

United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of Property

Historic name: Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation, Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)

Other names/site number: VDHR ID 009-0027

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 1776 Poplar Forest Parkway

City or town: Lynchburg State: VA County: Bedford, Campbell, Independent City

Not For Publication: N/A Vicinity: X

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national ___ statewide ___ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

A B C D

<p>_____ Signature of certifying official/Title: <u>Virginia Department of Historic Resources</u> State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>	<p>_____ Date</p>
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<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____ Signature of commenting official: _____ Title :</p>	<p>_____ Date _____ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</p>

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>6</u>	<u>17</u>	buildings
<u>18</u>	<u>10</u>	sites
<u>7</u>	<u>4</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>31</u>	<u>31</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: single dwelling, multiple dwelling, secondary structure

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: processing, storage, agricultural field, animal facility,
horticultural facility, agricultural outbuilding

LANDSCAPE: garden, natural feature

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE/TRADE: organizational

EDUCATION: research facility

RECREATION AND CULTURE: museum, outdoor recreation

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE: agricultural field

LANDSCAPE: garden, natural feature

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EARLY REPUBLIC: Early Classical Revival: Jeffersonian Classicism

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: BRICK; WOOD; STUCCO; TIN

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Poplar Forest consists of 617 acres in southeastern Bedford County, western Campbell County, and the western edge of the City of Lynchburg. The current acreage includes part of the original 18th century property, which has been recovered by the non-profit 501c(3) Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest acquired Poplar Forest, founded in 1983 (hereafter "the Corporation"). The centerpiece of Poplar Forest is the Palladian villa and ornamental landscape designed by Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, as a retreat where he could spend time with family and engage in intellectual pursuits. The Corporation has managed a program of restoration and research to develop Poplar Forest as a historic site and house museum, with full restoration of the retreat house, service wing, and other buildings and structures from the Jefferson period. The Cobbs/Hutter (1828-1946) and Watts (1946-1980) families maintained Poplar Forest as either a full-time residence or a summer home, making further changes and alterations to the house and the property, which continued to be used for agriculture or pasture by the families and tenants. Previous archaeological investigations have examined extant buildings and structures, and have located numerous sites that date before, during, and after the period of

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significance, including many associated with the enslaved African American community who lived and labored on the plantation prior to Emancipation.

Narrative Description

Setting

The property is located in the Virginia Piedmont between the Appalachian Mountains and the Coastal Plain. The Piedmont is a region of rolling hills dissected by dendritic drainages that feed a number of eastward flowing rivers. Poplar Forest soils are situated within the Cecil-Madison and Cullen-Wilkes associations, which are deep and well drained, with moderate to steep slopes. Numerous water sources have been identified within Poplar Forest's modern property boundaries and more were contained within the plantation during the 18th and 19th century. Water source types consist of springs and seeps, ephemeral and permanent streams, and small marshy flats along the courses of ephemeral and permanent streams and drainages. For Native Americans, these types of elevated, well-drained landforms with nearby fresh water sources and ecologically productive wetlands attracted temporary or seasonally occupied hunting camps. Plantation-era enslaved and free occupants also valued the numerous springs and seeps that are noted on many of the 18th and 19th century plats.

Detailed Description

The 617-acre Poplar Forest property contains buildings, sites, and structures from different ownership periods, as defined in the inventory of contributing and non-contributing resources that appears below. These include above-ground resources and dozens of sites that have been discovered during archaeological investigations completed at the property since 1986.

The inventory of 62 resources (31 contributing and 31 non-contributing) can be understood according to three zones originally defined by Thomas Jefferson in the 1810s which continue to shape Poplar Forest's landscape today. The total of non-contributing resources includes 10 buildings and 1 site that are contained within the description of Camp Ruthers in this section. The main concentration of contributing resources lies within a 10-acre zone "core" that once served as the core ornamental grounds. Among the 17 contributing resources recorded therein are 4 buildings and 2 structures from the original nomination in 1969, though that listing did not specify that these were contributing resources. These resources, which include the restored retreat house and service wing, two privies, and ornamental landscape features, support the arguments for Criterion C, within the Landscape Architecture and Architecture areas of significance. An additional 10 non-contributing resources are identified within the core, several of which relate to Poplar Forest's function as a historic site and house museum since 1983.

The core is enclosed by the curtilage, a common law term designating the area that surrounds a house that is legally considered part of that house. Historic surveys during the Jefferson period

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describe the curtilage as either 61 or 69 acres. According to Jefferson's original intent, housing for the enslaved population, gardens, stables, barns, and other outbuildings were to be established within the curtilage in order to support the retreat house as well as agricultural activities occurring outside the curtilage. These types of activities continued in the curtilage during the Hutter and Watts periods. The curtilage has 10 contributing and 6 non-contributing resources. This also contains an archaeological site that dates to the Wayles period before 1773.

A third part of the property lies beyond the curtilage including agricultural fields, roads, streams, and wooded areas. This zone has 4 contributing and 15 non-contributing resources. Together this broader collection of resources from these three zones located within the core, within the curtilage, and within the area beyond the curtilage defines Criterion A (Agriculture; African American Heritage), Criterion B (Politics and Government), and Criterion D (Archaeology, Historic Non-Aboriginal).

Inventory

This inventory includes a total of 62 buildings, sites, and structures which are divided into four phases based on property ownership. The first phase is the period from 1764 to 1773 under John Wayles. The second phase is the Thomas Jefferson and Francis Eppes period of ownership from 1773 to 1828, and the third covers the Cobbs-Hutter family's tenure from 1828 until 1946. The period of significance spans from 1764 to 1946. The fourth phase is 1946 to 1980 when James Watts owned the property, followed by the ownership of the non-profit Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest from 1983 to 2023.

Plantation Core and Curtilage, Wayles Period (1764-1773) and Jefferson-Eppes Period (1773-1828)

1 Main house, 1806; service wing, 1814, contributing building

The restored retreat house is a combination of Jefferson period brickwork and the 1989-2023 restoration of all of the interior and exterior woodwork and other building features. Evidence of other periods still remain for visitors to see in the northeast guestroom and east bedchamber, which has been left unfinished for interpretive purposes. This includes evidence of the 1845 fire and traces of subsequent reconstruction and remodeling that took place in its aftermath in the 1840s, and again in the mid-20th century. The interior and exterior brick walls, brick chimneys, and brick columns on each portico are original to the Jefferson period. Every restored feature, element, or material is based on documentary, physical, or prototypical evidence. An extensive investigation and restoration of the main house and attached wing of workrooms began in 1989 with a professional staff, consulting architects from Monticello and the University of Virginia, and an advisory panel of well-known architectural professionals. The investigation began with a search for all Jefferson and Poplar Forest documents,¹ paired with a physical investigation which revealed evidence of what Jefferson and his builders had created. Poplar Forest is one of the

¹ This resulted in a monograph: Chambers 1993.

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most documented early American houses based on two years of correspondence between President Jefferson in Washington and the builders. Correspondence during the fourteen years that Jefferson used the house and property is also significant, especially letters between Jefferson and John Hemmings, his enslaved carpenter. Three aspects of the award-winning 33-year restoration process make it unique. First, no artificial deadlines regarding what to restore and when to restore it were imposed. Second, the process followed Jefferson's original construction sequence, giving visitors a rare opportunity to see the house unfold as it did for Jefferson. Third, the restoration used Jefferson-era materials and tools for hand-crafting the classical elements.

The exterior of the house looks Jeffersonian, resembling Monticello and the University of Virginia. It is composed of locally made brick laid in a Flemish Bond pattern with locally made lime mortar. The brick columns of the north and south porticos are covered in a lime render to resemble stone. The Tuscan bases and capitals are constructed using specially-made bricks, using squint bricks with a forty-five-degree angle designed for the octagonal corners. A simple stepped-back water table shelf divides the thicker lower level walls from the upper walls. The house is set into the ground in such a manner that the upper floor is set even with the roof deck of the in-ground service wing. The south portico's arcade leads to the lower level which is open to that grade due to the digging of the sunken lawn by enslaved laborers. The service wing, known by Jefferson as the "Wing of Offices," is also submerged into the ground, presenting a lower elevation on the front façade in the same manner as Jefferson's design for Monticello and the White House. The double- and triple-sash windows, the central skylight, and the large lunette windows of the stair pavilions were designed by Jefferson to give a very light-filled experience that provided a Parisian-style modern feeling to the interior of the retreat house. Jefferson redesigned the roof over the dining room in 1819 with another "terras" deck where he could sit and view the distant Blue Ridge Mountains. The current roof is covered with tin-covered stainless-steel shingles. These restoration singles are designed to replicate the appearance of the tin-covered iron singles that replaced the original wood shingles in 1825 following a roof fire that took place when Jefferson's grandson Francis Eppes lived in the house.

The house is a roughly 50-foot diameter octagon with four chimneys that serve fifteen fireplaces on two levels. The 20-foot cube dining room at the center is connected diagonally to four chimneys. The surrounding rooms are either full elongated octagons (the parlor, and the east and west bedchambers) or half octagons (the two north bed chambers). The two large east and west bed chambers are divided by European-style bed alcoves that Jefferson used in Paris, and are also included in the remodeled Monticello. The extra facets of the octagon walls allow for more windows, which are truly double-hung sash with extra-large lights, and in the parlor, triple-hung sash from floor to ceiling. All the fireplaces are modified Rumford designs, including the central dining room fireplace with its diagonal flue and corner shelf. Cast iron fire backs based on surviving pieces and documentary and physical evidence have also been restored.

Other modern features are what Jefferson called "European" floors of oiled, waxed, and polished oak, a 16-foot skylight, varnished walnut window sash, and varnished walnut six-panel doors with European brass hardware. The dark, narrow entrance passage leads into the bright central

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cubistic dining room with its rare skylight, followed by the bright southern parlor with four triple sash windows and a sash door that leads onto the rear portico which acts as an outdoor room. Surrounding the dining room are four sets of glass doors, the first items made by enslaved joiner John Hemmings, that throw light into the entrance passage and the two vestibules on the east and west. Classical details and proportions are used throughout the interior, like the bases, chair rails, door and window architraves, entablatures, and the doorway pediments of the dining room and parlor. The classical hierarchy starts with a Tuscan Entablature in the passage, followed by a Doric Entablature in the Dining Room, and ending with an Ionic Entablature in the Parlor. In the current interpretation, the northwest and west bed chambers also feature a Tuscan entablature. The northeast and east bedchambers would have had the same entablatures, but these rooms are currently left unfinished to show the construction and restoration process. Each of the two stair pavilions is lighted by an oversized lunette window. On the side of Jefferson's bedchamber that window also throws light via a transom into the closet over his bed alcove. Jefferson also retrofitted the underneath portion of the stairs off of his bedchamber with a privy, which has been restored. The stair pavilions allow access to the lower level or to the exterior. The east pavilion has a retrofitted upper door added after the creation of the service wing to allow access to the terras roof deck.

The lower level includes a wine cellar that is a 20x20x12 foot room laid with local stone and completed in 1807. The cellar mirrors the above dining room and is surrounded by four elongated octagons, which are used as interpretive areas for sharing exhibits related to archaeological research, architectural restoration, the plantation, and other aspects of Poplar Forest history. The lower level has had all of its post-Jefferson fabric removed and only features the original brickwork on the floor of the wine cellar, the original stone foundation walls, and a modern brick floor made of recently produced restoration bricks for visitor use in the areas surrounding the cellar. The modern brick floor in the lower level overlies the remains of both brick and wooden flooring dating to the 19th century uncovered through previous archaeological excavations.

The finishing touches of Jefferson's neo-classical retreat are special terra cotta and lead ornaments that were originally made by English sculptor William Coffee in 1822 for the Doric dining room entablature and the Ionic parlor entablature and installed by John Hemmings in 1825. The former are based on the Roman Baths of Diocletian and the latter the Temple of Fortuna Virilis, both also used by Jefferson at Monticello and the University of Virginia with ornaments also made by Coffee. The significant difference at Poplar Forest is that Jefferson added bucrania to alternate with the face of Apollo for his Doric entablature, telling the sculptor that he could do this because it was a private house and he wanted to indulge "his fancy." These entablatures at Poplar Forest have been restored with 3-D printed reconstructions of the ornaments in the dining room and parlor. Jefferson used local marble from the Lynchburg area for his hearth stones and some fireplace surrounds. He also used imported Italian Carrara marble for some surrounds. These same two sources for these materials are used in the restoration of the Dining Room and Parlor fireplaces. The final restoration touch that restores Jefferson's personal aesthetics is the traditional paint finishes for the interior wood trim and plaster walls. These are

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hand-made 19th century-type distempers, pigmented lime washes, and linseed oil paints based on hundreds of original pieces found during the investigation.

The service wing consists of four rooms. From west to east, the wing consists of an unheated room possibly used for storage, a kitchen, a laundry, and a smokehouse. The reconstruction, completed in 2009, is based on archaeological evidence and observations of the correlating workrooms at Monticello. Archaeological excavations revealed intact remains of the stone wall on the north side and the original brick walls and other details from the four originally Jefferson-era rooms. In addition, a detached kitchen and smokehouse built in the 1840s was removed as part of the wing restoration. Both of these buildings incorporated portions of the original Jefferson era Wing of Offices, which has been reincorporated in the modern wing restoration. In addition, other portions of the antebellum period kitchen still remain for interpretive purposes, including the large hearth and fireplace. In addition, clay smoke pits still remain from the antebellum period smokehouse within the fourth room of the restored Jefferson-era Wing of Offices. This 100-foot service wing was added five years after the house exterior was finished. The kitchen featured a bake oven, set kettle, modern potager stove, and a modified Rumford fireplace. Atop the service wing is Jefferson's own roof system, which he called his "terras roof," which has been reconstructed and provides a flat deck on top of a hidden ridge and valley roof.

2 East Mound, early 19th century, contributing structure

This earthen mound is situated 84 feet east of the east stair pavilion of the retreat house. It is approximately 12 feet in height and 90 feet in diameter. Based on the current size of the east and west mounds and archaeological evidence, it is believed that soil from the sunken lawn, house foundation, and wine cellar were used to create the mounds over time. As a result, the construction of the east mound may have started as early as 1805, when enslaved laborers began to excavate the house foundation, and finished after the sunken lawn was complete. Plantings of aspen, golden willow, and weeping willow trees were added in 1811, and part of the western side of this mound was removed to accommodate the addition of the service wing in 1814. This mound, along with a second one located west of the retreat house, contributes to the symmetrical Palladian plan guiding Jefferson's design of Poplar Forest.

3 East Privy, 1808, contributing building

The octagonal privy, or necessary, is a tall brick building that is octagonal in shape, with a domed roof. It is located 180 feet to the east of the east stair pavilion. The classical cornice, door, roof framing and sheathing, brickwork, plaster, floor joists, west window sill, and one lunette window frame are original, representing Poplar Forest's most complete surviving woodwork from the Jefferson period, with the cornice having been built as part of John Hemmings work at Poplar Forest. The floor boards were added during the Hutter period. The seat, lunette windows, and wood shingle roof covering are restored. The east and west privies add to the Palladian symmetry of the core. The brickwork maintains many of the same features as the manor house such as bricks laid in Flemish bond and the corners of the octagon employing squint bricks. The floor joists sit just above the water table (a projection of lower masonry on the outside of a wall, slightly above the ground), which is 3 courses thick, then changing to 2 courses up to the roof

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framing, and just below the water table there is an arched opening for the cleanout directly in line with the privy seat. This privy has spalling brick on the interior east wall, and an original tinted lime wash finish which is a coral color.

