

**Before the Board of County Commissioners
Martin County, Florida
A Proclamation**

**Recognizing May 20th as Florida Emancipation Day
in Martin County, Florida**

Whereas, on January 10, 1861, Florida adopted an Ordinance of Secession and was the third state to withdraw from the United States to preserve slavery and object to the 1860 election of President Abraham Lincoln; and

Whereas, the Civil War took place from 1861 to 1865 between the northern anti-slavery Union states and southern Confederacy states that fought to keep slavery, and on January 1, 1863, President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation declaring that “all persons held as slaves within any State or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward and forever free”; and

Whereas, President Lincoln feared that the Emancipation Proclamation would be reversed by the judiciary after the Civil War, so as part of his 1864 election platform he resolved to abolish slavery permanently through the passage of the 13th Constitutional Amendment that was passed by Congress on January 31, 1865, adopted in December and officially abolished slavery and involuntary servitude throughout the United States; and

Whereas, the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments are known as the Reconstruction Amendments and the 14th Amendment was ratified on July 9, 1868, establishing citizenship for former slaves and “equal protection under the laws;” and the 15th Amendment of 1870 gave men the right to vote, regardless of race; and

Whereas, Martin County Black Heritage Initiatives, Inc. honors the Emancipation Proclamation as the foundation for civil rights that abolished slavery and all forms of servitude in the United States. The Florida Legislature established May 20th as a day for statewide celebration specific to Florida’s history, marking the day in 1865 when Union General Edward McCook read the Emancipation Proclamation aloud in Tallahassee, officially ending slavery in Florida.

Now, therefore, be it proclaimed by the Martin County Board of County Commissioners that May 20th is recognized as Florida Emancipation Day. Further, the Board extends greetings and good wishes to all observing and celebrating.

Presented this Fifth Day of May 2026

ATTEST:

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

CAROLYN TIMMANN, CLERK OF THE
CIRCUIT COURT AND COMPTROLLER

SARAH HEARD, CHAIR

EDWARD V. CIAMPI, VICE CHAIRMAN

EILEEN VARGAS, COMMISSIONER

STACEY HETHERINGTON, COMMISSIONER

J. BLAKE CAPPS, COMMISSIONER