



“To promote an understanding of the life and times of President Woodrow Wilson, his impact on the world, his relevance today and for the future.”

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Waiting To Be Uncovered: Archaeology in Staunton Program

STAUNTON, VA –The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library is pleased to host Dr. Dennis Blanton, Associate Professor of Anthropology at James Madison University who will be speaking about archaeology in Staunton on Sunday, February 10, at 4:00 pm. Dr. Blanton, aided by a host of community volunteers, conducted a limited archaeological excavation behind the Woodrow Wilson’s Birthplace. Dr. Blanton will be talking about the report that was issued after the dig and about the next steps for the Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library (WWPL), including a potential second investigation this summer.

“Staunton is a city rightfully celebrated for its above-ground historical treasures, but much of the larger story – the human story – lies underground and untold. The archaeological investigation behind The Birthplace Manse will exemplify how and why the below-ground evidence can enhance the telling of local history” said Dr. Blanton.

Until recently much of the rear yard of the Birthplace was planted as a boxwood garden designed by noted landscape architect, Charles Gillette. The garden and subsequent improvements were very generous gifts of the Garden Club of Virginia. Unfortunately, the boxwood has fallen victim to a boxwood blight and leading to their removal over the past several years.

Last year’s evaluation confirmed that there were intact deposits of artifacts spanning approximately 200 years, just waiting to be uncovered. Dr. Blanton will share what his findings represent about the history of the site’s occupation, household activity, and additional structures on the site.

“We look forward to the next phase of archaeology, with the help of Dr. Blanton and students from the Archaeological Research Laboratory at JMU” said Robin von Seldeneck, President and CEO of the WWPL. She continued that “we hope that the community will again support our efforts to broaden the story we tell here and volunteer to help us with both ongoing documentary research and additional field work starting this July.”

The WWPL is actively seeking funding for this project. A GoFundMe page has been established for those wishing to make a monetary contribution to this year’s excavation and lab work or contributions earmarked for archaeology may be sent to The WWPL, Post Office Box 24, Staunton, VA 24402.





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The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library and Museum is open 360 days a year for guests from around the world to tour the President’s Birthplace, the Woodrow Wilson Museum, including the President’s 1919 Pierce-Arrow limousine, and the Library and Archives. The Presidential Library sponsors educational programming for thousands of schoolchildren each year and hosts teachers’ institutes, and a variety of other educational programs. The Presidential Library has a large collection of Wilson and Wilson-era documents, many of which can be accessed on the on-line digital archive.

The Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library & Museum is located at 20 N. Coalter Street in Staunton and includes Wilson’s birthplace, a museum, and library and archives. The Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday – Saturday, and 12 – 4 p.m. on Sundays. The Museum is closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays during the month of February. For additional information, call 540-885-0897 or visit www.woodrowwilson.org.

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