



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Juneteenth Exhibit Explores Black Experience in California**

SACRAMENTO – California State Library celebrates Juneteenth with a display of items from its collection documenting the African American experience in the state during the years leading up to the Emancipation Proclamation and after. The exhibit is in the main lobby of the library at 900 N Street in Sacramento. It is open weekdays, 8 to 5, and is free to the public.

Among the many treasures on exhibit are the first California printing of the *Emancipation Proclamation* [San Francisco: 1864] and a bill of sale by Thomas of Tennessee, a slave who came west in 1850 with slaveholder J.B. Gilman to work in the gold mines and two years later had saved a thousand dollars to buy his freedom. Also on view are photos of Jack Johnson, the first African American heavyweight-boxing champion, as he trained in San Francisco for a fight that took place in 1909.

Curator Gary Kurutz, Special Collections Librarian Emeritus, also has included works by illustrator Grafton Tyler Brown. Brown is considered to have been the first professional African American artist in California. He worked as a lithographer in San Francisco for several years beginning in the mid-1850s, making maps, portraits and labels for clients, including Wells Fargo, Ghirardelli Chocolate, and Levi Strauss.

The exhibit touches on more recent history as well, with photos, pamphlets and memorabilia of the Black Panther Party in California during the 1960s and '70s. Among the items on display are a book of essays by party co-founder and Minister of Defense Huey P. Newton, a first edition (1967) of the Black Panther's newspaper, and "Black Power" and "Free Angela Davis" political buttons.

**\*High quality photos of individual pieces in the exhibit are available for publication.**

About Juneteenth: The oldest and only African American holiday in the United States, Juneteenth was first observed June 19, 1865, over two years after President Lincoln issued the Emancipation

Proclamation on January 1, 1863. On June 19, 1865, a few months after the Civil War ended, General Gordon Granger rode into Galveston, Texas and freed the last slaves in America. The spontaneous celebration that ensued is now commemorated as Juneteenth.

About the State Library: Founded in 1850, the California State Library is the central reference and research library for the Governor's office, legislature, state employees, and the general public. The State Library administers federal and state grants for programs in historical preservation, library construction, civil liberties education, literacy, volunteering, and broadband connectivity in public libraries. For more information, visit [www.library.ca.gov](http://www.library.ca.gov).

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Emancipation Proclamation, 1<sup>st</sup> California printing, 1864



Jack Johnson, heavyweight champion, circa 1909, San Francisco



"Free Angela" button, circa 1970