

**LOCAL HISTORY
AND
PRIMARY SOURCES**

Emancipation Changes Texas

INTRODUCTION

At first, the Northern states fought the Civil War to preserve the Union. Over time, they added another goal—ending slavery. When the war ended with the defeat of the South, that goal took effect. Slavery had long been a major feature of the economy and society in the South, including Texas. Suddenly, hundreds of thousands of African Americans in Texas were free.

ANNOUNCING EMANCIPATION

General Gordon Granger was in command of Texas for the Union army. On June 19, 1865, he issued General Order Number 3:

"The people of Texas are informed that in accordance with a Proclamation from the [president] of the United States, all slaves are free. This involves an absolute equality of rights and rights of property between former masters and slaves, and the connection [until now] existing between them becomes that between employer and free laborer. The freemen are advised to remain at their present homes and work for wages. They are informed that they will not be allowed to collect at military posts, and that they will not be supported in idleness, either there or elsewhere."

CHANGING LIVES

Sarah Ford had been enslaved on one Texas plantation near West Columbia. She was a teen in 1865. Years later, she remembered how the people she knew reacted when the announcement was made on the plantation where they lived:

"Pretty soon some soldiers came and the Captain read a proclamation to all the folks—white folks and us black folks, too. And Lordy me, that's one time Master Charles couldn't open his mouth, because

the Captain told him to shut up, would do the talking. Then the C to slaves, 'We came to let you kn free and you don't have to call an "Master" any more.' . . . After th left, Master Charles said we were he is, but if anybody wanted to s work, they would get paid for it, my papa. He said, 'Mike, you ca because you are a bad influence, and Sarah and the baby want to can.' Papa left the yard, but befo came back with a wagon and m borrowed, and loaded us in and East Columbia on the Brazos an down there. Mamma and Papa a out because I was a big girl and : we had a patch [of land of] our c where we [grew] a crop . . . , and the first time I ever saw money."

James Barber was only seven y emancipation came. His experienc greatly life changed for African An whites—after slavery had ended:

"When freedom came [Mrs. Orr mother, 'Well, Caroline, you're go into town and hire out. You c wages. But you can't take these i cause you don't have a husband of these children. You leave then I'll take care of them.' So my mo

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(continued)

there and she [Mrs. Orr] took care of us just like her own. We slept on a mattress on the floor in the room where she slept. She got up at night and tucked us in our own bed."

NEW LAWS DISCRIMINATE AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICANS

The end of slavery brought new problems for African Americans, however. White members of the state legislature passed tough laws called "black codes." These laws sharply limited the rights of the former slaves:

"An Act to define and declare the rights of persons lately known as Slaves, and Free Persons of Color.

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Texas, That all persons [previously] known as slaves, and free persons of color, shall have the right to make and enforce contracts, to sue and be sued, to inherit, purchase, lease, hold, sell, and convey real, personal and mixed estate; to make

wills and testaments, and to have and enjoy the rights of personal security, liberty, and private property, and all remedies and proceedings for the protection and enforcement of the same; and there shall be no discrimination against such persons in the administration of the criminal laws of this State.

Sec. 2. That all laws and parts of laws relating to persons lately held as slaves, or free persons of color, contrary to, or in conflict with the provisions of this act, . . . are hereby repealed; Provided, nevertheless, that nothing herein shall be so construed as to repeal any law prohibiting the intermarriage of the white and black races, nor to permit any other than white men to serve on juries, hold office, or vote at any election, State, county, or municipal: Provided, further, that nothing herein contained shall be so construed as to allow them to testify, except in such cases and manner as is prescribed in the Constitution of the State."

COMPREHENSION CHECK

1. When were the slaves in Texas officially freed?

2. What ordinary rights of citizens were denied to African Americans under the "black code" law reprinted here?
