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NEWSLETTER

WORKING TO PRESERVE OUR PAST IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

SPRING 2017



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QHS Spring Season Kick Off



▶ Image Credit: Queens Tribune

A warm early spring day can bring a dose of enthusiasm to a New Yorker. Call it a sort of spring fever that makes people feel like they can beat the odds of witnessing more cold and dreary days. In a delicious state of anticipation, spring is ready to enter our minds, and so is a busy list of events and collaborations we have in store for you this season. On February 25th, Honorable Council member Peter Koo was our guest of honor at Kingsland Homestead. We were delighted to present a quick preview of the events prepared in the upcoming months. As our long time supporter, Councilman Koo expressed a deep necessity for preserving our borough's past for future generations.

Our Curator and Collections Manager, Richard Hourahan discussed plans concerning various collaborations with local organizations to further explore and share Queens' history and diversity in all aspects of life. Our partners include Flushing's Chamber of Commerce, Flushing High School, Queens Public Libraries, Flushing Town Hall, as well as Queens College, and the Queens Botanical Garden.

Education and Outreach Director, Daniela Addamo, presented the highlights of our educational programs, one of them being "It's Electric!" a science based pilot program for middle school kids, presented by Con Edison, and geared towards their better understanding of sustainable energy and history of power use. In addition, we revitalized our Archaeology workshop aiming to bring local children closer to understanding the study of past human activity through a series of simulated digs taking place in Weeping Beech Park.

Enjoy the new spring season with us, pay us a visit, and help us serve the many Queens communities together.

A Letter from the Executive Director

Branka Duknic



► Image Credit: Frank DiStefano

Dear Readers,

Spring has had a cold start, but that shouldn't stop us from enjoying Queens and its many splendors. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the brilliant students of PS/MS 164 from south Flushing, who participated in our "It's Electric" workshop, this season. From assembling Stirling engines to figuring out how a wind turbine works, and using GPS knowledge to find historical caches, the students have excelled every step of the way. We're eagerly waiting for April 29th when they will be presented with honorary certificates for participating in this engaging pilot program, sponsored by Con Edison.

With the new season kicking off, I'm pleased to announce the new caretakers of Kingsland Homestead: Boris and Ana Pasic. They have settled in at our landmarked headquarters together with their lovely 9-month old baby girl and are happy to be a part of the QHS family. Ana holds a degree in Industrial Management with a keen interest in studying

various languages (she's proficient in Spanish), as well as professional photography. Boris has a BSc degree in Sanitary Engineering, and was a professional handball player. On top of that, Boris has an avid passion for cooking.

We are pleased to take part in commemorating the anniversaries of two important hallmarks of our nation's history through an educational poetry contest in Queens schools – an initiative developed by Queens Borough President Melinda Katz and the Queens Poet Laureate Maria Lisella. Students in Queens are encouraged to express their personal voice about freedom, civil rights and diversity through the art of poetry and prose. Under the theme: "What Does Freedom Mean to Me?" the contest is held to commemorate the 230th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution and the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in New York State.

Many exciting partnerships and collaborations lie ahead. Check on us frequently for fresh updates, and as always, stay merry!

A Message from Queens Historical Society President

Patricia B. Sherwood



► Image Credit: Anthony O'Reilly

The Queens Historical Society continues to change and grow. These past two months, we welcomed a new Board member and new caretakers.

Late January, Matt Klise our caretaker informed us, that he was relocating to Brooklyn. We wish Matt all the best. Interviews of candidates were held and we now have a new family taking care of our homestead. Read about our new family in Branka's message.

February also brought us a new Board Member. He had surveyed some of our members upon joining the Board of Trustees. He noted that a trustee must be committed to support the mission of the Society. Jason Antos answered our call. Our monthly meetings are now held at 5:30 pm on the 3rd or last Thursday of the month. He still would like to have additional resources become part of the Board.

Our licensing agreement with Historic House Trust is up for renewal. This is a necessary

document, since we are situated on New York City Parks land. We take it very seriously and require that the data and facts be correct before we sign it.

We would like to thank the Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer and his staff for the assistance that they provided with the snow removal around the Moore Jackson Cemetery.