4 West Privy, 1808, contributing building

The octagonal privy is a tall brick building that is octagonal in shape, with a domed roof that is located about 170 feet to the west of the west stair pavilion. The classical cornice, roof framing and sheathing, brickwork, plaster, floor joists, and seat are original, with the cornice having been built as part of John Hemmings work at Poplar Forest. The floor boards are Hutter period. The door, two lunette windows, and wood shingle roof covering are restored. The east and west privies add to the Palladian symmetry of the core. The brickwork for the privies maintains many of the same features as the manor house such as bricks laid in Flemish bond and the corners of the octagon employing squint bricks. The floor joists sit just above the water table which is 3 courses thick, then changing to two courses up to the roof framing, and just below the water table there is an arched opening for the cleanout directly in line with the privy seat. This privy has an original untinted lime wash finish, and an original door frame but not an original door.

5 West Mound, early 19th century, contributing structure

This earthen mound is 91 feet west of the west stair pavilion of the retreat house. It is approximately 12 feet in height and 79ft in diameter. Based on the current size of the east and west mounds and archaeological evidence, it is believed that soil from the sunken lawn, house foundation, and wine cellar were used to create the mounds over time. As a result, the construction of the west mound may have started as early as 1805, when enslaved laborers began to excavate the house foundation, and finished after the sunken lawn was complete. Plantings of aspen, golden willow, and weeping willow trees were added in 1811. This mound, along with a second located east of the house, contributes to the symmetrical Palladian plan guiding Jefferson's design of Poplar Forest.

6 Double Row of Trees, 1812, contributing site

Two rows of mulberry trees between the house and the west mound are located in 20-foot increments along rows placed 30 feet apart. In 2011 these were replanted as a Garden Club of Virginia restoration project in their original locations, as determined by archaeological evidence. Based on historical documents, all trees restored in the double-row are paper mulberries except for two European mulberries, which are planted closest to the mound.

7 Carriage Turnaround, ca. 1808, contributing structure

The reconstructed carriage turnaround, completed in collaboration with the Garden Club of Virginia 2021, is an 80-foot diameter circular road of quartz cobbles that was the formal approach to the main door on the north side of the house. Archaeological excavations exposed the entire original Jefferson-era cobblestone road surface and carriage landing. The original Jefferson-era surface has been preserved beneath protective layers, including modern stone set in mortar designed to convey the look of the original. A small viewing window reveals the original surface. This structure was originally built with cobbles that enslaved laborers collected from the

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agricultural fields, while the carriage landing was composed of pavers made of locally available schist stone, the same type used for the retreat house foundation. Occasional pieces of brick were also found during archaeological excavations. Replicas of these original bricks have been included in the restoration. This includes a concentration of bricks that were intentionally placed at the northern apex of the carriage circle, which contains a fragment of a squint brick designed for the octagonal sides of the main house and two compass bricks made for the columns of Jefferson's retreat. The presence of these column bricks suggests this feature was built after these bricks were made in July 1808, the same year when much of the house exterior was completed, including the stairs and the north portico adjacent to the carriage landing.

8 Clumps of Trees, 1812, and Oval Flower Beds, 1816, contributing site

In 2013, two Jefferson-era clumps of trees were placed at the northeast and northwest corners of the house in their original locations based on archaeological research. These planting features are briefly referred to in Jefferson's 1812 Planting Memorandum for Poplar Forest which included instructions for a "clump" to be placed at each corner with Athenian and balsam poplars intermixed with black locusts, Kentucky coffee trees, redbuds, dogwoods, calycanthus, and tulip poplars. Documentary evidence of two additional clumps at the southeast and southwest corners of the retreat house are also included in Jefferson's 1812 memorandum. Three oval-shaped flower beds in front of the retreat house were restored in 2021, based on archaeological evidence that determined their original locations and arrangements. These plantings include bristly locust (*Robinia hispida*) in the northwest bed, dwarf roses in the northeast bed, and large roses of different variety in the north front bed according to Jefferson's 1816 Planting Memorandum for Poplar Forest. The roses used in this Garden Club of Virginia restoration project are carefully selected from varieties that would have been available to Jefferson as he was designing his retreat in the early 19th century.

9 Tulip Poplar Grove, early 19th century, contributing site

This grove of tulip poplars is north of the retreat house. It dates to at least the early 19th century when construction of the retreat house began. The grove includes five original trees plus eight that have been restored in their original locations.

10 Sunken Lawn, ca. 1807, contributing structure

A sunken lawn south of the house begins at the lower basement level and extends approximately 200 feet to the south. Today it is roughly 115 feet wide from the upper edges of the sloped east and west banks. It was originally excavated by hand, by enslaved laborers in 1807 and 1808 based on written records. Ornamental plantings first added along the banks in 1812 have been located through archaeological research and marked on the modern landscape with blue circular concrete pavers. The east bank was canted outward approximately 9 degrees at roughly the same time the house's service wing was added in 1814. It is likely that this eastern bank was replanted soon after, with the planting holes located through archaeological excavations and marked on the modern landscape with white circular concrete pavers. Kentucky coffee trees were likely added along the banks at this time, remnants of which still exist in the southeast portion of the sunken lawn today as stump sprouts. Archaeological evidence suggests the southern end of the sunken

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lawn was impacted by mid-19th-century gardening activities. In addition, the south lawn was lowered to its present elevation and the banks altered in places to improve drainage in the mid-20th century when the lower level of the main house was remodeled.

11 North Tulip Poplar Grove, early 19th century, contributing site

A grove of tulip poplars is located within the curtilage, at the northeast corner of the 10-acre core. At least three original trees survive. A dendrochronology date of 1806 has been determined for one of these tulip poplars.

12 North Grove Ice House, 1826, contributing site

The remains of an ice house are located within the North Grove, consisting of a pit for storing ice that was built in January 1826 when Francis Eppes and his family lived at Poplar Forest. Archaeological excavations recorded fill accumulated in the ice house pit after it was abandoned in the late 19th century.

13 North Hill Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, ca. 1770, contributing site

Located in the northeast curtilage approximately 700 feet from Jefferson's retreat house, this archaeological site was found within a roughly 110x80 foot excavation area that is interpreted as the remains of a single short-term domestic site occupied by an enslaved African American household. Recovered artifacts indicate an occupation date from approximately 1770 to 1785, which includes the period when John Wayles owned Poplar Forest, providing evidence of one of the first cabin sites built and lived-in during the first decade of Poplar Forest Plantation.

14 Quarter Site Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, ca. 1790, contributing site

Located in the northeast curtilage approximately 600 feet from Jefferson's retreat house, this archaeological site was found within a roughly 80x100 foot excavation area, which contains evidence of three buildings built and lived in by enslaved African Americans between 1790 and 1812. Archaeological evidence includes a larger 25x15 foot duplex log cabin, which was divided into two equal-sized 12.5x15 foot rooms with evidence of a wooden chimney on each end. Evidence of two smaller log buildings measuring 13 foot and 18.5 foot square, respectively, were also found, along with a yard that includes the remains of at least three separate fence lines surrounding these log buildings and a nearby vegetable garden. The occupation of this site ended with the construction of a split-rail fence designed by Jefferson in 1812 to enclose what he referred to as the curtilage. The curtilage fence ran through the middle of this domestic site as part of the new formal landscape that took shape around Jefferson's retreat house.

15 Southeast Curtilage Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, early 19th century, contributing site

This is an archaeological site in the southeast curtilage that is believed to be the location of enslaved laborer housing. Preliminary analysis suggests an early 19th century occupation date.

16 Ornamental Plant Nursery, early 19th century, contributing site

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This archaeological site is the location of an ornamental plant nursery in the east curtilage. According to Jefferson's letters the nursery was located between two stables.

17 Outbuilding, late 18th century, contributing site

This is the archaeological remains of an outbuilding, which initial investigations suggest is a barn or stable that was part of Poplar Forest plantation prior to the construction of Jefferson's retreat house.

Extended Plantation Grounds, Jefferson-Eppes Period (1773-1828)

18 Jefferson Spring Road Trace, early 19th century, contributing structure

This archaeological site is believed to be the remains of a Jefferson-era road located near the western edge of the curtilage.

19 Jefferson Spring, 19th century, contributing site

This archaeological site is a spring depicted on multiple Jefferson-era maps which oral history suggests was the main source of drinking water for Jefferson's retreat house. Archaeological evidence suggests this spring was used by enslaved African Americans during the antebellum period.

20 Machine Branch Road Trace, 1810s, contributing structure

This archaeological site is the remains of a Jefferson-era road located along the bank of Machine Branch, which runs between Upper Field and Middle Field. This road was one of the primary routes for plantation movement, connecting the house to the threshing barn as well as public roads leading to Lynchburg and elsewhere.

21 Prize Barn, early 19th century, contributing site

This archaeological site is the location of a tobacco prize, a machine that was used to prize, or press, tobacco leaf into large wooden barrels known as hogsheads before shipment. The site is depicted on two Jefferson-era maps of the property that were created by 1801. These maps along with limited archaeological evidence has confirmed its location.

Plantation Core and Curtilage, Cobbs-Hutter Period (1828-1946)

22 Plantation Outbuilding, mid-19th century, contributing site

This archaeological site in the northwest curtilage (Site 32) is the location of at least one antebellum utilitarian outbuilding.

23 Plantation Outbuilding, mid-19th century, contributing site

This archaeological site in the northwest curtilage (Site 48) was identified during a survey based on the recovery of mid-19th century artifacts. Its proximity to other identified sites in the west core and curtilage suggests that it may be an outlying component of a nearby slave quarter or other outbuildings in use at this time.

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24 Carriage House, late 19th century, contributing site

This archaeological site is a potential carriage shed (Site 44), along the northwest portion of the gravel drive that circles around the north of the main house.

25 Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, mid-19th century, contributing site

This archaeological site in the west curtilage (Site 33) is believed to be the location of enslaved laborer housing. Preliminary analysis suggests a date range of ca. 1830-1860.

26 Granary/Barn, 1850s, contributing building

This standing building located in the curtilage approximately 390 feet west of the main house is a Hutter period wooden granary with a stone pier foundation. Lean-to sheds added on the sides in the 20th century have been removed. Dendrochronology shows that the building has hand-hewn log components dating to both the Jefferson and Cobbs/Hutter periods of ownership, indicating that it was partially built with wood salvaged from an earlier building.

27 Barn, 1896, contributing site

Documents and archaeological traces of this barn in the west core (Site 45) show that it was a three-bay, gable-front multi-purpose wooden barn with a hay loft. It replaced an animal barn that burned down in November 1894. During its nearly sixty-year life span this barn housed horses and cows, and stored hay and other farm-related materials.

28 Domestic Context, late 19th century, non-contributing site

This archaeological site (Site 13) is a late 19th- to early 20th-century building believed to be domestic in nature. Although the site was heavily disturbed in the late 20th century and early 21st century by the construction of parking lots, components of this site retain their vertical integrity.

29 Corn Crib, 1915, contributing building

This early 20th century corn crib joined the cluster of agricultural outbuildings in the west curtilage. It was later converted into a horse barn. In the 1990s it was converted into an archaeology laboratory and research library, and still serves those functions today.

30 Domestic Context, 19th century, non-contributing site

This archaeological site in the southwest curtilage (Site 6) is the location of a possible mid-19th century domestic building. More work is needed to narrow the date range and better understand the nature of this site.

31 Hothouse, 19th century, non-contributing site

This hothouse was added in the South Lawn by the Hutter family in the 19th century.

32 Abandoned Well, 19th century, non-contributing structure

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An abandoned well covered by a concrete cap was added to the south of the service wing in the mid-19th century.

33 Ice House, 1890s, non-contributing site

The second ice house at Poplar Forest is located on the South Lawn. It was filled in during the 1950s.

34 Pump House, 20th century, non-contributing site

This foundation of a pump house was part of a system of water pipes and holding tanks introduced during the Hutters family's ownership to provide separate supplies of water for the main house and the nearby tenant houses.

35 Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, ca. 1830s, contributing site

This archaeological site in the southeast core was a cabin inhabited by enslaved African American residents prior to the Civil War until emancipation.

36 Enslaved Laborer/Tenant House, 1857, contributing building

This building, known today as the 1857 Slave Dwelling, is a two-story common bond brick building with a single central chimney and two front entrance doors. Located 220 feet east of the retreat house, it was built to house enslaved African Americans, and post-Emancipation it continued to house African Americans or was used for storage. Originally constructed as a triplex, with three separate housing areas, it was later modified to a duplex in the mid-20th century. The two bays each have one window on the upper story west (front) face and one window on the upper story east (rear) face. The north face has one window in the center of each story. The south face has one window in the center of the upper story and two windows on the lower story. There are two lower level rooms and five upper level rooms, connected by a staircase in the southeast corner. This building was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1985-1986.

37 North Tenant House, 1857, contributing building

This two-story common bond brick building has one external chimney on each end. Located 220 feet east of the retreat house, it was built to house a white overseer and family, and post-Emancipation it continued to be inhabited by white farm managers and their families. The two bays each have one door on the lower story and one window on the upper story of the west (front) face. The east (rear) face has two windows on the upper story and one window on the lower story. The north and south faces have no windows. There are four lower level rooms and three upper level rooms, connected by a staircase in the center. It was documented by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1985-1986.

38 Storage shed, early 20th century, non-contributing building

This wood building from the later Hutter era was previously used as a garage for farm use and is currently used for storage.

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Extended Plantation Grounds, Cobbs-Hutter Period (1828-1946)

39 Spring House, Ridge Branch, 20th century, non-contributing structure

This structure is a cinderblock foundation with a low framed top covered with metal roofing. Three floor joists run inside the structure and the remains of floor boards are evident. A storage or compression tank is still present in the water.

40 Barn with silo, early 20th century, non-contributing site

A barn and silo were built in the southwest curtilage in the early 20th century. The concrete base of the silo remains.

Plantation Core and Curtilage, Watts-Corporation Period (1946-2023)

41 Rightmire Preservation Center, 1992, non-contributing building

This is a work area for restoration craftsmen and administrative offices for the Corporation. It is a raised building placed on wooden piers, to protect underlying archaeological remains.

42 Museum Shop, 1950s, non-contributing building

This garage built by the Watts family in the 1950s was renovated and converted into a museum shop during the Corporation period, and expanded in 2010.

43 Visitor Orientation Center, 2012, non-contributing building

This building was built between the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012 and provides a space to welcome visitors to the site. The 20th century smokehouse was formerly located in this vicinity.

44 Hands on History Pavilion, 2000, non-contributing building

This is an interpretive and educational space for school children and visitors.

45 Dog Kennel, 20th century, non-contributing site

This concrete surface located southeast of the main house is the remains of a dog kennel built during the Watts family's ownership.

46 Walled Flower Garden and Shed, 1950s, non-contributing building

This brick shed is used for storage and the garden area enclosed by a brick wall is an exhibit space for historic Jefferson-era fruits and vegetables, managed by the Master Gardeners of Lynchburg.

47 Pool (Filled In), 1950s, non-contributing site

This mid-20th-century pool in the South Lawn was filled in during the 1970s.

48 Pole Barn, 1950s, non-contributing building

The pole barn is currently used for storage. It was originally used to house farm-related equipment.

