

## **Hamilton Grange Restoration Update – October 7, 2008**

The Hamilton Grange restoration team has spent the past month uncovering remaining historic evidence of the home's original roof details. Based upon this evidence the National Park Service (NPS) proposes to replace the flat roof with non-historic material and to install stained wood shingles.

### **Details Emerge from Original Roof**

When constructed in 1802, the Grange's roof was flat and surrounded with a lower (hipped) roof. We do know that the flat roof failed very quickly, as the nails that were used for constructing the replacement hipped roof date to approximately 1815, 13 years after the Grange was built. The only definitive evidence we found of the original flat roof were small wrought flashing nails, lead flashing, sealant, sheathing nails and balustrade (decorative railing) base nails. Even with this evidence, we unfortunately are unable to conclude what the original flat roof was actually made of. Options from Hamilton's day would have included wood shingles, lead sheets, tin plates or canvas.

Since we cannot conclude what the original flat roof was made of, and given the uncertain performance of any of the historic options, NPS is proposing to install a roof made of modern materials that will ensure weather tightness. The new roof material, which will be a synthetic membrane, will match the off-white appearance of the historic wood shingles (ranging in width from 2-3/4" to 5," with 4" exposed to the weather) previously found on the sloped portion of the roof – see September 10, 2008 update at [www.nps.gov/hagr](http://www.nps.gov/hagr).

Additionally, we consider it possible that the roof's balustrade, which can be seen in a circa 1860 photograph, is not the original balustrade, and in fact the original main roof balustrade may have been placed around the perimeter of the flat roof, connecting the four chimneys on their inside edges. The balustrade base nails (two large 6" wrought spikes spaced every 15-16" along the flat roof beams), completely flashed over at the intersection of two flat roof beams, were instrumental in our re-considering the location of the original main roof balustrade. The spacing of the double nailing correlates with the balustrade newels and intermediate bottom rail support blocks.

### **Temporary Reconstruction of Original Stair Components**

When the Grange was moved in 1889, the original stair hall was reconfigured to accommodate a new front door (the original faced St. Luke's Church). The reconfiguration entailed the replacement of the 1802 stair case, three runs of stairs with two intermediate landings, with a new staircase of one long run, a short run and one intermediate landing. To our great surprise, and appreciation to the 1889 carpenters, replacement stairs used all of the original stair carriages and one of the original

landings. Last week we “temporarily” reconstructed the original stairs, in order to determine the extent of missing pieces, and verified that the re-used landing was in fact the original.



**To comment or ask a question, please return to the Hamilton Grange Web site and click on the e-mail link above the updates.**

*To be removed from this update list, go to [www.nps.gov/hagr](http://www.nps.gov/hagr), click on "e-mail us" and write UNSUBSCRIBE in the subject line before submitting. Thank you.*