



Press Release



Independence National Historical Park and City of Philadelphia

Dennis Reidenbach, Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park
John F. Street, Mayor, City of Philadelphia

Contact: Jane Cowley, 215-597-0060 (INHP)
Ted Qualli, 215-686-6210
Roz McPherson, 856-261-4023

For immediate release: Thursday, May 10, 2007

MORE FINDS FROM ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG OF PRESIDENT'S HOUSE – VIEWING PLATFORM TO BE OPEN THIS WEEK-END

Philadelphia, PA – In light of exciting new findings by archeologists working at the site of the former President's House on Independence Mall, Independence National Historical Park and the City announced today that the viewing platform at the site will be open this weekend, Saturday, May 12th, and Sunday, May 13th, from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm. Visitors are invited to view the dig at the corner of 6th and Market Streets and see the foundations of the original house where Presidents George Washington and John Adams lived from 1790 to 1800. A Park Ranger will be available to respond to questions about the dig.

This has been an exciting period of completely unexpected discoveries at the site. This week, archeologists uncovered the foundation wall from a bow (curved) window that is believed to be the prototype for oval rooms in the White House in Washington, including the Oval Office. Last week, INHP and the City announced the discovery of a basement below the kitchen where Hercules – one of at least nine enslaved Africans who toiled in the Washington household – presided as George Washington's chef. Archeologists also unearthed a "mystery foundation wall" that may indicate another outbuilding or extension that was previously undocumented.

Visitors interested in learning more about archeology can come to the Archeology Lab at the Independence Living History Center, at 3rd and Chestnut Streets. At the Archeology Lab, which will be open on Saturday, May 12th, from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, volunteer archeologists are hard at work cataloguing artifacts from other archeological digs in the park. Here, visitors can talk to the archeologists and learn more about the process of

analyzing and cataloguing artifacts, and what these artifacts teach us about life in 18th Century Philadelphia.

The Presidents House dig is expected to last through the end of May. Weekdays, archeologists can be seen on bended knee with trowels conducting the painstaking process of carefully removing dirt from the 18th century walls. In addition to the special week-end hours just announced, the visitors viewing platform at the site remains open, Monday-Friday, 8 am–5 pm. During that time, the team of archeologists is available at the dig site to answer questions from the public.

The world-class team assembled by the URS Group to conduct the dig includes Dr. Warren Perry, Director for Archeology for the African Burial Ground in New York; Field Director Douglas Mooney, who directed the recent archeological digs at the National Constitution Center and James Oronoco Dexter Sites; and Dr. Cheryl LaRoche, a conservator who worked on both the African Burial Ground and National Constitution Center projects. The National Park Service conducts archeological digs at construction sites as part of the due diligence process. This particular research dig is preparation for the beginning of work on the commemoration of the President's House site. As previously announced, the team headed by Kelly/Maiello Architects and Planners will design and build a new permanent outdoor installation commemorating the President's House and all its occupants – including the nation's first two presidents and the enslaved Africans who lived and worked in the Washington household.