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Extended Plantation Grounds, Watts-Corporation Period (1946-2023)

49 Spring House, Jefferson Spring, 20th century, non-contributing structure

This structure is a concrete spring box and associated reservoir/pumphouse located by Jefferson's Spring outside of the west curtilage when indoor plumbing was installed in the main house during renovations that took place after the Watts family bought Poplar Forest.

50 Dairy Barn Complex, 1950s, non-contributing site

This archaeological site is a dairy barn complex outside the curtilage to the southwest. It has been impacted by the construction of a condominium community as well as a swimming pool and tennis court in the 1970s and 1980s.

51 Golf Course, 1970s, non-contributing structure

This nine-hole golf course and club house lies within the agricultural fields in the northwest of the Poplar Forest plantation.

52 Camp Ruthers, 1923, non-contributing site and buildings

The former Camp Ruthers property was acquired by the Corporation in 1985, after it was operated for over 60 years as a summer camp by the Lynchburg Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). It includes 11 non-contributing resources: a lodge; detached kitchen; 4 cinderblock cabins; an office and storage space; a storage shed; a filled-in pool; a cinderblock building; and a warehouse. The property has not been formally assessed with regard to its potential significance for the National Register of Historic Places, but the 11 resources are significant for their historical associations with Camp Ruthers and might contribute to a Camp Ruthers National Register designation.

Additional Archaeological Potential at Poplar Forest

The archaeological sites located within the amended boundary for Poplar Forest have significant potential to contribute further information about the period of significance. These include sites already entered into the inventory and others that have yet to be identified. Even though most of the land around the main house has been subjected to plow-based agriculture in the past, investigations since the 1980s demonstrate that archaeological features often remain intact beneath the plowzone, and continue to be a source of great potential. Several enslaved laborer housing areas have been identified, which are listed in the above inventory, but more are known to have existed based on historical documentation. The Wayles period has only begun to be archaeologically identified, with only the North Hill Site concretely dating to the period before 1773. Within the core and curtilage, there is historical documentation of two Jefferson period stables (referred to as "old" and "new" stables in Jefferson's correspondence), gardens, orchards, roads, slave quarters and other outbuildings that have yet to be identified

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archaeologically. Outside of the curtilage, there is documentation of at least five tobacco houses, a threshing barn, and a blacksmith's shop. Additional outbuildings for the Cobbs-Hutter period are known to have existed from historic photographs, documents, and oral history, with archaeological remains still to be discovered.

The Native American presence has been recorded throughout the Poplar Forest property. Along with numerous sites that have been heavily affected by centuries of agricultural plowing, several sites contain intact archaeological features. Archaeological evidence spans from the Early Archaic Period to the Late Woodland Period. The present-day Monacan Indian Nation and their ancestors are historically connected to these archaeological remains found at Poplar Forest.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

AGRICULTURE

ARCHITECTURE

ETHNIC HERITAGE: BLACK

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT

ARCHEOLOGY: HISTORIC – NON-ABORIGINAL

Period of Significance

1764 - 1946

Significant Dates

1773

1781

1806

1828

1845

1864

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Jefferson, Thomas

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Jefferson, Thomas, architect and builder

Chisolm, Hugh, bricklayer and plasterer

Hemmings, John, enslaved master joiner

Hemings, Beverley, enslaved joiner

Hemings, Eston, enslaved joiner

Hemings, Madison, enslaved joiner

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Perry, John, carpenter
Perry, Reuben, carpenter/joiner
Antrim, Joseph, plasterer
Barry, Richard, painter and glazier
Chisolm, John, bricklayer and plasterer
Coffee, William, sculptor
Colbert, Burwell, enslaved painter and glazier
Gorman, John, stonemason
Hubbard, Phil, enslaved plasterer, mortar maker, and excavator
Richardson, John, plasterer

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The original NRHP nomination form approved in 1969 did not explicitly state the National Register Criteria for Eligibility, nor did it identify the areas of significance, since these were not required on the nomination form used at that time. Reviewing the brief Statement of Significance provided on the 1969 listing, the authors make an argument that aligns in a general sense with Criteria B, because Jefferson owned Poplar Forest and personally designed the retreat house, and Criteria C, in relation to the architectural features of the house and some aspects of the ornamental landscape. As well, the period of significance was indicated as “19th century” without clearly defined start and end dates.

This section expands upon the original nomination justifications and specifies the areas of significance. First, the period of significance for this additional documentation is expanded to the period from 1764 to 1946, encompassing three main ownership periods: (Wayles [1764-1773]; Jefferson/Eppes [1773-1828]; and Cobb-Hutter [1828-1946]). These more effectively represent the existing resources at the property. The 1764 start date reflects the earliest known historical documentation of occupation and associated agricultural activities, which began during the period when John Wayles, Thomas Jefferson’s father-in-law, owned Poplar Forest. This period correlates with evidence from the North Hill archaeological site, the location of a cabin where enslaved African Americans lived, which was discovered on the current Poplar Forest property in the 1990s. The Cobbs-Hutter family ownership period included plantation-based agricultural practices prior to Emancipation and the retention of ornamental landscapes, buildings, and structures associated with the Jefferson-era retreat landscape and plantation period that continued into the 20th century. The 1946 end date reflects the end of the Hutter family’s tenure, as the Watts renovated the retreat house, and removed trees planted along the banks of the south lawn and possibly fence lines that better mirrored the original Jefferson era landscape. The amended documentation explains six Areas of Significance, within all four National Register Criteria, that support the property’s national significance. For Criterion A, the Agriculture area has been defined based on the innovative agricultural practices under the Jefferson and Hutter periods, and the African American Ethnic Heritage area has been defined based on the archaeological and

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documentary evidence of the enslaved African Americans at Poplar Forest during the Wayles/Jefferson and Hutter periods. For Criterion B, Politics and Government explains how Poplar Forest reflects the Enlightenment principles that underpin Thomas Jefferson's involvement in local, national, and international politics during his lifetime, as a colonial subject of Great Britain and later a citizen of the United States of America. For Criterion C, the Architecture and Landscape Architecture areas discuss the significance of the retreat house and wing, which have seen intensive study during the restoration process since the 1980s, and the ornamental landscape designed by Jefferson in the core and curtilage. For Criterion D, the Archaeology, Historic Non-Aboriginal area summarizes the results of more than 35 years of archaeological investigations at Poplar Forest, which offer an outstanding material record of a plantation and farm as well as a Jeffersonian ornamental landscape in central Virginia beginning in the late-18th century.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Construction and Ownership of Poplar Forest

The Poplar Forest property was first legally defined by a patent in 1745 that granted William Stith "...leave to join two Tracts of Land at the Poplar Forest in the said County of Albemarle the one Containing 1172 Acres and the other 939 and to take in the land round his Bounds so as to make up the Quantity four thousand Acres passing the Ridge between the Waters of James River and Roanok all to be taken into one inclusive Patent..."² A survey that documented Stith's property resulted in the first map of Poplar Forest in 1749, which outlined Stith's 4,000-acre tract. The map does not illustrate buildings or structures and it is very doubtful that any existed at this early date, since Poplar Forest was part of Stith's holdings in central and western Virginia intended for land speculation. Poplar Forest passed from Stith to his daughter, Elizabeth [Stith] Pasteur, upon his death in 1755.³ Pasteur sold her property to Colonel Peter Randolph by the early 1760s, who in turn sold it to John Wayles in 1764.⁴ Wayles was a land speculator, and soon after acquiring the 4,000 acre Poplar Forest tract, he enlarged the holding by patenting an additional 800 acres and purchasing three adjoining properties.⁵ Agricultural production reliant upon an enslaved labor force began at Poplar Forest soon after Wayles bought the property, according to a 1766 Bedford County court order which directs the "Hands at Wayles quarter" to assist with nearby roadwork.⁶ While this does not specify whether these enslaved laborers were living at Poplar Forest or Wayles's nearby Judith's Creek plantation, it is likely the order refers to people living at Poplar Forest, since they are mentioned in conjunction with others who were held by Bob Clark and Thomas Moorman, both of whom owned land adjacent to Poplar Forest.

² Council of Virginia, June 13, 1745. See also Chambers 1993:2.

³ Thomas Jefferson to William Radford, November 30, 1822.

⁴ Marmon 1991a:6-8; Heath and Gary 2012:2.

⁵ Betts 1953:32.

⁶ Bedford County Order Book 3:240.

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The presence enslaved people at Poplar Forest is further confirmed in September 1770, when a court order specifically exempted them from taking part in roadwork nearby in Bedford County.⁷

John Wayles' daughter, Martha Wayles Skelton, married Thomas Jefferson in 1772. When her father died on May 28, 1773, Martha and her husband inherited almost 7,000 acres of land in Bedford County and 135 enslaved people from Wayles' estate.⁸ In a codicil to Wayles' will, drafted three months prior to his death, he stipulated to "have new quarters settled at Saml James's and in Bedford to increase the crops."⁹ This included the creation of two quarter farms at Poplar Forest. One of these quarter farms was at times referred to by Jefferson as the "Old Plantation" and was situated between the north and south branches of Tomahawk Creek. The second was a 1,000-acre tract of land called "Wingos" after John Wingo who Jefferson hired to serve as the quarter farm's overseer from 1773 to 1776.¹⁰ In 1790, Jefferson granted the Wingos tract to his daughter and her husband Thomas Mann Randolph.¹¹ Wingos is located outside of the boundaries described in this revised listing.

Jefferson only made two visits to his Bedford holdings before 1800. He first visited the property in 1773 to assess the land and create a roster of enslaved workers, but like Wayles, he remained absent while overseers managed the estate. Jefferson made his second visit in 1781, when British troops attempted to arrest Jefferson at his home at Monticello, while he was serving his final days as Governor of Virginia. He and his wife Martha, their two young daughters Martha and Maria, and friend William Short escaped and took refuge at Poplar Forest from June 14 until late July 1781. In June, Jefferson fell from his horse and was injured.¹² However his injuries appear to have been relatively minor as he was still able to spend much of his time at Poplar Forest compiling his notes into the manuscript for what would become his only published book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*.¹³

In the months following this visit, Jefferson began to consider building a home at Poplar Forest, and drew a plan for the building and surrounding grounds.¹⁴ In February of 1782, Jefferson sent an enslaved man named Jupiter to Poplar Forest with a wagonload of fruit trees and strawberry plants, perhaps intended to form the basis of an orchard near the proposed dwelling.¹⁵ However, in early September, his wife Martha died, leaving Jefferson distraught and he abandoned these original plans for his Bedford estate. By year's end, he had accepted an appointment as peace commissioner to Europe and, though that mission fell through, he spent the next six years abroad

⁷ Bedford County Order Book 3:685.

⁸ Chambers 1993:4.

⁹ Charles City County Deeds and Wills 1766-1774:461.

¹⁰ Heath et al. 2015:4.

¹¹ Heath 2015 et al.:11.

¹² Marmon 1991a:19-21.

¹³ Chambers 1993:8.

¹⁴ Wenger 1997.

¹⁵ Chambers 1993:12.

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in public service. This period culminated in his appointment as United States Minister to France from 1785 to 1789.¹⁶

Jefferson did not return to Poplar Forest until the fall of 1800, when he spent that summer and autumn in Virginia while serving as Vice President.¹⁷ His granddaughter, Ellen Randolph Coolidge, attributed the subsequent development of Poplar Forest as a retreat to Jefferson's experiences when he visited the property around this time. As she later recounted,

“It was towards the close of his Presidency that Mr. Jefferson began to think seriously of building a house at Poplar Forest. But the first idea was conceived much sooner, and he used to say from his having been confined there for three days, in one of the two rooms of an overseer's house.... The three days among the overseer's dogs and children... suggested a more convenient resort from long rain storms, and an uninterrupted retreat for the solitary study of high problems.”¹⁸

Soon after his next visit in the summer of 1805, Jefferson sent his master mason, Hugh Chisolm, to begin preparing the ground for construction in September 1805, which continued into 1806. Chisolm and a crew of enslaved and free workmen prepared the site. This included enslaved laborers digging the lower level and the wine cellar, and archaeological research suggests the soil from these excavations was used to mark the bases of the two earthen mounds that flanked the house to the east and west.¹⁹ Surviving correspondence suggest the house foundation was set during the summer of 1806, with Jefferson making a special trip to Poplar Forest at Chisolm's request to help personally supervise the laying of the octagonal foundation in August of that year, while the wine cellar foundation stones were completed the following year in June 1807.²⁰ By 1808, a team of enslaved laborers, led by Phil Hubbard, had begun excavating the south lawn, adding soil removed during this process to create the bulk of each mound.²¹ By 1809, the shell of the house was completed enough for Jefferson to start using the retreat. From 1809 until his death in 1826, Jefferson directed the completion of the house and ornamental landscape. Construction of four rooms in a service wing known as the Wing of Offices took place in 1814.²²

While house construction was ongoing, ornamental grounds began to be added around the house. An extensive field system was designed to grow tobacco as well as a rotation of crops. A map from 1809 depicts a series of internal roads that connected portions of the plantation. In addition, Jefferson began to establish a curtilage around the retreat house in December of 1812. Depicted on Colonel Joseph Slaughter's 1813 map, the curtilage was bounded by a split-rail fence and enclosed an area that included slave quarters, orchards, gardens, and stables designed to provide support for the house as well as the agricultural fields. A further interior division was made

¹⁶ Malone 1981.

¹⁷ Marmon 1991a:21-22.

¹⁸ Randall 1858:341.

¹⁹ Chambers 1993:41. Trussell 2000:45-49

²⁰ Chambers 1993:36; Hugh Chisolm to Thomas Jefferson, 1 June 1807.

²¹ Chambers 1993:41; Trussell 2000:45.

²² Chambers 1993:81-84.

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through the creation of a 10-acre square that enclosed the retreat house. This square was bounded by a fence which Jefferson refers to in 1814 when he instructs an overseer to ensure that it is completely mended in order to keep animals out of the ornamental grounds.²³ In these same instructions Jefferson asks that a new fence be constructed between the southwest corner of the 10-acre yard fence and the next fence to the west, which is presumably the curtilage fence. Jefferson instructs that the enclosed lot these fences would create should be sowed with oats and clover in order to prepare it for use as an orchard.

From 1810 until 1823 Jefferson visited Poplar Forest several times a year, for stays that would last from days to weeks at a time. His granddaughters often accompanied him.²⁴ By 1821, Jefferson relinquished most of his involvement in managing Poplar Forest to his grandson, Thomas Jefferson Randolph.²⁵ Two years later, another grandson, Francis Eppes, took up residence at the property with his bride Mary Elizabeth.²⁶ At his death in 1826, Jefferson bequeathed 1,074 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres of the Poplar Forest property to Eppes, and left the remainder to Randolph. Randolph, as the executor of the will, divided the property and sold it throughout 1827 and 1828 along with Jefferson's remaining enslaved men, women, and children to cover his grandfather's outstanding debts.²⁷ In 1828, Eppes sold his own portion of Poplar Forest, which included the retreat house, to local plantation owner William Cobbs and moved to Florida.²⁸

William Cobbs purchased the retreat house and the surrounding 1,074 acres for \$4,925 in 1828. Little is known about the activities of the plantation during the first decade of his tenure. Cobbs's grandson later stated that his grandfather's health had been "greatly impaired from a blow to the head" after being thrown from a horse. Cobbs' daughter Emily (Emma) married Edward S. Hutter on October 7, 1840.²⁹ Hutter assumed management of Poplar Forest in 1842, resigning from his position as a passed midshipman with the US Navy two years later.³⁰ His farm journal from 1844 to 1854 documents daily activities at Poplar Forest during these years. Hutter retained some aspects of Jefferson land use patterns and outbuildings, while some new buildings and structures along with agricultural practices were introduced under his management.

