

## HAMILTON GRANGE NATIONAL MEMORIAL: A FOUNDING FATHER'S ELEGANT HOME

**Steve Laise:** In order to understand what Hamilton Grange means, you have to understand who Hamilton was, and what it meant to him. This is a man who has achieved political importance and who had created a nation and a national economic system. This man had done it all. And it just seems to me, that this house has to be appreciated as a highly personal statement of this man's success.

**Steve Spaulding:** He had this piece of land which he'd been familiar with all the way back to his days on Washington's staff. He brought Congress up here, at one point, in order to look at the property as a possibility of where they would build the capital. He ultimately buys the piece adjoining it, and he just makes great use of that piece of land.

When we're doing investigations in the building, we can actually see there's changes that are made during construction, which is indicative of somebody, most likely the owner, being involved during construction and saying, "I want to do things different."

**Steve Laise:** Hamilton traveled a good deal, and wherever he went, he was observing things that he found in people's home that he'd admired, which he would then write home about and say, "We've got to incorporate this feature in the house. We have to have this carved mantle. We have to have a triple light over the doorway." It must have driven the architect crazy because there was never any end to it.

Although it's a small house for seven kids and two adults and the servants, it was beautifully executed. It's a very early example of what we call the federal style of architecture, but it was done in a very a delicate touch. It's balanced. There are two piazzas on either side. There is a front entrance squarely in the center, and as you enter the house you're facing a symmetrical interior as well. And directly in front of you, is a portrait bust of Alexander Hamilton, and that was there when he lived there, it's not a later addition

**Steve Spaulding:** The building shows a certain vision, a vision of what's possible. You find something that strikes you and then you alter that in a manner, and it strikes you that much more. I think, in a lot of ways, that's what he was able to do with the Constitution and with our financial system, is he saw a path by which you could achieve something.