

citizens and carry out the letter of our laws after the war, the sacrifices of soldiers, sailors, Marines, abolitionists, and countless other Americans would bring a renewed significance to the liberties established by our Founders. When the guns fell silent and the fate of our Nation was secured, blue and gray would unite under one flag and the institution of slavery would be forever abolished from our land.

As a result of the sacrifice of millions, we would extend the promise and freedom enshrined in our Constitution to all Americans. Through the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, we would prohibit slavery and indentured servitude, establish equal protection under the law, and extend the right to vote to former slaves. We would reach for a more perfect Union together as Americans, bound by the collective threads of history and our common hopes for the future.

We are the United States of America—we have been tested, we have repaired our Union, and we have emerged stronger. As we respond to the critical challenges of our time, let us do so as adherents to the enduring values of our founding and stakeholders in the promise of a shared tomorrow.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 12, 2011, as the first day of the Civil War Sesquicentennial. I call upon all Americans to observe this Sesquicentennial with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities that honor the legacy of freedom and unity that the Civil War bestowed upon our Nation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

#### **Proclamation 8655 of April 14, 2011**

#### **Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2011**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

The future of our Nation depends on our ability to instill in future generations the values that will help them write the next proud chapter of the American story—a dedication to knowledge and a sense of compassion for their fellow citizens. As we celebrate Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., we recommit to preparing our sons and daughters to thrive with principle and purpose in the 21st century.

Over the next decade, nearly half of all new jobs will require advanced training or a college degree. Ensuring our children meet this standard will take the collective commitment of parents, teachers, and communities coming together to instill a love of learning in our young people. By doing so, we can unlock every child's potential and give them the chance to fulfill

their dreams, while laying the foundation for our country's continued prosperity.

Education alone, however, cannot fully prepare our children to stand at the helm of our Nation. In an increasingly interconnected world, America remains a beacon of hope for many across the globe because of our open hearts during times of extraordinary challenge and our dedication to our common humanity. We must nurture these traits in our children to ensure America continues to be a symbol of promise to the world.

On Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., we celebrate the example set by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who dedicated his life to improving education and fostering goodwill for all people. His legacy continues to inspire individuals to carry forward his effort to build a brighter future. Each year, Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., reminds us of our obligation to create opportunities for a better tomorrow—life lessons we pass on to all our children.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BARACK OBAMA, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 15, 2011, as Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eleven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-fifth.

BARACK OBAMA

#### **Proclamation 8656 of April 15, 2011**

#### **National Park Week, 2011**

*By the President of the United States of America  
A Proclamation*

Every day, America's national parks—from the smallest historic sites to the largest natural spaces—contribute to our Nation's collective health and spirit. These places preserve our unique history and iconic symbols. They protect ecosystems and serve as reservoirs of biodiversity. They are sources of natural sounds, clean water, and fresh air. Our parks provide accessible, safe, and affordable places to appreciate the bounty of our land. They offer opportunities for wholesome outdoor recreation, which can improve the health and vitality of all Americans.

In no place is America's natural and historic legacy more evident than our extraordinary collection of 394 national parks. "*Healthy Parks, Healthy People*," the focus for this year's National Park Week, highlights the role of public lands—whether an iconic national park or a local green space—in connecting human and environmental well-being. To encourage citizens to spend time in national parks, all entrance fees will be waived during National Park Week. All Americans can visit [www.NPS.gov](http://www.NPS.gov) to find nearby parks where history can be discovered and nature explored.