A fire destroyed the roof and interior woodwork of the main house in 1845. About this time, much of the service wing was disassembled, incorporating some of the brick and stone walls into the base of a detached kitchen and smokehouse. The need to repair the main house may have provided the impetus for a spate of construction that occurred throughout the plantation during the 1840s and 1850s. Several new buildings were constructed, and a number of earlier buildings were torn down and repurposed to meet the needs of the main house and the broader plantation

²³ Instructions for Poplar Forest Management, November 11, 1814.

²⁴ Heath and Gary 2012:5-6.

²⁵ Chambers 1993:137.

²⁶ Heath and Gary 2012:6.

²⁷ Chambers 1993:167-168.

²⁸ Chambers 1993:174-177.

²⁹ Chambers 1993:177.

³⁰ Chambers 1993:178, Heller 1920:35.

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community.³¹ The two-story retreat home main house was redesigned to become a three-story family dwelling.³² East of the house, two brick dwellings were built in 1857. Identified today as the North Tenant House and the 1857 Slave Dwelling, oral history as well as the architectural construction and placement of these buildings suggests they housed a white overseer and enslaved African Americans, respectively. In the 1850s, Edward Hutter oversaw construction of a granary, which dendrochronology shows was composed in part of reused timbers from a Jefferson period building.³³ Little is known about how the west curtilage was used under the ownership of Jefferson, Francis Eppes, and William Cobbs.³⁴ However, the construction of this new barn in the 1850s began a gradual reorientation of the plantation, so that the concentration of outbuildings and enslaved domestic areas that had been located in the east curtilage during Jefferson's time, started to shift to the west core and curtilage during the Hutter period.

During the Cobbs-Hutter period, train tracks were also laid through this part of central Virginia. Records of the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad note compensating William Cobbs \$165 for use of his land to lay new track in 1850.³⁵ The payment records refer to "damages sustained by him on his land in Bedford," implying that at least part of the plantation landscape was affected by the laying of the rail line. A rail station, Forest Depot, was also built on land that had once been part of Jefferson's estate.

The occupants of Poplar Forest had a brief but dramatic brush with the Civil War in June 1864, as Federal troops led by Major General David Hunter burned the Forest Depot train station and searched Poplar Forest for supplies. Oral traditions recall the Union troops stealing livestock and carrying off "everything with life except of about 10 faithful negroes out of 48 slaves."³⁶ After the Civil War, Poplar Forest continued to be run by the Hutter family using tenants. Many of the formerly enslaved people that had lived at Poplar Forest are believed to have left the area, but some families remained working on the property post-Emancipation and continued to live in the vicinity.³⁷ Edward Hutter briefly tried using German immigrant laborers around 1870, but quickly returned to employing local tenant farmers.³⁸

Poplar Forest was divided among Edward Hutter's children upon his death in 1875. The property fell on hard times during this period, and following the death of Marian Cobbs in 1877, the last of the Hutter children moved away in the early 1880s.³⁹ At this time, Poplar Forest became a leased tenant farm, but little is known about those who lived and labored on the property. The Hutter children initiated a series of land sales to generate income in the 1880s. Christian Sixtus Hutter, youngest of Edward and Emma's children, began to purchase tracts from his siblings in

³¹ Proebsting 2012:62-63; Proebsting and Lee 2013:20.

³² Chambers 1993:183-191.

³³ Druckenbrod 2017; Proebsting and Lee 2013:21; Strutt and Trussell 1998.

³⁴ Proebsting and Lee 2013:20.

³⁵ Bedford County Deed Book, May 1851, No. 35:141.

³⁶ Notes, Christian S. Hutter, November 10, 1909.

³⁷ Marmon 1991c:106.

³⁸ Notes, Christian S. Hutter, November 10, 1909.

³⁹ Chambers 1993:194-195; Proebsting and Lee 2013:21.

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1885, adding them to his own inherited portion. In 1888, Christian bought 150 acres from his sister's husband that included the main house, which he began using as a summer home the next year.⁴⁰ Several outbuildings were added west of the house under Christian Hutter, while tenant farming continued on the land around the main house until the 1940s. Hutter continued to buy and sell small land parcels throughout his ownership. Sales of Poplar Forest land in the 1890s and early 1900s is truly labyrinthine, with records of no fewer than 37 property transactions have been found for the years 1890-1923. This includes the sale of tracts of land by Christian Hutter to neighbors as well as the repurchase of tracts from the original property back from relatives. In 1914, he sold a small lot to Joseph Dunn, who later sold this land to establish the YWCA Camp Ruthers on the northeastern section of the property. Later owner James Watts added 12 acres to this lot in 1972.⁴¹ Evidence of the local impact of Depression-era relief programs is also present. Christian Hutter allowed the City of Lynchburg to cut wood on the property between 1938 and 1946.⁴² Oral history also recalls CCC workers placing woven wire fences and wooden fence posts down both sides of the former gravel entrance road.⁴³

During the first two years, Camp Ruthers was open on the weekends for girls who were in wage work, mainly for the city's industrial section, while younger grade school girls used the camp on weekdays. A pool was built in 1924. A fire destroyed the camp that winter, but the community raised \$7,000 to rebuild the camp in time to open for the 1925 season. A rustic log lodge replaced the original frame house. More buildings were added or repurposed after World War II including a Craft House, the Director's Cabin, tennis courts and sleeping cabins. The camp began the process of racial integration for campers in 1968. In 1972, the YWCA purchased an additional 27 acres from James Watts, the current owner of Poplar Forest. They then added a Junior Olympic sized pool and a chapel. In 1977 the YWCA could no longer support Camp Ruthers as a residential camp and then began a "Family Recreation Center" which provided access to swimming, tennis, jogging trails, hiking trails, volleyball and picnic areas. Finally, the YWCA was unable to afford the upkeep and a caretaker to supervise the property, before it was sold to the Corporation in 1985. The site has been surveyed by Poplar Forest archaeologists and the historical documents and artifacts are maintained by the Corporation.

The Cobbs-Hutter family descendants owned Poplar Forest for 118 years before selling the property in 1946 to James O. Watts. The Watts family once again changed the farming practices and agricultural focus of Poplar Forest. A commercial dairy herd was maintained on the property and sheep were reintroduced as a significant type of livestock.⁴⁴ Large tracts of land on the southern parts of the property were sold to housing developers in the late 1960s and 1970s. Eventually, Watts retained only 50 acres surrounding the Main House. The Watts family hired Phelps Barnum, an architect from New York City, to restore the parlor in a Jefferson style and to modernize the entire house with updated mechanical systems and open up eight bricked-up

⁴⁰ Chambers 1993:195.

⁴¹ For more detail on property transactions between 1877 and 1946, see Marmon (1991b:93-107).

⁴² Marmon 1991b:107.

⁴³ Barger 2002.

⁴⁴ Chambers 1993:207.

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windows. They installed a swimming pool, bathhouse, and walled rose garden, and graded the South Lawn to divert water away from the house.⁴⁵ The Watts family lived full-time at Poplar Forest until 1979. They sold it to Dr. James Johnson of North Carolina in 1980. Dr. Johnson never lived in the house, and in December of 1983, he sold the house and 50 acres of property to the private non-profit Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest. The Corporation rescued Jefferson's endangered retreat and plantation for the cultural and educational benefit of the public, now and for future generations. In January 1984 the Corporation succeeded in taking title to the remaining 50-acre parcel of land at the Jefferson-era plantation core including the retreat house and privies. Poplar Forest opened to the public in 1986 in its pre-restoration stage, while fundraising efforts commenced to begin the state-of-the-art restoration. The property gradually increased in size as the Corporation acquired more land. The boundaries in this listing represent the current state as of 2024.

Criterion A – Agriculture

Poplar Forest preserves an archaeological, documentary, and oral historical record of agricultural and horticultural activities from the establishment of the plantation in the 1760s through the 20th century. Field boundaries that exist today represents many of the same boundaries originally laid out during Jefferson's ownership and cultivated by enslaved African American laborers. This agricultural landscape was originally dominated by tobacco, which was established as the primary cash crop. During Jefferson's lifetime, in addition to tobacco, fields were reorganized with a rotation of crops that was introduced in an effort to revive worn-out fields. This system of mixed-grain agriculture introduced wheat as a primary cash crop, and continued to be reliant upon enslaved laborers directed by overseers who followed Jefferson's written and verbal instructions. This implementation of a new system of mixed-grain agriculture is depicted on a map watermarked 1809, which shows six agricultural fields, which include, McDaniel's Field, Ridge Field, Upper Field, Middle Field, and Lower Field. Archaeological and environmental evidence of these agricultural activities have been found preserved in quarter sites and agricultural outbuildings as well as areas located along field boundaries and beneath landscape features related to Jefferson's retreat house, including the mounds and carriage turnaround.

Jefferson's keen interest in agriculture is well-documented and published in various collections of his writings, including his farm book, garden book, Notes on the State of Virginia, scientific papers, political philosophies, and many other letters of correspondence.⁴⁶ Crops and livestock produced at Poplar Forest were often used to help supply Monticello, with enslaved laborers assigned to transport agricultural produce and livestock between the properties. Among other things, agricultural products at Poplar Forest were also sold to help finance Jefferson's debts. Tobacco was packed into hogsheads that were delivered to Lynchburg and then shipped down the James River to Richmond. Along with the location of tobacco drying barns, several historic maps indicate an area dedicated to tobacco prizing, one of the last steps in tobacco cultivation, which is the process of using weights and levers to gently press dried tobacco leaves into

⁴⁵ Chambers 1993:200-207; Heath and Gary 2012:8-9.

⁴⁶ For examples, see Jefferson 1787, Betts 1944, and Betts 1953.

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hogshead barrels for shipment.⁴⁷ Jefferson expressed his reluctance at being solely reliant on growing tobacco as a cash crop. At Poplar Forest he introduced a more diverse rotation, with wheat being cultivated along with crops such as oats, timothy, clover, and cowpeas that were designed to ameliorate depleted soils.⁴⁸ To process the wheat crop, a threshing barn was established, as shown on several historic maps of Jefferson's plantation fields. In addition to plantation-based agriculture, archaeological evidence of horticultural activities has also been uncovered within the ornamental landscape surrounding Jefferson's retreat house. These sites include an early 19th century ornamental plant nursery located east of Jefferson's octagonal retreat has been documented. In addition, the archaeological remains of numerous ornamental plantings have been found with the 10-acre ornamental grounds.

Jefferson's grandson Francis Eppes briefly managed Poplar Forest from 1823 until he sold 1828, providing a brief record of these activities in his farm book and other correspondence. Following the purchase of the plantation by William Cobbs, under the management of his son-in-law Edward Hutter in the 1840s, Poplar Forest remained an active plantation until the Civil War. His daily Memoranda Book from 1844 to 1854 records that some Jefferson-era agricultural production was retained, while other innovations were introduced. Hutter made a brief attempt to resume tobacco production in the early 1850s. This also connects with Hutter's desire to implement a sophisticated new farming system, which employed wheat as the main cash crop. These efforts are shown by evidence found in Hutter's journal which records an exhausting routine of ditching, grubbing, plowing, harrowing, and fertilizing where enslaved African American laborers were forced to rebuild the fields of the plantation.⁴⁹ Today, a granary that was built in the 1850s west of the main house still stands as a testament to these activities. This wooden building includes significant portions of its original form and materials, which dendrochronology has revealed includes wooden sills and other elements procured in the 1850s as well as timbers originally felled in 1805, that were most likely reused from an earlier Jefferson era outbuilding. First under Edward Hutter, and later after 1888 under his son Christian, there was a reorientation of the landscape so that the core of agricultural activities began to shift west of the main house. In addition to the granary and a corn crib, both of which still stand today, this complex included a variety of other structures, including a barn for animals and hay, a smokehouse for curing meat, and several other outbuildings used for other agricultural activities. During the postbellum period and into the mid-20th century, tenant farmers conducted most of the agricultural activity at Poplar Forest, including the residents of the two standing brick tenant houses. Details related to this work that took place during this period are preserved in oral histories, historic photographs, maps, written correspondence, and a 1935 Farm Book.⁵⁰

Criterion A – African American Ethnic Heritage

From the establishment of the plantation in the 1760s until Emancipation, enslaved African Americans formed the backbone of Poplar Forest plantation. The earliest period of enslaved

⁴⁷ Giese 2016:38-43.

⁴⁸ Proebsting 2012:54.

⁴⁹ Hutter Farm Journal 1844-1854; Proebsting 2012:61-62.

⁵⁰ Crist 1935.

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labor at the Poplar Forest begins soon after John Wayles' purchase of the property in 1764. Among the first residences built and inhabited by enslaved African Americans during this period is the North Hill Site, which is located on Poplar Forest's property. Jefferson created the first of many lists of Poplar Forest slaves in his Farm Book in January 1774.⁵¹ In this list, Jefferson recorded a single family living in this portion of Poplar Forest, noting that Will and his 26-year-old wife Bess worked as "laborers in the ground." Six-year-old Hall, their eldest child, probably spent his days looking after his sisters Dilcey and Suckey, aged four and two. The only other enslaved person living on that portion of the property was the blacksmith, Billy.⁵² Jefferson then nearly tripled the population of Poplar Forest and the adjacent Wingos tracts when he reorganized Wayles' holdings by sending 17 or 18 individuals to the property in 1774.⁵³ Jefferson continued to send enslaved families and individuals from his other properties, which resulted in Poplar Forest becoming home to more than 90 enslaved African Americans by 1819.⁵⁴ In total, at least 230 enslaved men, women, and children lived at Poplar Forest between 1773 and 1826 during the Jefferson and Eppes ownership periods. In addition to names, additional information related to their age, family connections, occupations, and households has been gathered about these individuals from the details included in Jefferson's farm journal and personal correspondence. In addition to those recorded at Poplar Forest, a number of enslaved people who lived at Jefferson's main residence of Monticello also traveled back and forth, along with crops, livestock, and other materials that circulated between the properties. A great deal of information about these individuals and their families has been gathered through decades of in-depth research and outreach, including ongoing work lead by members of Monticello's Getting Word Project.

After the house's architectural shell was completed by enslaved and free laborers in 1809, members of the Hemings family completed much of the highly-skilled joinery work for the exterior and interior of the house. This work was led by John Hemmings (his spelling) who was at that time the enslaved master joiner at Monticello. He and his nephew apprentices, Beverley, Eston, and Madison Hemings (their spelling) worked for ten years completing Poplar Forest. The young Hemings men were Jefferson's bi-racial sons by Sally Hemings. John Hemings could read and write, and his frequent correspondence with Jefferson provides extraordinary insight to Jefferson's architectural design as well as the building process.⁵⁵ The process of architectural restoration and surviving architectural details found at Poplar Forest speak to the high-level skill and craftsmanship displayed by John Hemings and his apprentices. This includes two surviving walnut doors as well as the remaining original cornices for the east and west privies. The surviving and archaeological evidence of the brickwork, mounds, sunken lawn, ornamental plantings, Wing of Offices, and carriage turnaround associated with the main house also speak to the contributions and activities of African Americans surrounding the creation of Jefferson's retreat. Subtler forms of evidence of the contributions by enslaved African Americans who worked on the retreat house include remnants of paint, plaster, and other original elements that

⁵¹ Betts 1953:7.

