

Visit Six Historic Queens Houses In One Momentous Day During #HollyTour2019

See How Different Cultures Observed Christmas Years Ago

(Flushing, NY) — Six Queens landmarks will open their doors to the public during #HollyTour2019 on Sunday, Dec. 8, from 1 pm to 5 pm. The 32nd annual extravaganza will feature time-honored, family-friendly activities, performances, displays, and refreshments. All-inclusive tickets are \$20 in advance, but \$25 at the door. Children under age 12 are free! (Max 2 per family)

The Queens Historical Society is the #HollyTour's main organizer, and tickets are for sale via the nonprofit's website and in person at its headquarters at Kingsland Homestead.

Participants will be able to walk and/or take a dedicated shuttle to the venues — Bowne House; Flushing Town Hall; Quaker Meeting House; Kingsland Homestead; Lewis Latimer House Museum; and Voelker Orth House — which are all in Flushing. Most of will be decorated as they were during their first holiday seasons.

Voelker Orth House (149-19 38th Ave., Flushing) will be dressed in a traditional German-American style much the way the Voelker and Orth women would have decorated it. Guests will check out a seasonal installation of miniatures, peruse a gift-and-plant sale, and enjoy pfeffernüsse (tiny spice cookies) and hot mulled cider. Pianist Kenneth Gartman will lead a holiday sing-a-long.

The Victorian abode dates to 1891 and provided shelter to three generations of a family with German roots. The original Voelker granddaughter, Elisabeth Orth (1926-1995), bequeathed her estate to establish the museum and preserve a view of Flushing's past. The garden contains popular plants and bushes from the 19th century. They're maintained with time-honored gardening techniques (no pesticides) for birds, butterflies and honey bees to feast upon and pollinate.

The **Quaker Meeting House** (137-16 Northern Blvd., Flushing) will offer folk singing and hot apple cider. Visitors will be able to walk around the grounds and view the historic cemetery. The building, which dates to 1694, was the first house of worship in a town that was then called "Vlissengen." Now it's New York's oldest structure in continuous use for religious purposes.

At the **Lewis Howard Latimer House** (34-41 137th St., Flushing), patrons will enjoy STEAM educational programs in the Tinker Lab, view an art exhibition, and watch

a video interview of the namesake's granddaughter, Winifred Latimer Norman, who fought to save the house and raise awareness of his contributions to science.

Lewis Latimer lived in his 19th century Victorian house from 1902 until his death in 1928. The African-American son of fugitive slaves helped develop the telephone and incandescent light bulb. The Renaissance man was also a poet, painter, and musician.

Kingsland Homestead (143-35 37th Ave., Flushing) will lead guided tours of the new Flushing Garden Club exhibition. Built between 1774 and 1785, the dwelling is one of the earliest surviving examples of area houses that were common in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Its name comes from British sea captain Joseph King, who bought it in 1801. Five generations of distinguished Quakers from the King/Murray family lived there until the 1930s. Currently, the dwelling serves as the Queens Historical Society's headquarters.

#HollyTour2019 partakers to **Flushing Town Hall** (137-35 Northern Blvd., Flushing) will be able to shop at an annual Holiday Market, where local artisans sell their wares, including jewelry, paintings, ceramics, paper goods, greeting cards, and clothing.

Built in 1862, the Romanesque Revival hall was the village's cultural and political focal point in the late 19th century. It hosted swearing-in ceremonies for Union soldiers before the Civil War and later served as an opera house, courthouse, jail, and bank branch.

Activities at **Bowne House** (37-01 Bowne St., Flushing) will include discussions of early holiday traditions and demonstrations of Colonial crafts. An early dollhouse with mini furnishings will be on display, and refreshments will include a treat typical of those served in the region of the Bowne family's ancestral home in the English countryside.

Built by English-born religious freedom advocate John Bowne in 1661, the home is the borough's oldest domicile. Nine generations of the Bowne and Parsons families lived there until 1945, when it became a museum. The structure, which has city, state, and federal landmark status, features a unique blend of Dutch and English construction techniques.

More information is at www.queenshistoricalsociety.org or contact Jeran Halfpap at 718.939.0647, ext. 14, or jeranh@queenshistoricalsociety.org.