

Hamilton Grange

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Hamilton Grange National Memorial



A Monumental Move



The moving of Hamilton Grange National Memorial on June 7, 2008 was the first major historic structure relocation the National Park Service had done since the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse was moved in 1999. The entire process took 38 days — from the time the house was separated from its foundation to when it arrived at the new site just around the corner in St. Nicholas Park in upper Manhattan. The move was the first step in a full-scale restoration of the only home Alexander Hamilton ever owned.

The Movers



Wolfe House & Building Movers of Pennsylvania were selected to move the Grange, because their technique enabled them to relocate the 200-year-old house without having to cut it into two pieces in order to get it past part of a neighboring structure.

During the moving process, curious on-lookers often asked if the movers were Amish or Mennonite since they wore the flat straw hats, plain clothes and facial hair most Americans associate with those groups. However, the Wolfe movers are neither; they belong to a related sect known as the German Baptist Brethren.

Going Up

This project presented a unique set of challenges, as the Grange was sandwiched between St. Luke's Church Episcopal Church and an apartment building. A stone loggia (porch) on the church juttied out in front of the Grange, requiring Wolfe House & Building Movers to lift the house 38 feet vertically in order to roll it out over the loggia and out to the street.

To accomplish this feat, the movers employed a system of linked hydraulic jacks to maintain a level and uniform "lift," in order to reduce stress on the Grange to a minimum. After each lift, the movers installed towers of "cribbing," layering wooden supports and steel I-beams, and then moving the jacks into position for the next lift, until the house was raised nearly four stories above the ground.

The process took approximately 20 days.

The overhead pass

Seven thousand pieces of cribbing and almost two miles of chain were used to provide a stable support for the Grange to roll it to the street.

On May 26, 2008, the push over the loggia and out to the street took only a few hours. Then the cribbing was removed layer by layer over the next 24 hours to lower the building back down.

After the Grange was at street level, nine massive dollies were affixed to the support structure in preparation for the trip to the new site.



Moving Day

On June 7, 2008, hundreds of onlookers gathered to watch the nearly 200-ton structure roll down to the intersection of 141st Street and Convent Avenue and turn the corner to head to the park.

The nine dollies that moved the Grange were computerized and remote controlled, the operator making adjustments as needed, such as when the Grange turned the corner and began heading down 141st Street. The dollies used hydraulics to partially compensate for the steep slope of the hill.

At the entrance to the new site, a platform made from tons of dirt and gravel created a place for the Grange to be turned so it could be moved into the



proper position for its transfer onto its new foundation in late June. The ramp, which had been built the day before was removed by nightfall.

The Grange's New Home

Today, the Grange rests in the northwest corner of St. Nicholas Park. The 1-acre site was part of Alexander Hamilton's original 32-acre estate, which makes it an ideal place to tell its story and the story of the man who built it.

The landscaping plan for Hamilton Grange includes 13 sweet gum trees that recall the grove of sweet gum trees that was planted on the first site to represent the 13 original states.