⁵² Heath 1999:10.

⁵³ Betts 1953:16; Heath 1999:11.

⁵⁴ Heath 2012:113-114.

⁵⁵ McDonald 2023:130-139.

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are preserved and visible in places in the structure today, alongside those features that have been restored. In addition, extensive evidence of daily life of African Americans at Poplar Forest has been found in the Wing of Office where Hannah, Jefferson's enslaved cook, and others worked to prepare food while Jefferson was in residence. Insight into Hannah's life as well as those who worked with her in these service rooms are found through numerous archaeological features and artifacts recovered from this site, with additional information gleaned from Jefferson's written correspondence.⁵⁶ Among these surviving documents includes a remarkable letter written by Hannah to Jefferson in 1818, which shows she could read and write during a time when this opportunity was often forbidden to enslaved people living in Virginia, and provides valuable insights into her life.⁵⁷

As noted in the inventory, Poplar Forest preserves an archaeological record of the African American inhabitants of the plantation in a succession of sites that spans the full history of the plantation from the 1760s until Emancipation. In addition to the archaeological evidence associated with work spaces, such as the Wing of Offices and the Hutter era detached kitchen and smokehouse built to replace those from the Wing in the 1840s, archaeologists have found a number of housing areas associated with the history of the plantation. This includes the archaeological remains of wooden cabins dating to the Wayles, Jefferson, and Cobbs-Hutter periods as well as a standing brick building constructed in 1857 to hold three separate households.⁵⁸ During the Cobbs-Hutter Period, at least 87 men, women, and children were enslaved at Poplar Forest. This included roughly 40 enslaved people who were held by Hutter at the outset of the Civil War. After Emancipation during the Hutter and Watts periods, African American families continued to live and work on the Poplar Forest as property caretakers and laborers, some of whom resided in the 1857 Slave Dwelling until the early 20th century.

Over the past several decades, the interpretation of Virginia plantations has become increasingly aligned with providing visitors with a more comprehensive account of the past. This applies to African American communities who lived and labored under slavery, as well as the post-Emancipation era when institutionalized racism and segregation continued to shape everyday life. Scholars have made great strides toward understanding the diversity of plantation communities by documenting extant housing of enslaved and free African Americans, studying archaeological remains associated with the enslaved, and drawing together written and oral histories associated with African American communities. This includes groundbreaking work by Poplar Forest's archaeological department in the 1990s under the direction of Dr. Barbara Heath that recovered evidence of three log slave cabins and the surrounding yard space at the Quarter Site, highlighted in an outdoor exhibit that opened in 2022.⁵⁹ Poplar Forest also provides a unique opportunity to tell the story of emancipation, including the liberation of enslaved individuals by Union troops in 1864, and to share the history of African Americans living in this portion of Virginia post-Emancipation through the Jim Crow era.

⁵⁶ Kelso et al. 1990; Kelso et al. 1991.

⁵⁷ Hannah to Thomas Jefferson, November 15, 1818.

⁵⁸ For a summary of many of these archaeological investigations, see Heath and Gary 2012.

⁵⁹ Heath 1999.

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A primary focus at Poplar Forest since its founding in 1983 has been the restoration of Thomas Jefferson's retreat home and ornamental landscape. Since its inception in 1989, the Archaeology Department has also been dedicated to bringing the story of the plantation's enslaved community to light, as part of the Corporation's mission to "tell the stories of the free and the enslaved people who lived and worked at Poplar Forest."⁶⁰ Poplar Forest has made great strides as an organization to actively engage in public history and archaeology with members of the local African American community. This includes providing a forum for discussions with leading scholars and local citizens about the history and legacy of topics related to slavery, race, and democracy in America; interpretive programs designed to give voice to historically underrepresented groups; and developing new exhibits and events created in collaboration with the local African American community that share the history of slavery at Poplar Forest.

Criterion B – Politics and Government

Poplar Forest was a plantation owned by Thomas Jefferson from 1773 until his death in July 1826. He maintained an active career in politics throughout much of this time. Jefferson served as a delegate to the Virginia House of Burgesses (1769-1775), the Continental Congress (1775-1776), and the Virginia House of Delegates (1776-1779), ultimately being elected as Governor of Virginia (1779-1781). Following the American War of Independence, he served his nation as a member of Congress (1783), Minister to France (1785-1789), Secretary of State (1790-1793), and Vice President (1796-1800), before becoming the third President of the United States (1801-1809). Poplar Forest was his retreat home after his retirement from politics.

Poplar Forest is a manifestation of Enlightenment ideals that were current in Jefferson's lifetime. While serving as President, Jefferson oversaw construction of the White House which was incomplete when he arrived in 1800, while he managed construction projects at Monticello and Poplar Forest from afar, as he resided in Washington DC. He managed to travel to Bedford County in August 1806, to aid Hugh Chisolm in ensuring that the proper angles were being used to lay bricks for the octagonal house foundation.⁶¹ As his retirement neared and his public service reached its end, the completion of Poplar Forest as a retreat increased in importance and attracted more of his attention. From 1809 when the shell of the house was completed, timed for Jefferson's retirement that year, until his last visit in 1823, he came to Poplar Forest several times a year. Upon his death, Jefferson's grandsons, Thomas Jefferson Randolph and Francis Eppes, inherited the Bedford County properties. Poplar Forest is the missing chapter of Jefferson's life in retirement. In addition, the plantation and the products generated by its enslaved labor force provided an income source as well as a legacy for his heirs.

Thomas Jefferson was a politician influenced by the Enlightenment ideals of the 18th century, including individual liberty, utility, sociability, rigorous scientific and philosophical discourse, and neoclassical inspiration in art, politics, and education. Several hints at the incorporation of these ideals can be found at Poplar Forest. The most prominent example is Jefferson's incorporation of mathematical precision, symmetry, and classical elements into the designs of the

⁶⁰ Board of Directors 2022.

⁶¹ Chambers 1993:36.

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built landscape and the architecture of Poplar Forest (see Criterion C – Architecture). The inclusion of light, as a metaphor for illumination of the mind, was a popular element of Enlightenment architecture. At Poplar Forest, the skylight in the cube-shaped dining room and the windows lining the octagonal rooms allowed for plenty of light. Any visitor who missed Apollo, god of the sun, adorning the entablature of the dining room, would not have escaped the library in the parlor filled with books by Enlightenment philosophers such as Voltaire, Locke, Hume, and the Comte de Buffon.

Jefferson’s first extended time at Poplar Forest took place in 1781, while spending over a month taking refuge to evade the British during the Revolutionary War.⁶² During this time, he worked on what would become his only book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, which among other things, includes Jefferson’s thoughts and views on Virginia’s constitution and laws as well as some of his broader philosophies on government.⁶³ As part of the same visit to Poplar Forest, Jefferson was also inspired to make his first plans for a Poplar Forest retreat house, sketched using a neoclassical design that drew inspiration from the classical form of a Roman temple. As architectural historian Mark Wenger suggests, Jefferson’s 1781 design draws “parallels between political institutions of the new order and the ancient models on which they were self-consciously patterned—Athenian democracy and the Roman Republic.”⁶⁴ In addition, the Anglo-Saxon names Jefferson used to label the domestic functions of various rooms in this early plan for Poplar Forest are also quite significant. As Barbara Heath emphasizes in her research into Jefferson’s Poplar Forest Landscape, the use of Anglo-Saxon in this early design for Jefferson’s retreat echoes his broader belief that colonial Americans were “heirs to the legacy of Anglo-Saxon England,” with its government “organized around elected monarchs and a parliamentary democracy.” This Revolutionary-era ideology held that America’s independence from Britain found precedence in this history. In this way, Jefferson and others felt that “just as the Anglo-Saxons had left Germany to create an independent democratic society in England, so too had their descendants, the people who colonized British North America, left behind the current monarchy.”⁶⁵

By the time Jefferson instructed for work to begin at Poplar Forest in 1805 and 1806, he was eager to retire from politics and other aspects of public life. In this way, the idea of a rural retreat after a lifetime of public service resonated with Jefferson and other political figures of the Revolutionary Era. Jefferson was particularly inspired by the notion of the Roman villa retreat that emerged during the Renaissance through the work of Andre Palladio, which was later drawn on in writings and designs created by the British Palladians of the 18th century.⁶⁶ In this way, Poplar Forest broadly drew inspiration from “the villas of antiquity where virtuous statesmen retired to enjoy pastimes among their families and friends.”⁶⁷ It also provided an intellectual retreat where Jefferson was free to read, write, and pursue his other interests away from the

⁶² Chambers 1993:8.

⁶³ Jefferson 1787.

⁶⁴ Wenger 1997:234.

⁶⁵ Heath 2007:134.

⁶⁶ McDonald 2023:19-20.

⁶⁷ Heath 2007:137.

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crowds of Monticello. Among the most important of his retirement projects was his work to design the University of Virginia, some of which took place during his visits to Poplar Forest.⁶⁸

The kitchen at Poplar Forest is another manifestation of how Jefferson's political tendencies aligned with Enlightenment ideals. When archaeologists excavated the service wing, they found two cast iron grates that were once part of a substantial masonry stove. Though uncommon in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, some wealthier individuals had variations of this design in their kitchens. Jefferson was unique because he owned three masonry stoves, one at Poplar Forest and two at his primary residence at Monticello.⁶⁹ Masonry stoves were designed to give cooks the ability to exercise better control of heat when cooking dishes that require great attention. Jefferson likely first encountered these stoves during his term as Minister to France. By the early 1600s the kitchens of many wealthy French households had masonry stoves called potagers, simple raised masonry structures used to help prepare soups and stews.⁷⁰ During the Enlightenment, more elaborate versions of the potager were constructed in wealthier French homes, both influencing and being influenced by a new style of cuisine. Apertures of various sizes allowed for simultaneous cooking of multiple dishes over varied temperatures.⁷¹ This control led to the rising prominence of dishes that are now considered staples of French cuisine. Eighteenth-century Nouvelle cuisine rejected the ancient dishes and the over-the-top style of the past. Instead of aiming to produce bold flavors with heavy spices, Nouvelle cuisine aimed for subtle tastes and levels of flavor, which demanded precision and training. Though this cuisine originated in the aristocracy's kitchens its influence became widespread and inspired the French middle class to try for similar effects, using less expensive ingredients and simpler recipes.⁷² Jefferson loved Nouvelle cuisine and endorsed gourmet dining at the White House as President and as a private citizen. He also promoted the use of new crops such as rice and he experimented with hundreds of vegetables, herbs, and fruits that he thought could help American farmers prosper. His efforts were not completely successful, though, as Americans at the time thought that food should embody American characteristics of simplicity, honesty, and heartiness instead of the fussy French cuisine.⁷³

Potager stoves were typically located near a chimney so that transferring coals from the fire was not unnecessarily difficult.⁷⁴ However, during the Enlightenment, medical thought began to see kitchens as emitters of potentially dangerous fumes from charcoal, food waste, and waste water as well as a source of loud (thus dangerous) sounds and smoke. Enlightenment design suggested mitigating potential hazardous health conditions by moving the stove near a window for ventilation and installing drains to lead refuse water away.⁷⁵ This design element can be found at the service wing, where the masonry stove with three apertures is located directly beneath a

⁶⁸ McDonald 2023:192-207.

⁶⁹ Ptacek and Arendt 2017.

⁷⁰ Wheaton 1983:101.

⁷¹ Tew 2013:14.

⁷² Pinkard 2009.

⁷³ Crews 2013.

⁷⁴ Tew 2013:11.

⁷⁵ Takats 2011.

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window. Additionally, a French drain runs parallel to the southern edge of the wing before turning south and draining down the edge of the South Lawn, irrigating flowers and shrubs along the east bank.

The Enlightenment also marked major cultural changes in terms of household arrangement. The home became a familial sanctuary, where guests were permitted intermittently and servants were expected to be invisible. Wealthy homeowners erected walls, wings, attics, and corridors to separate masters and servants. Servant bells, also called house bells, provided a genteel way to request help from servants while simultaneously allowing greater locational flexibility and privacy to the family. Instead of coarsely yelling across the halls of his house, an employer could quietly pull a cord to summon his employees, projecting an image of ease and leisure. The practice of hanging bells in houses surged in popularity in the early 1800s. Architectural historians drawing on Ed Chappell's work place house bell systems within the grander scheme of the pursuit of refinement in the Chesapeake region.⁷⁶ Imported servant bells provided links between the enslaved and their masters, who increasingly wished to control how and when contact occurred. It was this sense of mastery that many slave-owners desired as they used bells or horns, just as much as order and efficiency. Bells interrupted enslaved laborers at their tasks and "disrupted whatever rhythm they may have established for themselves."⁷⁷

Thomas Jefferson owned several enslaved laborers who ran his houses at Monticello and Poplar Forest, but he seemed to have an aversion to keeping an enslaved body servant solely for his personal needs.⁷⁸ His daughter Maria fretted that her father slept in an "unsafe and solitary manner" at the President's House and his grandson-in-law recalled much later that "it was incompatible with the sentiment of Manhood, as it existed in him, that one human being should be followed about by another as his shadow."⁷⁹ In the years of Jefferson's final retirement after 1809, an enslaved man named Burwell Colbert acted as the butler of Monticello and Jefferson's personal servant, though probably not as a valet as understood at the time. As historian Lucia Stanton notes, Burwell was described "by overseer Edmond Bacon as 'the main, principal servant' at Monticello" and he was responsible for keeping the keys, supervising the other enslaved house servants, and acting as chief waiter at meals, as well as serving Jefferson himself both at home and at Poplar Forest.⁸⁰ Jefferson enjoyed lively company and thoughtful conversation over a well-prepared meal and good wine. He believed that the presence of enslaved servants in the room would hinder such discussion, and that slaves would then gossip to their fellows. To avoid this, Jefferson employed different types of dumbwaiters when dining with small groups. He also had servant bells installed in his Virginia homes so that he could call for servants.

Physical evidence of the bell system at Poplar Forest was found during reconstruction of the main house in the 1990s and early 2000s. An opening in the dining room brick floor at the east

⁷⁶ Wenger 2013:154.

⁷⁷ Murtha 2010:13.

⁷⁸ Stanton 2012.

⁷⁹ Maria Jefferson Eppes to Thomas Jefferson, January 11, 1803; Nicholas Trist, memorandum to Henry S. Randall, n.d.; Stanton 2012:44.

⁸⁰ Stanton 2012:181.

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wall aligns with the face of the south wall of the east stair pavilion and the south face of the wing.⁸¹ Architectural historians believe that a bell pull was probably located near the dining room fireplace and ran through the floor, through the east room in the lower level, and along the south wall of the east wing to the kitchen. It is possible that there was only one bell, running from the dining room to the kitchen. However, architectural evidence does not preclude the possibility of additional pulls and bells whose wires were run through the same opening in the dining room floor joists to service areas in the lower level and along the wing of offices. Six artifacts in the Poplar Forest collection can be identified as associated with the house bell system with reasonable certainty; three eared brass cranks, two copper alloy bell fragments, and one iron bell carriage spike.

