



THOMAS JEFFERSON'S

*Poplar Forest*



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## **Poplar Forest Presents New Archaeology Online Exhibit Comprehensive Information Now Available Online About the Latest Jefferson-era Archaeological Excavation**

**Forest, VA** – Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest has unveiled a new online exhibit, featuring the latest information about "Site B," the current archaeological excavation site at Poplar Forest. The exhibit will give online visitors a glimpse into the process of an historical archaeological investigation and the ongoing interpretation of data. Visit the online exhibit at [www.poplarforest.org/siteb](http://www.poplarforest.org/siteb).

The large scale excavation and analysis of Site B has been ongoing since 2004. Often dubbed the "mystery" site due to its complexity and lack of easily explained features, the archaeological investigation at Site B has begun to shed light on a large, but little understood area of Thomas Jefferson's plantation called the "curtilage."

At Poplar Forest, Jefferson delineated a 61-acre space around the octagonal house – the curtilage – to carry out his vision for a villa retreat. Beyond the boundary of the curtilage were the agricultural fields of the plantation. Within the curtilage, Jefferson deliberately organized the space to include utilitarian elements, like orchards and stables, and purely ornamental elements, like flower beds and clumps of trees.

Archaeologists working at Site B have uncovered artifacts that indicate the likely presence of plantation support buildings and activity areas. Objects that indicate people were also living at or near this site include large quantities of early 19th century ceramics and bottle glass, and items like thimbles, buttons, marbles, and pieces of clay and stone tobacco pipes.

The types of ceramics used, architectural details of buildings long demolished, and even clothing styles and traditional African American practices of the enslaved community are illuminated by materials found at Site B.

“Archaeological investigation is a year-round activity at Poplar Forest. When conditions prohibit being outside, we come into the archaeology lab to analyze and research objects, document our activities and begin to form conclusions about life at Poplar Forest,” said Jack Gary, director of Archaeology and Landscapes at Poplar Forest. “The online exhibit gives visitors year-round 24/7 access to the current body of knowledge.”

The Site B online exhibit includes images of maps, historic documents and letters, archaeological land features and artifacts found in the excavation. As analysis on Site B continues it is the goal to update the exhibit with new information and interpretations.

This exhibit and information contained within were made possible by the support of the Richard Gwathmey and Caroline T. Gwathmey Memorial Trust. The new Site B exhibit is the second archaeology online exhibit to be added to the Poplar Forest website. The first, an interactive look at the Poplar Forest landscape, was made possible by Verizon.

Access the online exhibits and learn more about archaeology at Poplar Forest at [www.poplarforest.org/arch](http://www.poplarforest.org/arch).

### **About Poplar Forest**

*Poplar Forest is Thomas Jefferson's secluded plantation and retreat home, now a National Historic Landmark. Undergoing award-winning restoration and archaeology, Poplar Forest offers tours, special events, and school outreach programs. Poplar Forest is currently closed to the public. Poplar Forest is open April through November, Wednesday through Monday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call (434) 525-1806 or visit [www.poplarforest.org](http://www.poplarforest.org) for additional information.*

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