A Journey of American Rights:
From Emancipation to the Right to Vote
We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Preamble to the Declaration of Independence
Prior to the American Revolution the colonies were under English rule. England was involved in the slave trade. Slaves were brought to the Virginia Colony in 1619. Many colonies wanted to abolish slavery but King George III vetoed any attempts to abolish slavery. The question of slavery became an issue in gaining independence from England. After gaining independence from England many colonies abolished slavery however some colonies were pro-slavery and fought to keep slavery. In 1783 six states voted to end slavery in America but pro-slavery states were successful in defeating that vote. The pro-slavery states were successful in passing legislation that left the question of slavery up to the states. Slavery, states’ rights, and the guarantee of the right that all are created equal were among the many factors that led to the Civil War.
The abolition movement was instrumental in abolishing slavery.

Wilbur Wilberforce, in England, fought tirelessly to end the slave trade and was instrumental in ending the slave trade in England.

The Puritans, Pilgrims, churches, ministers, and many others were opposed to slavery in America. While under British rule abolition societies were formed in America in direct violation of English law.

Not all of America’s Founding Fathers were slave owners and many fought to abolish slavery such as Benjamin Franklin, Dr. Benjamin Rush, William Livingston, John Reed, and Noah Webster.

Quaker minister Anthony Benezet, Founding Fathers Dr. Benjamin Rush and Benjamin Franklin were founders of America’s first abolition societies in America.

The abolition movement continued to gain momentum in America and was instrumental in passage of the The Emancipation Proclamation and the 13th-15th Amendments to The Constitution.

It is impossible to list, in this presentation, all of those who were instrumental in abolishing slavery in America. Some of the most well known are Frederick Douglas and Harriet Tubman but there are many African Americans and non African Americans, who are not known, who fought tirelessly to abolish slavery in America.
The Emancipation Proclamation

The Emancipation Proclamation, Proclamation 95, was issued on January 1, 1863. The Emancipation Proclamation freed the slaves in the states that were in rebellion to the United States but did not free the slaves in states that were not in rebellion against the U.S.

The Emancipation Proclamation provided that freed slaves could join the Union Army and directed the Army and the Executive Branch to ensure the freedom of ex-slaves. It is estimated that 180,000 African Americans joined the Army. African American soldiers were one of the key factors in the Union winning the Civil War.

The Emancipation Proclamation was vital to the success of the Union in winning the Civil War. The Proclamation changed the focus from fighting to restore the Union to fighting for the abolition of slavery and for freedom.

Once President Lincoln issued the Proclamation, he pushed for the ratification of the 13th Amendment to The Constitution.

The efforts of Abolitionists, all who fought to abolish slavery, and the Emancipation Proclamation laid the groundwork for the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to The Constitution.
Juneteenth Independence Day or Freedom Day

Juneteenth is a U. S. holiday that celebrates the June 19, 1865 announcement in the state of Texas of The Emancipation Proclamation.

Slaves in Texas were unaware of The Emancipation Proclamation, with the exception of those who escaped, until the Union Army came in to occupy Texas.

General Gordon Granger came to Galveston Island and read General Order No.3 announcing that all slaves were free.

African Americans who lived in Texas celebrated Juneteenth and as they moved to other states they celebrated the holiday.

The first legislation recognizing Juneteenth was introduced to the Congress in 1996 and 1997. The Senate recognized Juneteenth in 2013.

Approximately 43 states recognize Juneteenth.

The National Juneteenth Observance Foundation is trying to have Juneteenth designated as a national holiday.
Human Trafficking is a crime that involves taking advantage of people for labor, services, or commercial sex.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 defines human trafficking.

President Trump declared January as the National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month.

It is estimated that about 25 million human beings are victims of human trafficking.

To learn more about important legislation regarding human trafficking access the Government Publishing Office’s website “govinfo” at https://www.govinfo.gov.

Govinfo is GPO’s new website that offers free access to official publications from the three branches of the government.

More information on human trafficking can be found at the Department of Justice and the State Department.
We would like to encourage all to read the founding documents of the United States of America.

The Declaration of Independence, The Constitution, and the Bill of Rights are called The Charters of Freedom.

Visit the National Archives webpage to read and find out more about our founding documents.

https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs

More information on our founding documents can be found at https://bensguide.gpo.gov/
Works Cited


Works Cited