The bell system can be emblematic of Enlightenment conceptions of gender roles and domestic ideals in the emerging Antebellum South. Southerners believed that a good family life watched over by a virtuous woman was necessary to one's survival and comfort in a world that could be harsh, violent, and unpredictable.⁸² Jefferson, though he chose to educate his own daughters and granddaughters more classically than their contemporaries, still expected them to become virtuous Virginia plantation wives. The Enlightenment solidified the idea in American society that life should be divided into the public sphere suitable only for men, and the private sphere of the home where women could have at least some influence. Women were supposed to provide their male relatives with a stress-free sanctuary where all of the work was performed invisibly. These strict gender roles limited a woman's power even in her own home, since her husband was still the ultimate authority. Upon the occasion of her marriage in 1790, Jefferson wrote to his daughter Martha "the happiness of your life depends now on the continuing to please a single person. To this all other subjects must be secondary; even your love to me."⁸³ Slave ownership, however, could increase a woman's domestic supremacy. With enslaved laborers to perform the drudgery of the household chores, Southern women could appear to create the ideal domestic environment by focusing on their families. Though exaggerated, women who directed the actions of enslaved laborers in the household projected themselves to the rest of society through the image of the model Southern mistress in order to uphold their role.⁸⁴ The bell system at Poplar Forest would have displayed Jefferson's and his family's status and moral values to visitors, reinforcing their authority to their enslaved servants who had to answer the bell's ring. But for a man such as Thomas Jefferson, who not only embodied the zeitgeist of his time but had a unique view of practicality, the bell system may have simply been a way to ensure that he and his teenage granddaughters would be able to easily access help during their visits.

Criterion C – Architecture

The Poplar Forest retreat house is uniquely Jeffersonian because it selectively blends ancient traditions into modern contemporary buildings. This displays the gathering of forms and ideas from international sources that characterizes the work of Thomas Jefferson, long recognized as

⁸¹ Mesick-Cohen-Waite 1994.

⁸² Weiner 1998.

⁸³ Thomas Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, April 4, 1790.

⁸⁴ Fox-Genovese 1988.

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one of America's premier architects. The house illustrates his familiarity with Roman authors who instilled in him the concept of a villa. Poplar Forest more perfectly fits the classic definition of the villa building type than any other of his works, and perhaps more than any other American work. Poplar Forest also reflects Jefferson's studied use of Andrea Palladio's interpretations of Roman buildings, codified classical proportions, bilateral symmetry, and connected service wings. Jefferson's own neo-Palladian device is the use of landscape features to form an architectural ensemble. From the English Palladians of the 18th century, Jefferson borrowed the overall octagonal shape and the south portico ensemble of arches, columns, and pediment. Giles Worsley stated that "Jefferson was the culmination, the very worthy culmination, of English neo-Palladianism,"⁸⁵ and architectural historian Hanno-Walter Kruft labeled Jefferson "the most significant spokesman" for American Palladianism.⁸⁶ From his five years in France, Jefferson learned many stylistic and convenient features including alcove beds, floor to ceiling windows, the low, horizontal look of façades, indoor toilets, and the use of skylights. It is believed that Poplar Forest had the largest skylight in America for its time. One of the few visitors to the house, the Englishman George Flower, remarked after visiting Poplar Forest in 1816 that Jefferson's "house was built after the fashion of a French chateau, Octagon rooms, floors of polished oak, lofty ceilings, large mirrors betokened his French taste."⁸⁷ The French architectural quality of light and air had become a part of Jefferson's taste, especially within an octagonal design optimizing these qualities, and certainly its place made Poplar Forest an indigenous Virginia house in materials and feeling. While Jefferson's own style of Roman neoclassicism was not nationally adopted due to the new Greek neoclassical movement, Jefferson's builders perpetuated his style throughout Virginia in public and private buildings. Nevertheless, Fiske Kimball wrote that "American classicism traces its ancestry to Jefferson,"⁸⁸ and Michael Dennis compares Jefferson's role in the Americas to Italian architect Sebastiano Serlio.⁸⁹ Poplar Forest embodies four significant architectural values. It is an American example of the international neoclassicism movement. The house is one of the most important examples of a Jeffersonian style. It is one of the best American examples of a centuries-old building type. Finally, it is a unique American house shape.

Poplar Forest was Thomas Jefferson's most intimate work of architecture as well as his second home. Poplar Forest was Jefferson's personal design, bridging Monticello before and the University of Virginia afterwards. It was his ultimate octagon in a lifetime of using that shape. The fact that this was an occasional retreat meant that Jefferson could make it very modern for an individual or a small number of family members, rather than a conventional house. For instance, the staircases for this two-story house are only reached by going through one of the two bed chambers and were stuck as pavilions onto the exterior of the octagon walls in order not to intrude upon the idealistic geometric form. The design was a marriage of Jefferson's favorite forms and was very modern compared with typical Virginia houses of the period.

⁸⁵ Worsley 1995:286.

⁸⁶ Kruft 1994:346.

⁸⁷ Flower 1882:43.

⁸⁸ Kimball 1968:89.

⁸⁹ Dennis 1988.

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Service wings were a feature Jefferson had observed in Andrea Palladio's villas from the 16th century and were part of Monticello as well as the White House. The 100-foot service wing at Poplar Forest was the same size as two service wings Jefferson added to the White House. At all three locations, Jefferson designed his own roof system, called his "terras roof," giving a flat deck on top of a hidden ridge and valley roof. This was Jefferson's only architectural invention and he used it on top of the cubistic dining room at Poplar Forest and also at the University of Virginia. Documentary and archaeological evidence suggest portions of the original service wing were disassembled prior to the 1845 fire in the main house. Upon the Jefferson-era brick base, a detached brick kitchen and a detached brick smokehouse were built. Later owners connected the two buildings and renovations in the 20th century converted them into guest housing. These later buildings were mostly dismantled by the Corporation in the 2000s in order to reconstruct Jefferson's original service wing.

Much has been written about how Thomas Jefferson's architecture reflected both his personal taste and the appropriate public forms suited to the new republic he helped craft. Jefferson's architectural genius at Poplar Forest, in comparison with the other sites, is both similar and unique. Poplar Forest represented a new form as it expanded Jefferson's lifelong love of octagons into a dramatic conclusion in his second, and last, house for himself. Most importantly, the private nature of the site influenced the overall idealistic design and certain decorative details. For example, the detailing of the dining room entablature reflects the nature of the site in Jefferson's mind. When English sculptor William Coffee, in New York, questioned Jefferson on the details of the cube room entablature frieze he was to make, Jefferson would explain that in this private house his inventive mixture of classical sources was "a fancy which I can indulge in my own case, altho in a public work I feel bound to follow authority strictly."⁹⁰ Jefferson's satisfaction with this unique house and landscape led him to comment that it was "the most valuable of my possessions," and indicated its long-awaited value when he stated "when finished, it will be the best dwelling house in the state, except that of Monticello; perhaps preferable to that, as more proportioned to the faculties of a private citizen."⁹¹ It was one of Jefferson's clearest demonstrations of an abstract idealism made real. Throughout his life Jefferson spoke of his intentions for a retreat, produced drawings for them, and found substitutes for them. When leaving public life, Jefferson focused on a final retreat, creating Poplar Forest as a villa. James Ackerman describes the attributes of a true villa: a country retreat for the owner's enjoyment and relaxation within an agricultural setting; a modern product of an architect's imagination and creative aspirations; a dialog between city and country moral values; and as an intimate engagement with nature.⁹²

A signature shape, the octagon, provides a primary architectural value. Jefferson began using octagonal shapes in his earliest architectural drawings, admiring the shape observed in British Palladian architectural handbooks by James Gibbs, William Kent, and Robert Morris. Jefferson also paid attention to Andrea Palladio, who very seldom used an octagon shape.

⁹⁰ Thomas Jefferson to William John Coffee, July 10, 1822.

⁹¹ Thomas Jefferson to John Wayles Eppes, September 18, 1812.

⁹² Ackerman 1993.

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Characteristically, Jefferson's early architectural drawings from the 1770s show him taking Palladio's round plans and redrawing them as octagons. Jefferson's work thereafter is filled with semi-octagons (Monticello I and II) and projecting octagons (Barboursville, the University of Virginia, and the initial proposed plan for Poplar Forest). Poplar Forest became the ultimate, and only full, octagon in Jefferson's life. In linking Poplar Forest's octagonal plan to Palladio, Robert Tavernor wrote that "Jefferson's control of the symmetry is superior" and that it was "as inspired and precise as any of the centralized Palladian villa forms."⁹³ Marcus Whiffen remarked about Poplar Forest's plan that "Jefferson's addiction to the octagon was never more ingeniously indulged."⁹⁴

Poplar Forest exhibits a cultural expression of Jefferson's national style, both public and private, as the embodiment of universal human concerns in the ideological nature of the villa and as a place where Jefferson reaffirmed the power of the mind and of ideas to affect civilization. Jefferson's ideology cannot be separated from his architecture. In trying to distance himself and his new country from its colonial precedents, Jefferson consciously looked abroad to develop a national symbolic style for both public and private uses, forever linking that style with freedom and democracy. In appropriating classical precedents for the Virginia State Capitol (1785) in Richmond, Jefferson created one of the earliest public buildings housed in a classical form. Jefferson, Fiske Kimball wrote, was "the father of our national architecture."⁹⁵ Kruft observed that "it was largely because Jefferson, as a Humanist, found his answer to the quest for a symbolic American Style in Roman and Palladian models that the country developed a particularly rigorous form of Classicism."⁹⁶ In this associated way Poplar Forest is a place where people personally connect with intangible and abstract ideals. Historian David McCullough perhaps best summarized the significance of the site: "More and more it's becoming clear how very important Poplar Forest is to our enlarged understanding of Thomas Jefferson and the reach of his imagination. That Jefferson was, along with so many other things, one of the premier American architects, has long been appreciated, but the originality and ingenuity of Poplar Forest—especially now that it is so superbly restored—raise his standing still higher. This is an American masterpiece by a great American artist who also happened to be the President of the United States."⁹⁷ Jefferson's design of Poplar Forest as a villa grew out of an intense, programmatic investment of ideological goals. In giving shape to his architectural and ideological ideals, Jefferson gave shape to universal human concerns. From the bright, perfectly proportioned middle room, described as "the ideal of human reason rendered in space," outward, the site reflects the Age of Reason's debate of man's role in nature and nature's impact on man. Jefferson's ensemble of the uniquely arranged architecture and landscape reflected his own answer: a harmonious balance with nature.⁹⁸

⁹³ Tavernor 1991:201.

⁹⁴ Whiffen 1981:106.

⁹⁵ Kimball 1968:89.

⁹⁶ Kruft 1994:346.

⁹⁷ Horn 2002:1.

⁹⁸ Wills 2000.

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During the Hutter period, some of the Jefferson period outbuildings were replaced. Three of these remain standing today. First, a granary was built in the west curtilage about 400 feet west of the main house, with an east-west axis that aligns with the center of the house. Edward Hutter's journal and dendrochronology suggest the granary was built in 1853, while an inscription of "1856" in the mortar on one of the piers suggests a later date. Analysis of the architecture indicates that it was built in the style of a three-bay threshing barn, without evidence of a loft. Dendrochronology identified hand-hewn log components dating to both the Jefferson and Cobbs/Hutter periods, indicating that it was partially built with wood salvaged from another building.⁹⁹

Second, a pair of brick buildings in the east core were built simultaneously in 1857 by a crew of enslaved African American laborers owned by Samuel H. McGhee, a neighboring planter who was hired by Edward Hutter.¹⁰⁰ These buildings illustrate how differences in race and status were reflected in architecture on the eve of the Civil War, in terms of their layouts and other architectural features.¹⁰¹ The southern house was originally constructed as a triplex intended for enslaved African Americans, with the upper and lower rooms on the north connected to form one living space, and the upper and lower rooms on the south forming two separate spaces.¹⁰² It is important to note that this is the only standing building that survives at Poplar Forest which was originally built for the purpose of housing enslaved African Americans. In the early-to-mid 20th century, the building was used to store farm equipment and produce as well as to house seasonal black workers. In the late 19th or early 20th century, brick partitions between the north and south halves were removed on both floors. New floors were installed and all four fireplaces were filled in to accommodate heating and cooking stoves. In the 20th century, a modern kitchen was installed in the southern room of the first floor. Prior to 1911, a large two-story shed was attached to the east wall of the building and farm equipment was stored in and around this shed. A doorway on the south elevation, formerly used to enter the upper level directly, was converted to a window after 1951. A porch with a concrete slab floor was added to the west elevation. Aside from the porch addition, the exterior remains similar to its original appearance, but the interior has been renovated several times, covering over portions of the original building fabric that survive.

The northern house was originally intended to house white overseers and their families, and post-Emancipation the building housed farm managers and white tenant families. The house was originally constructed with two rooms on each floor, divided in the center to create two separate living spaces. Two gable-end chimneys provided each household with cooking and heating ability. A farmhouse-style porch with decorative corner brackets was built across the west elevation prior to 1911. An addition wrapping around the northern and eastern walls was constructed in the 1930s, and altered in the late 1940s. The original portion of the building

⁹⁹ Hutter 1844-1854; Strutt and Trussell 1998.

¹⁰⁰ McIlvoy et. al 2020.

¹⁰¹ Heath and Lee 2010.

¹⁰² McDonald 2018.

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maintains much of its architectural integrity and remains similar to its original layout and appearance, while the addition has had substantial renovations.

Criterion C – Landscape Architecture

Poplar Forest is a significant contribution to the field of American landscape architecture in the early 19th century. Designed by Thomas Jefferson, the ornamental grounds surrounding his octagonal retreat represent a lifetime of experience, developed after decades of travel, study, and practice.¹⁰³ Jefferson is a pioneering figure in American landscape architecture and played a prominent role in applying the European art of landscape gardening to Virginian landscapes. Along with Poplar Forest, other major accomplishments include Jefferson's designs for his home at Monticello, portions of the nation's new capital in Washington D.C., and the grounds of the University of Virginia. During his lifetime, Jefferson also served as a consultant on a variety of other landscape projects for friends and family located elsewhere in Virginia.¹⁰⁴

Jefferson's concept for his private retreat at Poplar Forest provides an outstanding example of his landscape design aesthetics, and is among the most essential expressions of his goals and abilities as a landscape gardener. Located on a hilltop with distant views of the Blue Ridge mountains to the north, Jefferson's plans for Polar Forest included a seamless combination of attractive and useful landscape elements to create a unified landscape design. At the center of this design was the retreat house itself, which was flanked on either side by earthen mounds. These mounds were created roughly between 1805 and 1808 from earth dug from the south lawn and the lower level of the house by enslaved African American laborers. After the mounds were completed, double rows of paper mulberry trees were added on either side of the retreat house, uniting the built and landscape architecture as part of a single five-part Palladian design. In this way, Jefferson created an ingenious interpretation, inspired by both the work of Italian Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio and contemporary garden designs by replacing brick-and-mortar wings and end-pavilions with double rows of mulberry trees and earthen mounds. The mounds were to be covered in ornamental trees, originally planted in 1811 with weeping willows on the top, golden willows around the sides, and aspen trees encircling the base to create a dome-like effect. In addition, two octagonal privies located just east and west of the earthen mounds also add to the symmetry of the initial design. Written evidence suggests these small brick buildings were built in 1808, with Jefferson instructing that weeping willows and privet were to be planted around them in 1811 and 1816, respectively. Historic evidence shows this was a dynamic landscape, with a Wing of Offices added to the east side of the main house several years later, and the weeping willows being replaced by flowering shrubs in 1816. Nevertheless, the essence of Jefferson's Palladian design for Poplar Forest continued to be elegantly expressed along the east-west axis of Jefferson's retreat as the newly planted trees and other garden elements of his ornamental landscape matured throughout his retirement years.