Please, attend our programs and events.

Please, consider becoming more active in the Society and...

Please support us with an extra donation with your membership.

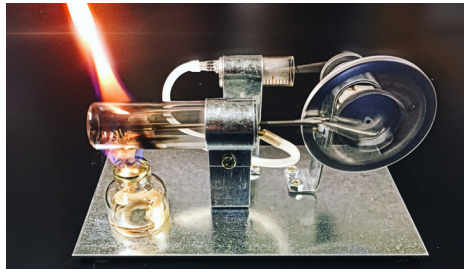
Thank you!

Public Programming & Education Updates

Daniela Addamo



► 8th graders from P.S./M.S. 164 learn about wind power, by building their very own small wind turbines. Image Credit: Daniela Addamo



► Steam Engine put together by 8th graders during the *Now it's Electric!* Program at P.S./M.S. 164. Image Credit: Daniela Addamo

With the Spring weather quickly approaching, the Queens Historical Society has over 30 school groups scheduled for our revitalized Archaeological Excavations Workshop. Students of all ages will have the opportunity to participate in a simulated archaeological dig at Weeping Beech Park. This hands-on learning experience of uncovering features and artifacts will teach students how to refine their analytical skills. The partnership between Queens Historical Society and Materials For The Arts

has been instrumental in supplying us with the materials needed for our educational programs.

The pilot program *Now It's Electric!* presented by Con Edison is in full swing. Carefully selected 8th grade students from P.S./M.S. 164Q are the first to participate in this after school program that traces the history of energy and power from colonial times to the present. In the past few weeks, students have already learned about the history and science of steam, hydro, and wind

power. In addition to these lessons, students have demonstrated their mechanical skills by working together on science experiments. Some of these experiments include building their very own steam engines, and even a mock internal combustion engine! Sunday, April 30th will mark the end of this pilot program, for which all 15 students will receive certificates during the Closing Ceremony.

Saturday, June 17th will kick off the summer with a Saturday Sculpture Workshop hosted at Socrates Sculpture Park in Long Island City. This will be the start of a new collaboration between Queens Historical Society and Socrates Sculpture Park! Staff from the Queens Historical Society will be at the event, to provide hands-on activities for kids. See the Programs & Events page for more details.

In addition to this program, be sure to check out details of our Spring Events: Jacob Riis Settlement House Past, Present & Future, and our Book Signing Event: *Lovely Toys From Long Ago*, by Elizabeth Uhlig.

The By-Laws of the Village of Rockaway Beach

Richard Hourahan

This rare document was recently donated to the Queens Historical Society by the Brooklyn College Archives. It is rare because the incorporated Village of Rockaway Beach only existed for one year and carried out very few transactions—it was formed in 1897 as an entity of the Town of Hempstead, County of Queens, and dissolved in 1898 when it became part of the Borough of Queens, County of Queens, in the newly expanded City of New York.

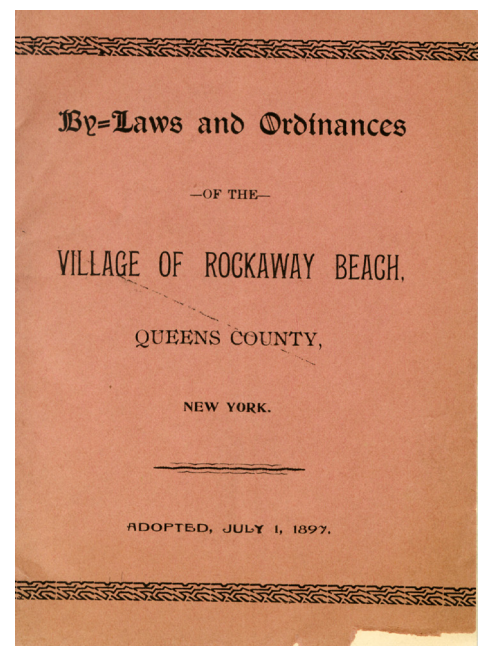
The Village of Rockaway Beach consisted of the merger of two unincorporated villages on the Rockaway Peninsula—Holland and Hammels.

