

# HEADQUARTERS OF THE DEPARTMENT COMMANDER



DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK



## SONS OF UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR

Honoring the memory of the Grand Army of the Republic &  
The Men from New York who saved the Union from 1861 to 1865

[www.nysuvcw.org](http://www.nysuvcw.org)

June 19, 2024

### Juneteenth Message

Today on Juneteenth, we mark the occasion of the light of liberty reaching those who were enslaved in Texas with the issuance of General Order #3 by Major general Gordon Granger at Galveston. The enslaved population of Texas had exploded during the Civil War as enslavers fearful of the freedom that followed in the wake of the United States Army fled with their captives from Arkansas and Louisiana. In one of the many New York connections to Juneteenth, Granger was born in Joy, New York and grew to adulthood in Wayne and Ontario Counties. A distinguished hero of the Mexican War, Granger went on to perform admirably during the Civil War including pivotal support to General George Thomas at Snodgrass Hill during the Battle of Chickamauga.

Among the troops present in Galveston on the day of freedom's arrival, were two of New York's United States Colored Troop regiments the 26<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup>. The regiments had been raised by the Union League Club at Riker's Island in the wake of the Draft Riots and the racial pogrom that accompanied it. Among the soldiers in these regiments, were free born men from New York and surrounding states driven by Frederick Douglass's words that "The speediest way open to us manhood, equal rights and elevation, is this service." They stood against a foe who promised to enslave them if captured and to murder their officers for the crime of treating them as men. Also among in these regiments, were formally enslaved men who had either been liberated by the arrival of the United States Army or who had self-liberated escaping in the night from cotton fields or rice paddies to the freedom of Union lines. Even after the safety of arriving in New York these men agreed to go back into the benighted south for the opportunity to free those they left behind.

The Union soldier has brought into the national life two holidays: Memorial Day and Juneteenth. He reconsecrated the Fourth of July at Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Through his labor the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments were added to our Constitution. We, as the Sons of Union Veterans, will remember them always as we strive to keep their memory alive and to ensure that we as Americans live up to our founding ideal that All Men are Created Equal.

William P Stump  
NY Department Commander