



Jesse White
SECRETARY OF STATE

NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

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Washington Exhibit to Open Extended Run at State Library

SPRINGFIELD — Secretary of State Jesse White, the Central Illinois Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and Renaissance Architects, Inc. of Springfield will soon be presenting the traveling panel exhibition, George Washington, Architect, in the atrium of the Illinois State Library, 300 S. Second Street in Springfield.

The exhibition will open to the public from Friday, July 28, through Sunday, Sept. 3. The Illinois State Library is the third site nationally to host the exhibit.

The exhibit explores a little-known aspect of George Washington's life as a highly accomplished, self-taught builder whose home at Mount Vernon has become an icon for early American design.

"We're proud to be part of bringing this wonderful architectural exhibit to Illinois," said Secretary White.

Divided into four parts, George Washington, Architect examines Washington's influences, his design and building efforts at his Virginia plantation, his vision of a grand American capital city and his architectural legacy. The exhibition explores the character of the man, his life and his times through the prism of the 18th century.

The exhibition offers more than 90 artifacts, drawings, manuscripts and paintings that explore Washington's role not only in the design of Mount Vernon but in the nation's capital that bears his name.

Unlike Thomas Jefferson, George Washington never attended college or traveled in Europe. He formed his ideas on design in many ways, from reading English pattern books to seeking advice from local workmen and neighbors.

For nearly two centuries, hundreds of architects have adapted Washington's designs for their own structures. The exhibition's section on Washington's architectural legacy proposes that George Washington created an architectural vocabulary that was distinctly American. As noted by architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, "Mount Vernon is one of the most widely imitated, if not the most copied house in this country. Easily the most famous house in the United States."

The exhibition was organized by the American Architectural Foundation in conjunction with the Mount Vernon Ladies Association. After the close of the exhibition at the State Library, the exhibit will continue to tour nationally.

The Illinois State Library Atrium will be open for extended hours during the run of the exhibit. The public can view the free exhibition from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturdays, and noon to 4 p.m. on Sundays.

For additional information about George Washington, Architect, contact the Illinois State Library at 1-800-665-5576, Ext. 6; Renaissance Architects, Inc. at 217/753-1585, or Tracey Owens of AIA at 217/522-2309.