Michael P. Holland was the Founder of Holland and Lewis Hammel was the Founder of Hammels. An excerpt from Holland's obituary which appeared in the *Brooklyn Eagle* in June, 1914 speaks of his origins:

Mr. Holland was 63 [sic, 64] years old. He was born in Jamaica on July 12, 1849, where his father was in the hotel business, and also conducted a tobacco factory. This tobacco factory was the first ever built on Long Island, and the old building still stands in Queens. In 1857 his father brought his family to Rockaway Beach, and opened a hotel at what is now the foot of Hollands ave. When the Hollands came to Rockaway Beach there were but six families there.

Unfortunately, all that is known of Lewis Hammel is that he purchased the land that bore his name in 1878 and that he was born in Germany.

► Rockaway Beach By-Laws
Image Credit: Richard Hourahan



An Update of our Underground Railroad Research

Jim Driscoll

Starting more than fifteen years ago QHS received a number of grants from New York State Assemblyman Jeffrion Aubrey to study the anti-slavery movement. We found a great deal of information about the movement here in Queens and even published three books on the topic. The people who did the research and the writing were Richard Hourahan, Derek Grey, Professor Kathleen Velsor and I. Gloria Sesso and Wini Warren edited the books that we wrote.

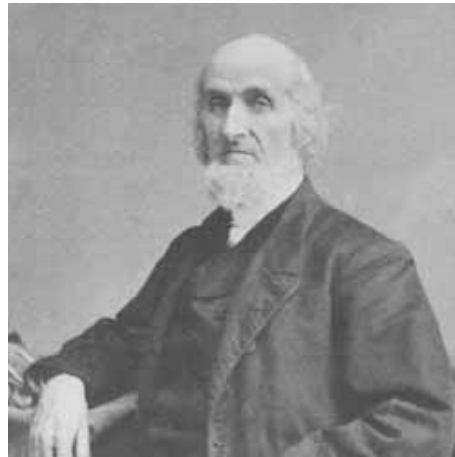
One of the families we found a good deal of information about was the Parsons Family of Flushing. The founding member of the family was Samuel Parsons. He died in 1841 and was for many years was the clerk of the Flushing Quaker Meeting House. He kept a diary, a copy of which still exists in the Parson Family collection at the Queens Archives. In it he writes about his hatred of slavery and the things that happened to it that he liked or disliked, such as the abolition of slavery in the West Indies by the British starting in 1835.

... the New York Tribune which said of Robert Bowne Parsons that no fugitive who knocked on his door was ever turned away.

In 1838 Samuel started an agricultural nursery to benefit his sons. He and his wife Mary eventually had seven children but his agricultural nursery went to Samuel Bowne Parsons and Robert Bowne Parsons when Samuel died in 1841. Samuel married Mary in 1806. She was a Bowne, a direct descendent of John Bowne, and was raised in the Bowne House. As was sometimes the custom in the

early 1800s, the mother's maiden name was used as a middle name for both the sons and daughters. Samuel Bowne Parsons and Robert Bowne Parsons ran the nursery for years and were regarded as important horticulturists. In the late 1850s, Olmstead and Vaux actually bought some of the plants used in Central Park from the Parsons Nursery.

Robert died in 1898 and Samuel in 1905. Because of their importance many newspapers carried articles about them when they died. They frequently mentioned the brothers' involvement in the anti-slavery movement or the "Underground Railroad." My favorite was the New York Tribune which said of Robert Bowne Parsons that no fugitive who knocked on his door was ever turned away.



► Rev. Simeon Jocelyn
Image Credit: Bowne House Historical Society

A couple of months ago I visited the Bowne House and met with their archivist, Charlotte T. Jackson. She appears to be carefully going through each of the papers and documents in the collection. In 1987 much Bowne correspondence and memorabilia was donated to the house. Although well taken care of no one appears to have read them. One of the items was a letter written by Simeon Jocelyn, a well-known Brooklyn abolitionist and participant in the Underground Railroad. The letter was brought to William Bowne Parsons by a fugitive and Bowne was asked to hide the fugitive for a couple of days because the place where he was staying, Williamsburg, was too close to Man-

hattan. The letter was signed September 28, 1850, about ten days after President Fillmore signed the Fugitive Slave Act. The new federal law angered many abolitionists and if you were caught violating it by helping a fugitive you could be fined or sent to prison.

