# Civil War 150th Anniversary

The 150th anniversary of the American Civil War (2011-2015) offers the current generation of Americans the opportunity to understand, discuss, and commemorate this country's greatest national crisis, while at the same time exploring its enduring relevance in the 21st century. As steward of more than 75 battlefields, historic homes and other original sites associated with the war, the National Park Service is uniquely positioned to be the leader in commemorating one of America's most defining national struggles and the impact of that struggle on present day America.

Through the commemoration the National Park Service will provide the nation an opportunity to reflect upon this momentous event within an environment that is both inclusive and contemplative. Collaborating with partners and communities, the Park Service will provide millions of Americans a great opportunity to find meaning and relevancy in an event a century and a half in the past. These opportunities include:

- **Inclusive Stories** – Visitors to the Civil War sites during the anniversary will find the National Park Service interpretation moving beyond the battlefield, expanding to address not only the traditional battles and tactics, but also the institution of slavery as the principal cause of the Civil War, as well as the transition from slavery to freedom – after the war – for the four million previously enslaved African Americans. The Service will additionally introduce the people of the battlefront and home front, who they were, and how they lived.

- **New Website** – The National Park Service 150th anniversary website (*www.nps.gov/cw150*) includes a calendar of events of all anniversary programs, as well as historical features and timelines designed to illustrate the relevancy of events that occurred 150 years ago.

- **Programs** – Hundreds of commemorative programs, special events and symposia are planned during the anniversary years, including a dozen large-scale "Signature Events." For 2011, these events will include:

    - **Lincoln Inaugural Journey -** at 18 venues along the original journey route (February 11-23)
    - **Fort Sumter** – Fort Sumter National Monument, South Carolina (April 9-17)
    - **First Battle of Manassas** – Manassas National Battlefield Park, Virginia (July 21)
    - **National symposium** on *The Ordeal of The Border States* – hosted by Fort McHenry National Monument in Baltimore in April

- **Interpretive Media** – A new National Park Service handbook, *The Civil War Remembered*, will be published in 2011, designed to provide a measure of understanding of the war and its lessons that still resonate 150 years later. Additionally, funding is being provided to upgrade museum galleries, wayside exhibits, and audio-visual programs at Civil War parks throughout the country.

- **Battlefield Preservation** – Through the anniversary period, the National Park Service will continue to preserve Civil War battlefields as sacred ground and honor the memory of those who served and died there, while investing in the acquisition and preservation of additional Civil War sites.