¹⁰³ Heath 200; Trussell 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Nichols and Griswold 1978.

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Archaeological excavations have revealed that evidence of the Jefferson-era ornamental landscape has remained remarkably intact. This includes evidence of the double row of trees, revealing early 19th century tree root remains. These double rows were found to have originally included eight mulberry trees on either side, placed 20 feet apart with 30 feet between the rows. The spacing between the rows was carefully planned, allowing enough room for the brick and mortar wing to be added to the east side of the retreat house in 1814, while still retaining the northern row of trees to provide shade for its terras roof. The western double row was restored in 2011 as the first of four landscape restoration projects completed in front of the retreat house conducted between 2010 and 2021 in collaboration with the Garden Club of Virginia.¹⁰⁵

Adding trees for shade and visual appeal was a key aspect of Jefferson's design at Poplar Forest. The addition of young trees into the landscape was also necessary, since the retreat house was placed in the middle of a fallow agricultural field, which research suggests had few trees following several decades of clearing and cultivation.¹⁰⁶ Other trees included as part of the ornamental landscape include at least 13 tulip poplar trees, which were located north of the retreat house. In the front lawn, five of these Jefferson era trees still remain, while the other portions of this design have been restored, with young tulip poplars placed back in original locations based on archaeological research.

In addition, clumps of ornamental trees and shrubs were placed at all four corners of the retreat house. These included Kentucky coffee, black locust, balsam poplars, Athenian poplars, and tulip poplar trees as well as smaller flowering dogwoods, redbuds, and native calycanthus shrubs filling in the understory. The northern two clumps have been located through archaeological investigations, with a diameter of 33 feet on either side, measured by Jefferson and likely an assistant using a surveyor's chain. In addition, archaeological research revealed the trees were laid out in a spiral pattern, drawing inspiration from designs suggested in period gardening literature. Notes preserved in Jefferson's Planting Memorandum for Poplar Forest suggest these features were placed when he visited Poplar Forest in the winter of 1812. The clumps are one of a number of examples where precise geometric forms were used by Jefferson to design naturalistic elements at Poplar Forest, which drew inspiration from contemporary gardening manuals and examples Jefferson had witnessed during his travels. Other features that have been found through archaeological research include three oval-shaped flower beds, which were restored in 2021. Based on Jefferson's planting memorandum and archaeological research, this includes a bed of bristly locust (*Robinia hispida*) to the northwest, a bed of dwarf roses to the northeast, and a bed of large roses of different varieties to the north, placing it in front of the retreat house.

Jefferson experimented with several carriage turnaround designs during his lifetime as part of his plans to create ornamental landscapes. At Poplar Forest, the carriage circle, inspired by aspects from several of his previous designs, remains the only example that has been located, studied, and restored through archaeological research. The Poplar Forest carriage circle measures 80 feet across and was placed on ground leveled by enslaved laborers soon after construction of the

¹⁰⁵ Gary 2012a.

¹⁰⁶ Proebsting 2012; Gary and Proebsting 2016.

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retreat house began. Archaeological excavations have revealed that the portions of the hilltop where the carriage circle was placed was leveled to create a gentle 3 percent slope leading up the cobblestone approach to the steps of the retreat house. Enslaved African Americans were required to move tens of thousands of stones from the surrounding fields to make this feature, made of primarily of quartz cobbles. Stone pavers in front of the retreat house steps were fashioned of local schist to provide a smooth landing where Jefferson and other passengers would disembark before entering the retreat. Artifacts and archaeological features suggest this cobblestone surface was completed by the time the exterior of the retreat house was completed in 1809. Restoration work completed in 2021 recreated this surface using hand laid fieldstones placed by skilled stonemasons, designed to closely match the original for visitors to experience.¹⁰⁷ This work includes a small viewing window to see a portion of the road surface, with the rest of the original Jefferson era surface carefully preserved beneath the modern restoration. A roughly 3-foot area surrounding this viewing window uses original stones recovered from the carriage turnaround surface during archaeological excavations, so that visitors can have the experience of standing on original stones as they look on a portion of the original surface protected below.

Archaeological research has also explored the sunken lawn located south of the retreat house. This work has revealed that a 70x180 foot area, designed using the principles of dynamic symmetry, was excavated by enslaved laborers in 1807 and 1808. This allowed for the southern view of the retreat house to have the appearance of having two stories after the exterior of the retreat was completed in 1809. It also provided confined the gaze of the viewer both to and from the retreat house as plantings were added along the banks in 1812. The South Lawn was modified after the addition of the service wing altered in 1814, with a French drain added to carry water runoff from the Wing of Offices along the lawn's eastern edge, across the southern end, and toward what appear to be additional garden spaces that are yet to be fully explored in the south. At this time the east bank was also canted outward by approximately 9 degrees and replanted, with Kentucky coffee trees likely added along the banks at this time, remnants of which still exist as several clusters of stump sprouts along the southeastern portion of the sunken lawn today. When viewed from the south parlor of the retreat house, this use of forced perspective along the banks of the sunken lawn would have helped bring the outdoors closer to the view as they gazed past plantings and garden spaces toward the more distant agricultural landscape.¹⁰⁸

Surrounding the retreat house was a "540 yds. round" circular road designed by Jefferson in 1812.¹⁰⁹ Ringed with inner and outer rows of paper mulberry trees, the remains of several of these trees that once enclosed the 5-acre space surrounded the retreat house have been revealed through archaeological research.¹¹⁰ In addition, the boundaries of a 10-acre square was first surveyed in 1812 to mark the outer portion of the ornamental grounds of the retreat house, with a wooden fence planned to help set this space apart from the larger plantation. It appears a grove of

¹⁰⁷ Rieley 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Trussell 2000, 2012:79-82; Heath 2007:140-141; Heath 2013:702-704.

¹⁰⁹ Betts 1944:494.

¹¹⁰ Heath 2013.

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tulip poplar trees was placed just outside of the northeast corner of what would become the 10-acre ornamental grounds as early as 1806, based on tree ring dating conducted on the surviving Jefferson-era tulip poplar trees in this area. These trees, in what is known as the North Grove, may have been placed when the construction of the house began to provide shade for an icehouse envisioned by Jefferson, which archaeological research suggests was built by enslaved laborers under the direction of Jefferson's grandson Francis Eppes in 1826 several months before Jefferson's death. Additional alterations occurred to this icehouse in the 1840s before it was abandoned and filled by the turn of the 20th century.

A number of other features would have occupied the curtilage landscape, which at least 61-acres in size, occupying the space between the ornamental grounds and the surrounding plantation fields after it was surveyed in the winter of 1812. Archaeological research at the Quarter Site has revealed that this split rail fence was placed through the middle of several preexisting cabins, displacing the enslaved African American households who lived here as part of what Jefferson referred to as the Old Plantation or the Tomahawk Quarter Farm. Additional written and archaeological evidence suggest that the curtilage included a variety of different buildings and other features, including a large vegetable garden for Jefferson's retreat well as an ornamental plant nursery, stable, slave quarters, trees, plantation roads, a brick clamp, and other outbuildings and activity areas. Several of these features, including Jefferson's ornamental plant nursery, have been located through archaeology excavations.¹¹¹ Located about 300 feet south of the main house are the buried remains of a brick clamp where enslaved African Americans are believed to have produced the 250,000+ bricks made for the retreat house and privies at Poplar Forest. This may be the site referred to as a "brick kiln" on an 1813 map of the property; however, there could be other brick clamps on the property that have not been found. The site has been disturbed by 20th century gardening activities and was located by an archaeological and geophysical survey.¹¹² Others still remain to be discovered.

Criterion D - Archaeology, Historic Non-Aboriginal

The Poplar Forest property contains known archaeological sites from the period of significance, as well as more sites that are known from the historical record but have not yet been discovered. Documented archaeological remains include sites associated with at least six enslaved African American housing areas; a white overseer's residence; four post-bellum tenant housing areas; barns and/or stables; a Jefferson-era wing of service rooms; a detached antebellum period kitchen quarter and smokehouse; ornamental landscape features; a brick clamp; plantation roads; historic springs; an antebellum period well; buried landscapes and other historic field remains; icehouses; an antebellum period hothouse; and a Jefferson period ornamental plant nursery. Sites that are known to have existed but the exact locations of which are undetermined include additional enslaved laborer housing, ornamental landscape features, burials, barns, stables, a cooper's shop, fence lines, roads, a blacksmith shop, an overseer's residence, a spinning house, a dairy, a cocoonery, vegetable gardens, and orchards.

¹¹¹ Gary et al. 2010.

¹¹² Strutt, Michael and Tim Trussell 1998a.

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Poplar Forest contains a wealth of archaeological potential, and much of it has yet to be explored. That which has been investigated thus far has borne a vast amount of critically important information that without archaeology would not have been recoverable. Future research will include investigations of the east half of Jefferson's curtilage related to exploring the layout, workspaces, living quarters, and daily lives of those associated with this space. Research questions will seek to answer key aspects of how archaeological remains in this area provide insight into the history of Jefferson's retreat as well as the broader history of the plantation and its residents. Another area of research will include continued investigations into aspects of the ornamental landscape surrounding Jefferson's retreat house, including plantings, roads, and boundaries. Among other things, this work includes exploring the place of a Jefferson-era icehouse at the northeast corner of the ornamental landscape. Additional research questions focused on preservation and restoration are also planned as a part of ongoing efforts to interpret and restore the 1857 Slave Dwelling as well as sites associated with other Jefferson-era and antebellum period quarters. Finally, questions focused on better understanding the post-bellum period are centered on archaeological evidence associated with buildings that served as tenant houses in the late 19th and early 20th century.

Poplar Forest preserves a material record over more than 55 years of ownership by Jefferson and his grandson, combined with the volume of correspondence the Jefferson produced in relation to Poplar Forest specifically, and to his affairs more generally, this is a nationally significant resource of Jefferson and his interests as well as the enslaved population that built and maintained the property. As well, sites from the Hutter period from 1828 to 1946 preserve a continuous record of how the Jeffersonian landscape evolved over time, in terms of agricultural production and the lives of enslaved and free African American laborers (see Criterion A - Agriculture, and Criterion A - African American Heritage). The archaeological record around the main house in the core preserves the history of rural technological advances, from the introduction of indoor plumbing, running water, electricity and telephone service. These utilities have also been recorded outside of the core, especially related to the laying of metal pipes to provide a water supply for the house.

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Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation,
Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
Name of Property

Bedford, Campbell, and
City of Lynchburg, VA
County and State

Heath, Barbara J., Eleanor E. Breen, Crystal Ptacek, and Andrew Wilkins (with contributions by Daniel W.H. Brock, Stephen J. Yerka, Gerald F. Schroedl, D. Brad Hatch, Lori A. Lee, Heather Trigg, and Samantha Henderson)

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Name of Property

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Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
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County and State

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Name of Property

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Name of Property

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County and State

Name of Property

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Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
Name of Property

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Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
Name of Property

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Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation,
Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
 recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency
 Local government
 University
 Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR ID 009-0027

Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation,
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Name of Property

Bedford, Campbell, and
City of Lynchburg, VA
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property approximately 600 acres

Acreege previously listed in the National Register approximately 800 acres

Acreege of boundary increase approximately 120 acres

Acreege of boundary decrease approximately 320 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 37.363539 | Longitude: -79.248070 |
| 2. Latitude: 37.360703 | Longitude: -79.242757 |
| 3. Latitude: 37.344986 | Longitude: -79.270000 |
| 4. Latitude: 37.350549 | Longitude: -79.278345 |
| 5. Latitude: 37.359154 | Longitude: -79.267230 |

Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or NAD 1983

- | | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation,
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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The historic boundary of the Poplar Forest plantation encompasses parts of Bedford County, Campbell County, and the City of Lynchburg. The plantation's boundary fluctuated over the centuries as tracts were bought and sold, with the 1969 boundaries consisting of land owned by Mr. and Mrs. James O. Watts. The boundary of the National Register listing amended in 2024 includes only properties that are owned by the Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest.

Campbell County Parcel Numbers: 11-A-1, 11-A-3

Bedford County Parcel Numbers: 117-A-83C, 117-A-83D, 117-A-83E, 117-A-83F, 117-A-83G, 117-A-83J, 117-A-83K, 117-A-84, 117-A-84A, 117-A-85, 118-A-16, 136C-1-117-120, 136C-2-B

City of Lynchburg Parcel Numbers: 25106001, 25012001, 25107001, 25009001

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These amended boundaries lie entirely within properties once owned by Thomas Jefferson and are owned by the Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest as of May 2024.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Steve Lenik, Karen McIlvoy, Eric Proebsting, Travis McDonald
organization: Corporation for Jefferson's Poplar Forest
street & number: 1776 Poplar Forest Parkway
city or town: Lynchburg state: VA zip code: 24502
e-mail: admin@poplarforest.org
telephone: 434-525-1806
date: May 2024

Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation,
Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
Name of Property

Bedford, Campbell, and
City of Lynchburg, VA
County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Poplar Forest

City or Vicinity: Lynchburg (vicinity)

County: Bedford, Campbell, and City of Lynchburg

State: Virginia

Photographer: Steve Lenik

Date Photographed: June 2023

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 29. Main House and Service Wing, south elevation, camera facing N

2 of 29. Main House and Service Wing, north elevation, camera facing S

Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation,
Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
Name of Property

Bedford, Campbell, and
City of Lynchburg, VA
County and State

- 3 of 29. West Privy, camera facing N
- 4 of 29. West Mound, camera facing N
- 5 of 29. East Privy, camera facing N
- 6 of 29. East Mound, camera facing N
- 7 of 29. Carriage Turnaround, camera facing SW
- 8 of 29. Granary/Barn, camera facing NW
- 9 of 29. North Tenant House, east elevation, camera facing W
- 10 of 29. Enslaved Laborer/Tenant House, west elevation, camera facing E
- 11 of 29. Corn Crib, camera facing S
- 12 of 29. Water Pump, camera facing W
- 13 of 29. Dog Kennel, camera facing N
- 14 of 29. Pole Barn, camera facing NE
- 15 of 29. Storage Shed, camera facing E
- 16 of 29. Walled Flower Garden and Shed, camera facing SE
- 17 of 29. Rightmire Preservation Center, camera facing S
- 18 of 29. Museum Shop and Visitor Orientation Center, camera facing W
- 19 of 29. Hands on History Pavilion, camera facing S
- 20 of 29. Service Wing, south side, camera facing E
- 21 of 29. Weaving Room, camera facing NE
- 22 of 29. Kitchen Interior, camera facing E
- 23 of 29. Roof of Service Wing, camera facing W
- 24 of 29. North Portico, exterior, camera facing S

Poplar Forest (Additional Documentation,
Boundary Decrease, and Boundary Increase)
Name of Property

Bedford, Campbell, and
City of Lynchburg, VA
County and State

25 of 29. West Bedchamber, camera facing SW

26 of 29. Dining Room, camera facing NW

27 of 29. Dining Room Entablature, camera facing W

28 of 29. South Chamber, camera facing W

29 of 29. East Bedchamber, camera facing N

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources



Virginia Cultural Resource Information System

Legend

County Boundaries

Location Map
Poplar Forest
Bedford and Campbell counties,
and City of Lynchburg
DHR No. 009-0027

