



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Andersonville National Historic Site 496 Cemetery Road
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Living History Program Event Overview

Freedom in the Fall?

October 25 – 26, 2014

What is “Freedom in the Fall?”

In the autumn of 1864, the Atlanta campaign is rolling south, bringing change to all the inhabitants of Sumter County. This year, as part of our 150th commemoration of prison operations, we have added a living history weekend to allow staff and volunteers the opportunity to share the stories of the prisoners, guards and civilians who were caught in the turmoil of that fall. The overarching theme of the weekend is the question, “Freedom in the Fall?.” As participants you will help explore this question through informal interactions with visitors, impromptu encounters with other characters and scheduled programs.

What are the Objectives of the Event?

The goals of this event are to:

- Illustrate the prisoner experience just after the height of the prison population in 1864. Prisoners are being moved as a response to Sherman’s approach, and they all wonder if this is finally their chance for freedom. Is this a real opportunity or just another rumor?
- Guards provide a counterpoint to the prisoners’ hopefulness. Each guard is worried about their safety, their homes and their families. They wonder if they will have to fight over this miserable field. Is this what they signed up to do? Thousands of prisoners have died before their eyes, does that change them?
- Artillery demonstrations will take on a commander’s perspective. Every time a cannon is fired the objective is not solely to explain the process, rather it is to explain the purpose. A cannon being fired at Andersonville is either to be used to defend the location from attack by the United States Army or to prevent a prison riot or escape. What choices do commanders have?
- Civilians know that Atlanta has fallen. Their homes and families are at risk. Are they at risk here in Sumter County? Thousands of prisoners are dead. How will the United States army treat civilians caught in middle? Did they do enough to help?

The intent of the living history weekend event is to give visitors a more complex and dynamic view of the prison history. It is not always August 1864, and the prison population is lowering. Everyone has an opinion over what might happen next, and the air is rife with uncertainty. Our focus will always center on the prisoner experience, however, the Confederate guards and civilians provide additional commentary about the conditions and choices faced at Camp Sumter.

Participants should bring their own historic weapons (*Confederate guards only*), tents and all other camping gear. Please see the volunteer manual for specific requirements for clothing and props. Civilians should be dressed to reflect the war-weary year of 1864. Male and female civilians are encouraged to participate.

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The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Logistics

Registration is open until **September 30, 2014**. On Friday, October 3, all registered participants will receive email confirmation, and additional volunteer paperwork that may be submitted upon arrival at event. Every participant will receive event overview, historical briefing sheets, and tentative schedule at that time.

Registered participants may arrive as early as Friday, October 24. Period and modern camping is available Friday and Saturday nights. All modern camping equipment and vehicles must be removed from prison site by 9:00 am, each morning. Each vehicle that is present on-site will need a parking pass. The pass may be picked up at registration on Friday night or Saturday morning.

Morning meetings are mandatory. Please meet at 8:30 am at the civilian camp.

Lunches will be provided to all registered volunteers on Saturday and Sunday based on their registration forms. Lunches include a Subway sandwich, chips, cookie and water or Gatorade. Saturday night dinner will be chicken and dumplings, green beans, bread and tea. Breakfasts are on your own.

Breakdown of camp and departures should not begin before 4:30 pm on Saturday or before 3:00 pm on Sunday. Please realize that this is to preserve the opportunities for all visitors to enjoy your work.

How to Participate:

This year, all participants will register as individuals for accounting purposes. We welcome re-enactment groups or units to join us, but each person must submit a form. If you have not participated in a living history event at Andersonville National Historic Site in the last THREE years, then you will need to speak to the event coordinator before your registration is processed.

All volunteers interested in participating in the living history program at Andersonville National Historic Site must submit an individual application to event coordinator. Applications are available by contacting the park by phone or by printing one from the park website at <http://www.nps.gov/ande/supportyourpark/living-history-volunteers.htm>

Individuals applying to Andersonville should understand that they are held responsible to abide by the conditions stipulated in the event agreement and volunteer agreement. Failure to comply with this voluntary contract may result in ineligibility to participate in future park programs or expulsion from the event.

For more information or to sign up, please contact event coordinator:

Stephanie Steinhorst, Park Ranger
229 924-0343, x. 203
Stephanie_Steinhorst@nps.gov

Thank you for your commitment to sharing these stories. See you in October!