



PRESS RELEASE
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For immediate release

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MEDIA ADVISORY

James Hoban
The Architect of the White House

Celebrating the Building of the White House

James Hoban's was a memorable Irish-American success story. In his boyhood he learned the craft of a carpenter and wheelwright and became an architect and builder by trade. He immigrated to America and 1785 found him in Philadelphia seeking business in the temporary capital of the new republic. Two years later he was supervising construction projects and teaching draughtmanship in Charleston, South Carolina. Hoban's work in Charleston brought him to the notice of George Washington. With the President's encouragement, and following a competition organized by Thomas Jefferson, Hoban was appointed by the Commissioners of the Federal District to design and supervise the construction of the presidential residence. The assignment occupied him from 1792 to 1802.

Much about Hoban's life and personality remains a mystery. In his time he was not the legendary figure he is now. His personal and business papers, lost in a fire in the 1880s, left scattered drawings, public and legal documents, and newspaper notices to construct what is known of his life. His contribution to the early growth and development of Washington, D.C., as an architect, a builder and employer of scores of craftsmen, a mason, captain of the militia company, a civic leader, and founder and pillar of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church forever honor his memory.

However, no detail of him is more than incidental beside that of building the White House. He built it, returned to build it after the British burned it, then returned twice again to give it the columned porticoes, north and south, that we know so well. It is to James Hoban that this celebration is devoted.

The Building of the White House

To celebrate the 250th anniversary of Hoban's birth the White House Historical Association is hosting a symposium and an exhibition; creating the James Hoban Achievement Award; publishing a commemorative issue of *White House History*, its semi-annual journal; and producing a commemorative ornament and bookmark in observance of the occasion.

Symposium

James Hoban : Architect of the White House
Stephen Decatur House Museum at Lafayette Park
1610 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.
8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

To commemorate the 250th anniversary of the birth of James Hoban, the White House Historical Association and the United States Capitol Historical Society are sponsoring a free one-day symposium. Presentations will examine Hoban as federal architect and local civic and church leader; Irish artisan in early 19th-century Washington; and residential styles and construction in the nation's capital, 1790-1830.

Exhibition

James Hoban: The Architect of the White House
White House Visitor Center
1450 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C.
March 13, 2008 – November 2, 2008

The nine-panel exhibition looks at the many facets of James Hoban. Panels include Irish Roots; Life and Work in Charleston, South Carolina; Building and Rebuilding the White House; Developer in the Nation's Capital; and Family Life and Civic Contributions.

White House History Number 22 Spring 2008

Building the White House was the greatest event in Hoban's life. He worked on the Capitol, but others did as well; the White House was his. To paint as full a picture of this man as limited documentation will allow, *White House History* has brought together historians with interests in him and his era in Ireland and America. We look at him in the context of building and architecture as he knew them.

The James Hoban Achievement Award

The White House Historical Association has created the James Hoban Achievement Award to honor an individual who has made a lifetime contribution to the association's mission to enhance the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the White House. The award was inspired and named after the Irish-American architect and builder of the

President's House. The first award will be presented to Robert L. Breeden during the opening reception for the James Hoban exhibition.

The James Hoban Commemorative Ornament (2008)

This commemorative ornament, depicting the north and south facades of the White House, is crafted with sandstone from the same Virginia quarry that produced the stone used to build the White House more than 200 years ago.

James Hoban Bookmark (1758 – 1831)

Featured on the bookmark is a genuine postage stamp of the United States issued to mark the 150th anniversary of James Hoban's death. The stamp, now out of print, is a collector's item.

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