



# Press Release



## Independence National Historical Park and City of Philadelphia

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### **FIRST FINDS FROM ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG OF PRESIDENT'S HOUSE!**

**Philadelphia, PA** – Independence National Historical Park and the City of Philadelphia announced today that archeologists working at the site of the President's House at 6<sup>th</sup> & Market Streets have located remains of the actual house. These findings are significant because they are shedding new light on the current understanding of the house where Presidents George Washington and John Adams lived from 1790 to 1800. "We're very excited," exclaimed National Park Service Archeologist Jed Levin. "In archeology, you never know what you're going to find until you dig. It was a long shot that any portion of the house would survive. And now we're learning things we might otherwise never have known!"

Already, there is important new information about the kitchen where Hercules – one of at least nine enslaved Africans who toiled in the Washington household – presided as George Washington's chef. Excavations have unearthed a large portion of the kitchen wall and foundation walls at the southeast corner and along the south wall of the main house. As Levin explains, "Based on documentation, we thought the President's House kitchen was only one story, so we didn't expect it to have deep foundations. But now we know it also had a basement. This makes sense since it may have been used for storage."

The initial finds were remnants from structures built on the property in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

“That in and of itself was an exciting find,” says Levin. “And then we discovered a coin from 1833!” This find is significant because it confirms that the President’s House was torn down in 1832, as indicated in the historical record. The 1833 coin is believed to have been dropped or intentionally placed by the workmen building the basement floor of the house that was built over the site in 1833.

A “mystery foundation wall” is yet another important find in this dig, raising even more questions about the house, its layout and design. “We do not yet know if this wall is from the time period of the President’s House,” said Douglas Mooney, URS Group Archeologist. If the archeologists determine that the wall dates from the right time period, it could very well indicate another outbuilding or extension that was previously undocumented.

Three shaft features have also been unearthed, and may prove to be valuable sources of artifacts and information. These shaft features have not yet been definitively dated. Any other artifacts encountered so far have been demolition rubble, related to much later time periods in the location’s history.

The dig is expected to last for another month, through the end of May. Visitors are encouraged to come to the site. Archeologists can be seen on bended knee with trowels conducting the painstaking process of carefully removing dirt from the 18<sup>th</sup> century walls. The visitors viewing platform at the site also remains open, Monday- Friday, 8 am–5 pm. In addition, 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.