Charlotte Moore has written about this letter in the Autumn edition of the Bowne House Newsletter. This is an important document. It wasn't written forty or fifty years after the event by a newspaper man but is what we call a primary source. It was written at the time of the event: the coming of the Civil War, by someone we can prove was involved in helping fugitives escape. At the time Jocelyn was an officer in the New York Vigilance Committee which actually ran the Underground Railroad in the New York area. In his letter he tells Bowne how to help the fugitive and although he doesn't mention the Fugitive Slave Act he tells Bowne to keep his eyes open. Thanks to the work done by Jackson we can now say that Flushing definitely had at least one Underground Railroad station and that it was run by the Parsons family. Unfortunately we don't know much about William Bowne Parsons. As Jackson says, he did die in 1856 and according to a local newspaper it was while he was in Brattleboro, Vermont. The tone of the article makes it seem he was on a visit. But it's just one more item to be researched.

Winter 2017 Issue Errata

Garahan, pg. 8
Bolitzar, pg. 8
Friedmann, pg. 8

Voices From the Interns At The Queens Historical Society

Daniela Addamo

As a non-profit organization, the Queens Historical Society thrives on the hard work of our interns. While many of them have come and gone over the years, they've all contributed to the cause in their own unique way, leaving their mark for the future of the Society. Here are some of the bios and personal experiences of this year's interns:

► "After graduating with a BA in History from John Jay College I was lost in trying to find a place to put my education into good use. Then I found the Queens Historical Society and I started to work as an archival intern. I am constantly working with different materials such as photos and even books dating back to the late 1800s and it has been nothing short of amazing. I always look forward to coming back each week to work on the archives, and through this I was able to make up my mind to pursue a career in archival work. I am so happy and excited to see where this path leads me to; QHS is amazing and it's evident that the staff loves what they do through their constant hard work and attitude." – Dana He

► "As a senior, completing the final semester of my undergraduate education, the word that best describes my emotional state is ecstatic. As a history major with a minor in art history, my love of this subject matter is apparent.

When one needs to find me; I'm either in a library researching or working on my thesis on the origins of the Varangian Guard. Graduation to me means the opportunity to further my career in the museum, curatorial, and archival world. It will mark the beginning of my earning my PhD.

All of these emotions and opportunities were, and are still, enhanced by my internship at the Queens Historical Society. Here, I was provided with an indispensable knowledge of the inner workings of running and maintaining a museum and its collections. QHS provides students with a chance to work in and experience every aspect of museum life. QHS gave me opportunities as an individual, specific to my interests and needs – something a larger institution could not have provided.

I will forever be grateful to the Society for the opportunities they provided me, the support they've given me and the knowledge and skills they've passed to me which will all serve as a solid foundation for my future endeavors." – Anthony Tsouristakis

► "Internships are about gaining experience for our future professional careers, and an adult learner, who already had many years of working experience, I was quickly made to feel at ease as

a native of Barbados who is a recent immigrant to America. The warm and friendly staff environment at QHS allowed me to obtain a broader knowledge of working systems by exposing me to administrative duties and group events. As I complete my major in Social Work at Queensborough Community College, I will take this new-found knowledge to my future endeavors as a teacher/social worker to provide services for children and their parents in underserved populations." – Sophia Worrell

► "I recently graduated from The City College of New York with a BFA in Electronic Design & Multimedia. This Spring, I am interning at QHS redesigning and developing the website. QHS has provided me an incredible opportunity to practice my craft. It is refreshing to work in a friendly and supportive environment where I continue to learn and grow. There are many wonderful opportunities to make a difference here and I think that is a special quality too often lost in NYC. The experience I am gaining is invaluable and I sincerely hope my contribution will benefit the Society for years to come." – Rich Prior

Barbie Doll's Champion Receives QHS Kudos

Joseph R. Brostek

The Barbie Doll came along in 1959 and was destined to become the largest selling Fashion Doll in toy history. Hundreds of millions have been sold worldwide. The woman who drove that remarkable expansion is Jill Barad who was Chair and CEO of Mattel, Inc. from 1997 to 2000. She was one of the first women to head a Fortune 500 company.

