

THOMAS JEFFERSON'S

Poplar Forest

School Group Field Trips Hands-On History Center with House and Grounds Tour

Purpose of the Hands-On History Center

The Hands-On History programs are designed to give students the opportunity to experience various aspects of daily life within the plantation community and Thomas Jefferson's time at Poplar Forest. Led by the Hands-On History Leader, students will have a chance to interact with docents, participate in hands-on activities and use critical thinking skills to interpret, analyze, and evaluate history.

General Information

When: Teachers and home school educators can schedule a field trip September 1-mid November and April 1-mid June.

Who: The program is suitable for students from K-5 students and up, with a **minimum of 20 students**. The ideal number of students for a program is 30 students, who are divided into two groups. We require one chaperone for every five students for elementary groups and one chaperone for every ten students for middle and high school groups. **Poplar Forest reserves the right to schedule two different groups on the same day if the groups are between 20-30 students.**

Cost: \$4.00 per student

Required chaperones are free.

\$8.00 per adult (over complimentary ratio)

Activities

Select two of the following Hands-On History activities for the primary, class focus.

Literally Fun (Reading and Writing at Poplar Forest)

Dig the Past (Archaeology)

Build a Dream (Architecture)

Hidden Lives (The Plantation Community at Poplar Forest)

Format for Hands-On Activities

*The Hands-on History Leader will introduce the students to Poplar Forest, Thomas Jefferson and the plantation community, through primary sources.

*Students will then be divided into groups for Hands-On History activities.

*Time permitting, students will be given free time to explore other activities within the Hands-On History Center.

Additional activities may include a visit to the slave quarter or the current archaeology site.

These activities are offered, weather permitting and only with proper staffing for the archaeology site. You may also schedule time and reserve our picnic tables if you plan on having your lunch on the grounds. **For this entire program, which includes Hands-On History activities, a House and Grounds tour, and lunch, please allow 2 to 2 ½ hours for your visit.**

For more information or to schedule a field trip, please contact:
Octavia Starbuck, Director, Interpretation/Education
Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest
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(434)-534-8108 or e-mail octavia@poplarforest.org

Hands-On History Center Activities

Dig the Past: Yesterday's trash is today's treasure. Learn how Poplar Forest's archaeologists find bits of plates, pipes, coins, and other artifacts, which allow them to piece together the past. In a simulated site students will dig in a sand pit, and sift buckets of dirt for artifacts. In a process known as crossmending, they will piece together reproduction artifacts.

Build a Dream: Thomas Jefferson always dreamed of building a retreat home for himself. Learn what it takes to build a house like Poplar Forest. Make bricks out of mud and build walls with wood blocks (which simulate bricks) to understand brick bonding. Put together a plan for an eight-sided house. Explore the tools used to build Jefferson's home, and work with his herringbone floor plan.

Hidden Lives: Enslaved workers helped build and maintain Poplar Forest. Explore how they lived, worked, and played by examining what they wore and tools they used. Learn to play their game of marbles and see what kind of food they ate. Carry a pot, and sit on a bed, both similar to those Jefferson gave as wedding presents to members of the Poplar Forest plantation community. See what it takes to churn butter, weave a basket or make a bucket. Work with materials to make clothing; such as wool, cotton and flax.

Literally Fun: Thomas Jefferson was constantly writing letters and memorandums. There are approximately 20,000 Jefferson letters known to exist in various historic collections. Jefferson recorded his daily activities and those of his plantation communities in a farm journal and a garden journal. He is noted to be the author the Declaration of Independence and students will see a copy of this as well as a copy of one of his (17) rough drafts for this historic document. Students will write with a quill pen as Jefferson may have. They will also write with a slate pencil on a slate board.