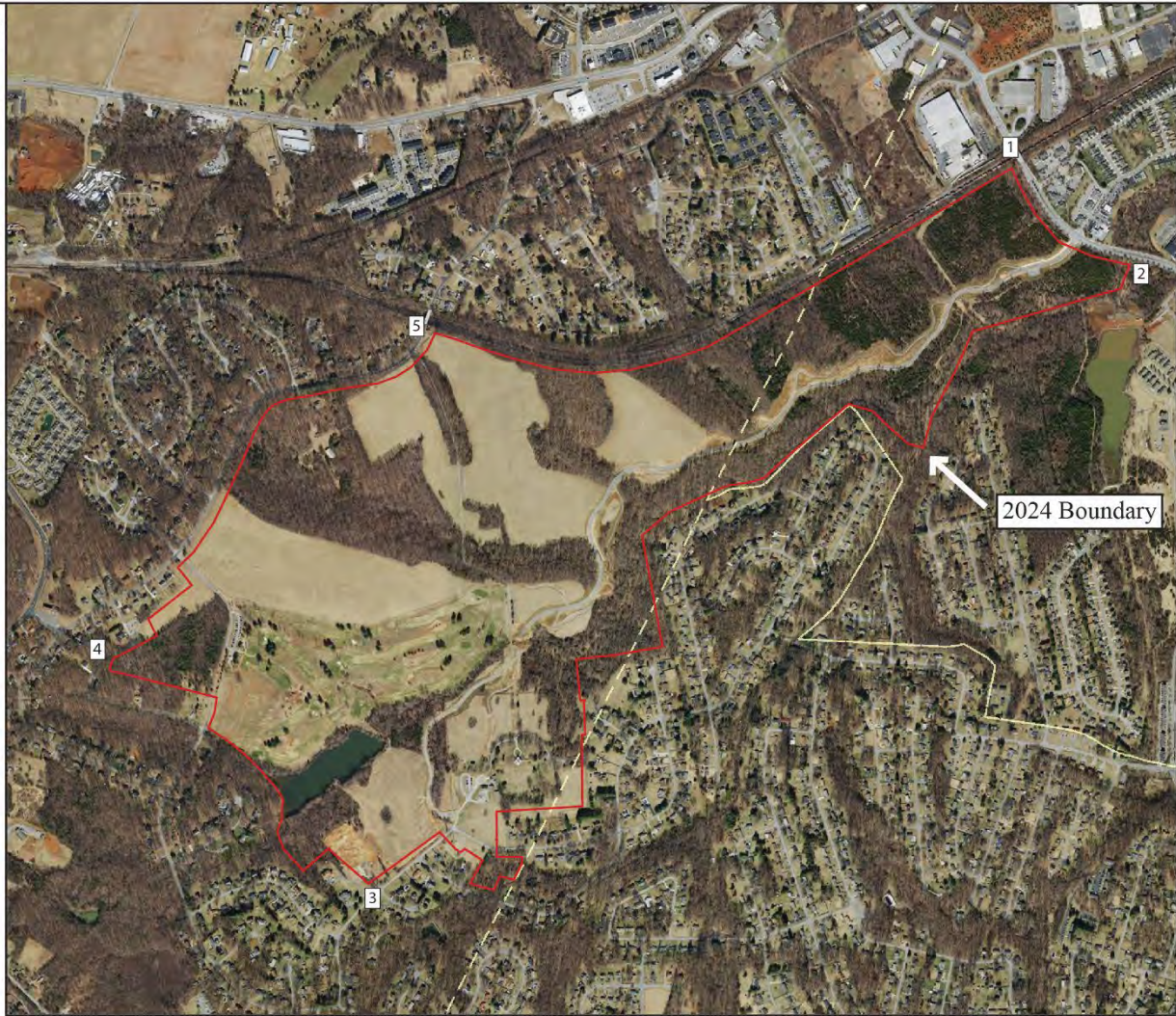
Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

- 1. Latitude: 37.363539
Longitude: -79.248070
- 2. Latitude: 37.360703
Longitude: -79.242757
- 3. Latitude: 37.344986
Longitude: -79.270000
- 4. Latitude: 37.350549
Longitude: -79.278345
- 5. Latitude: 37.359154
Longitude: -79.267230



Feet

0 500 1000 1500 2000
1:22,000 / 1"=1,833 Feet



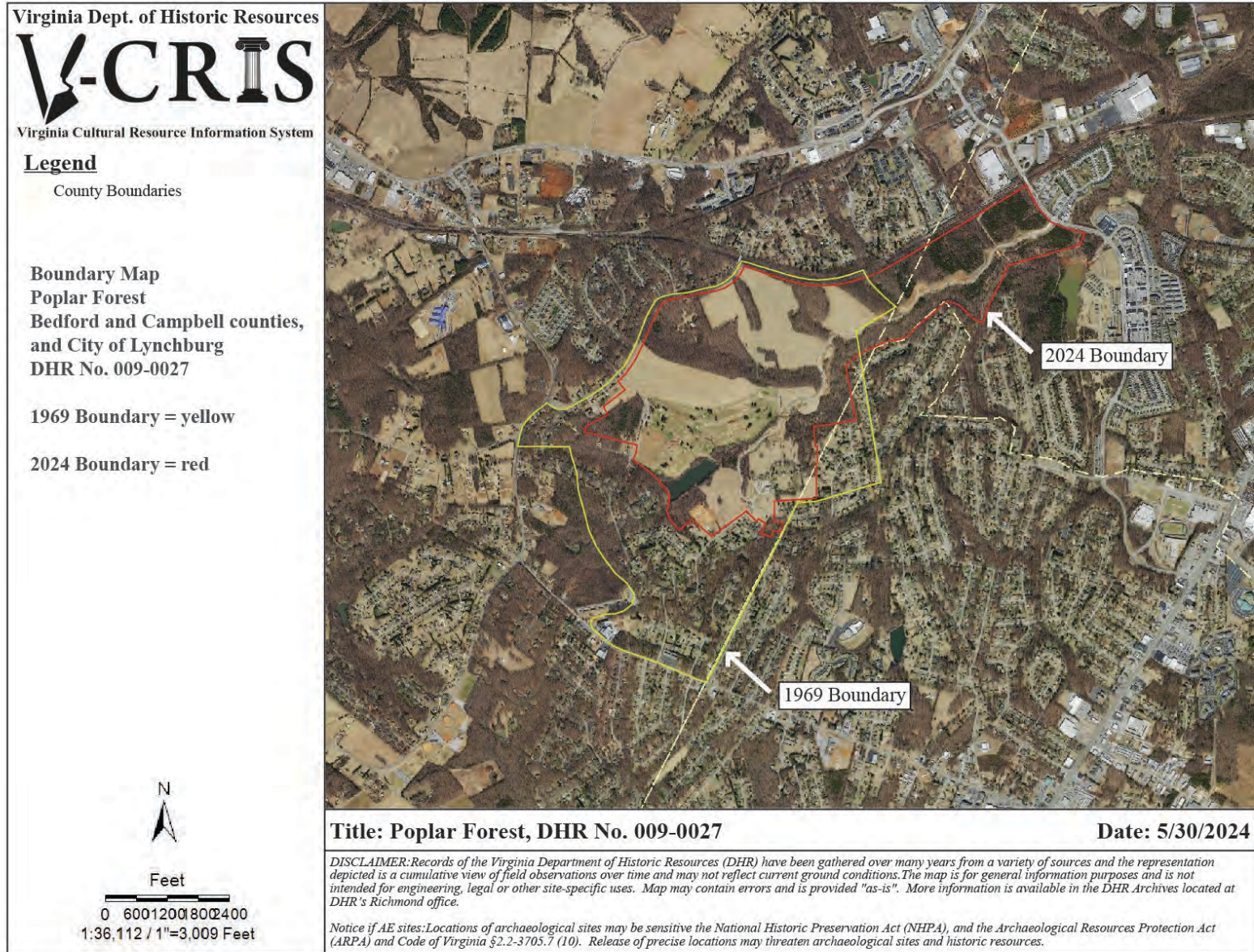
Title: Poplar Forest 009-0027

Date: 5/9/2024

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

Notice if AE sites: Locations of archaeological sites may be sensitive the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) and Code of Virginia §2.2-3705.7 (10). Release of precise locations may threaten archaeological sites and historic resources.

SKETCH MAP (1 of 6), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027



SKETCH MAP (2 of 6), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027

Virginia Dept. of Historic Resources



Virginia Cultural Resource Information System

Legend

County Boundaries

SKETCH MAP (1 of 5)

Overview Map with Inset Map

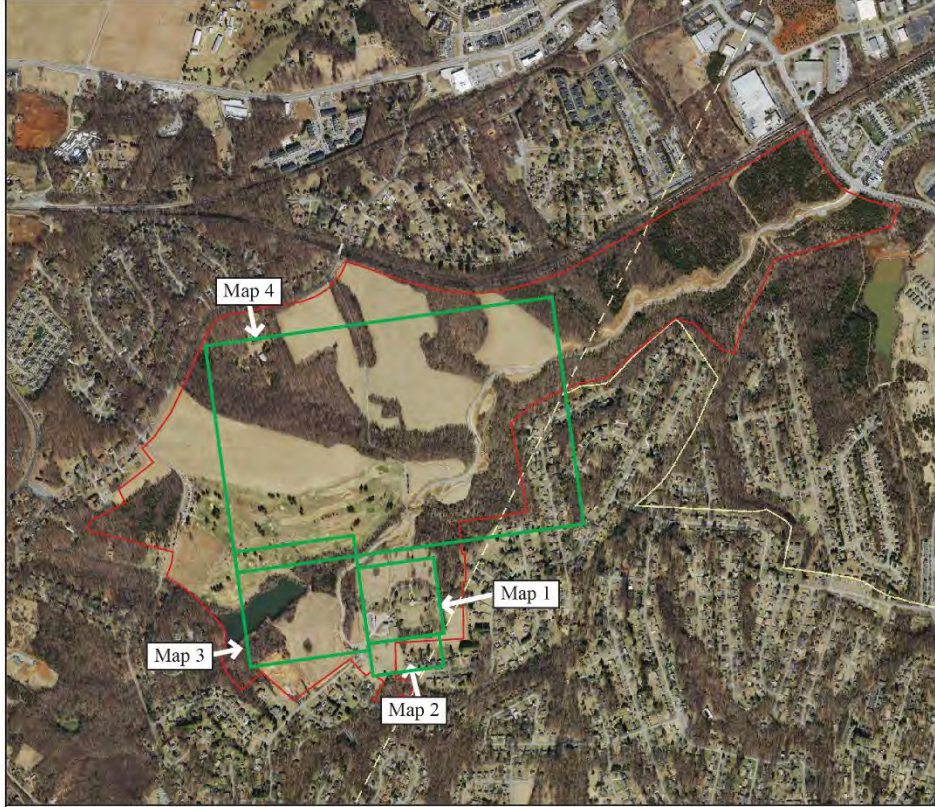
Locations

Poplar Forest 2024 Update

Bedford and Campbell counties,

and City of Lynchburg, VA

DHR No. 009-0027



Feet

0 500 1000 1500 2000
1:22,000 / 1"=1,833 Feet

Title: Poplar Forest 009-0027

Date: 5/9/2024

DISCLAIMER: Records of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) have been gathered over many years from a variety of sources and the representation depicted is a cumulative view of field observations over time and may not reflect current ground conditions. The map is for general information purposes and is not intended for engineering, legal or other site-specific uses. Map may contain errors and is provided "as-is". More information is available in the DHR Archives located at DHR's Richmond office.

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SKETCH MAP (3 of 6), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027



List of Resources – Map 2, Core and Curtilage

Wayles and Jefferson-Eppes Period

- 1 Main House, 1806, and Service Wing, 1814, contributing building
- 2 East Mound, early 19th century, contributing structure
- 3 East Privy, 1808, contributing building
- 4 West Privy, 1808, contributing building
- 5 West Mound, early 19th century, contributing structure
- 6 Double Row of Trees, 1812, contributing site
- 7 Carriage Turnaround, circa 1808, contributing structure
- 8 Clumps of Trees, 1812, and Oval Flower Beds, 1816, contributing site
- 9 Tulip Poplar Grove, early 19th century, contributing site
- 10 Sunken Lawn, circa 1807, contributing structure
- 11 North Grove, early 19th century, contributing site
- 12 North Grove Ice House, 1826, contributing site
- 13 North Hill Site Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, circa 1770, contributing site
- 14 Quarter Site Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, circa 1790, contributing site
- 15 Southeast Curtilage Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, early 19th century, contributing site
- 16 Ornamental Plant Nursery, early 19th century, contributing site
- 17 Outbuilding, late 18th century, contributing site

Cobbs-Hutter Period

- 22 Plantation Outbuilding (Site 32), mid-19th century, contributing site

SKETCH MAP (3 of 6), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027

- 23 Plantation Outbuilding (Site 48), mid-19th century, contributing site
- 24 Carriage House (Site 44), late 19th century, contributing site
- 25 Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, mid-19th century, contributing site
- 26 Granary/Barn, 1850s, contributing building
- 27 Barn, 1896, contributing site
- 28 Domestic Context (Site 13), late 19th century, contributing site
- 29 Corn Crib, 1915, contributing building
- 31 Hothouse, 19th century, non-contributing site
- 32 Abandoned Well, late 19th century, non-contributing structure
- 33 Ice House, 1890s, non-contributing site
- 34 Pump House, 20th century, non-contributing site
- 35 Enslaved Laborer Housing Area, circa 1830s, contributing site
- 36 Enslaved Laborer/Tenant House, 1857, contributing building
- 37 North Tenant House, 1857, contributing building
- 38 Storage Shed, early 20th century, non-contributing building

Watts-Corporation Period

- 41 Rightmire Preservation Center, 1992, non-contributing building
- 42 Museum Shop, 1950s, non-contributing building
- 43 Visitor Operations Center, 2012, non-contributing building
- 44 Hands on History Pavilion, 2000, non-contributing building
- 45 Dog Kennel, 20th century, non-contributing site
- 46 Walled Flower Garden and Shed, 1950s, non-contributing building
- 47 Filled In Pool, 1950s, non-contributing site
- 48 Pole Barn, 1950s, non-contributing building

SKETCH MAP (4 of 6), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027



List of Resources – Map 3, South Side of Property

Cobbs-Hutter Period

- 30 Domestic context (Site 6), 19th century, non-contributing site
- 40 Barn with silo, early 20th century, non-contributing site

SKETCH MAP (5 of 6), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027



List of Resources – Map 4, West Side of Property

Wayles and Jefferson-Eppes Period

18 Jefferson Spring Road Trace, early 19th century, contributing structure

19 Jefferson Spring, 19th century, contributing site

Watts-Corporation Period

49 Spring House, Jefferson Spring, 20th century, non-contributing structure

50 Dairy Barn Complex, 1950s, non-contributing site

51 Golf Course, 1970s, non-contributing structure

SKETCH MAP (6 of 6), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027



List of Resources – Map 5, North Side of Property

Wayles and Jefferson-Eppes Period

- 20 Machine Branch Road Trace, 1810s, contributing structure
- 21 Prize Barn, early 19th century, contributing site

Cobbs-Hutter Period

- 39 Spring House, Ridge Branch, 20th century, non-contributing structure

Watts-Corporation Period

- 52 Camp Ruthers, 1923, non-contributing site and buildings

PHOTO KEY (1 of 1), Poplar Forest 2024 Update, Bedford County, VA, DHR No. 009-0027









I have done - one of the necessary
part in the course of this work
I will have the other done."
John Wesley, 1739, Sermon 14, p. 10.















PLANTATION MUSEUM HISTORY
LARGE QUARTER EXHIBIT











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