

The Bandera PROPHEET

June 20, 2023

Good fellowship, good music, good spirit, good food at Juneteenth celebration

By Jessica Nohealapa'ahi
The Bandera Prophet

During a simultaneously solemn and triumphant celebration, people gathered at the Bertha Tryon/Hendrick Arnold Cemetery to honor Juneteenth, when in 1865, 250,000 Texas slaves were freed.

Hosted yesterday by the Bandera County Historical Commission, the Frontier Times Museum and the Arthur Nagel Community Clinic, the second annual event was marked with a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation by Bandera resident and USAF Veteran Larry Jackson, a recitation from poet DaRe'll Darrell Pittman, and performances from the San Antonio Mass Choir.

Rebecca Norton, Frontier Times Museum executive director and member of the Bandera County Historical Commission, provided the welcome and opening remarks. Chuck Lutke, executive director of the Arthur Nagel Community Clinic, read aloud the Names of the Interred. The free community event concluded with fellowship and food, prepared by Suzanne Jackson and others.

~ On June 19, 1865, Union General Gordon Granger arrived in Galveston and announced the Emancipation Proclamation. Although the proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln two years earlier, on Jan. 1, 1863, it was not honored by Confederate states until enforced by the advancement of Union troops. Texas was the last state of the Confederacy with institutional slavery.

The first Juneteenth celebrations were held in Texas in 1866, on the anniversary of General Granger's announcement. In 1979, Governor William P. Clements signed an act making the day a state holiday. In

2021, President Joseph Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law.

~ The Bertha Tryon/Hendrick Arnold Cemetery, formerly known as the Black Cemetery, was established in 1922. During segregation, the Montague family donated land for the county's black community to bury their dead, since they were not allowed to use the city cemetery.

The Black Cemetery was forgotten until 1993, when Bandera resident Buddy Tryon requested permission to bury his wife Bertha there.

The Bandera County Historical Commission then undertook a multi-year restoration project to clear the weed-ridden cemetery, locate gravesites, and place stone markers upon those found.

The names of the interred include Mary E. Arnold, Leonor Benson, John Benson, John Coats, Jeff Cooksey, Jeff Cooksey, Jr., C.D. Cooksey, Baby Cooksey, A.H. Hubble, Maria Jackson, Mary Jackson, Andrew Jackson, Amanda Lee, D.W. Leonard, Mrs. S.F. McClung, Elizabeth Moore, Joseph Moore, Mrs. William Moore, Martha A. Phillips, Everett Robinson, Mary Ethel Taylor, Bertha Mae Tryon, Wife of Jim Walker, and Wellencrane.

The Bertha Tryon/Hendrick Arnold Cemetery is located off Hwy. 16, on Old Medina Highway and Houston Street.