A graduate of Queens College, she came to New York in February to receive a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Annual National Toy Fair. She also appeared at her alma mater in a program called "Professionals on Campus"

where she met with business students. QHS Trustee Joseph Brostek is also an alumnus of Queens College and the unofficial historian of the college. He appeared on the program and thanked Ms. Barad for providing happiness to millions of people around the world and for being such a strong supporter of Queens College. He also spoke about the current Kingsland Homestead exhibit which features Barbie and many other Mattel toys. Mr. Brostek invited the audience to come and visit the "Toys & Games from the Attic & Beyond!" exhibit which will run through June.



► Queens College Former Mattel, Inc. Chairman and CEO Jill Barad (right) and QHS Trustee Joseph Brostek (left) at the Queens College campus.

Exhibitions Now on View at Queens Historical Society

Off-street parking available in municipal lot at 37th Ave & Union St.

Days & Times for All Exhibitions:
Tuesday, Saturday & Sunday from 2:30-4:30 pm

Museum Admission:
\$5 General,
\$3 Seniors/Students,
QHS Members are FREE
Exhibitions Now on View at QHS

► All programs & exhibits are held at the Kingsland Homestead unless otherwise noted.



Kingsland: Past to Present

In our main hallway is a refurbished exhibit on the history of the Kingsland Homestead and the family that made it their home for over 100 years.



Aunt Mary's Landing

Mary King Murray was affectionately referred to as "Aunt Mary" by her family. Aunt Mary resided at Kingsland from 1847 until the 1920s. She is the linchpin in the history of Kingsland and its owners from its construction in 1785 until its sale during the Depression of the 1930s. Aunt Mary saved numerous mementoes from her great grandparents, grandparents, and her parents. Displayed on Aunt Mary's Landing are these handed down memories along with other personal items that were part of her everyday life from childhood to adulthood.



Toys & Games From the Attic and Beyond!

Step back into your childhood and experience the magic of the toys of yesteryear. Indulge yourself in nostalgia, learn about toys and games from across the world, and discover toys you've never even heard of!

The Queens Historical Society presents our newest exhibition, Toys & Games From the Attic and Beyond! This exhibit features dozens of playthings and collectibles -- everything from an antique Chinese pinball game to a Star Wars collection to the Queens-born Fantastic Mr. Machine! Learn about the importance and history of generations of toys and games.

On view from July 2016 to June 2017.



Victorian Parlor

The Kingsland Victorian Room has been modeled to appear as it would have in the year 1870. This year was chosen because it represents a traditional period for the Murray family.



Weeping Beech Park

Come enjoy nature at work and watch as the buds on the Landmark Weeping Beech tree in America continue to grow and have their own daughters. While here, don't forget to look for the progress of our recently planted New-Town-Pippen apple tree.

Upcoming Events Spring 2017

Sunday, April 23rd

2:30 – 4:30 PM

"Jacob Riis Settlement House Past, Present & Future"

Presented by Executive Director of Jacob Riis Settlement House

Chris Hanway

Saturday, April 29th

2:30 – 4:30 PM

"Con Edison Closing Ceremony"

Presented by QHS

Sunday, May 7th

2:30 – 4:30 PM

Book Signing

"Lovely Toys from Long Ago"

Presented by QHS

Presented by Author Elizabeth Uhlig

Saturday, May 20th

2:30 – 4:30 PM

Award Ceremony

Art & History Student Contest

Presented by QHS

Saturday, June 17th

12:00 – 3:00 PM

Saturday Sculpture Workshop

Queens Historical Society

and Socrates Sculpture

Park Collaboration

Location:

Socrates Sculpture Park

32-01 Vernon Blvd. PO Box 6259

Long Island City, NY 11106-0259

<http://socratessculpturepark.org>

TBA

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QUEENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY SITE RENTAL

**Did you know, you can rent space at the
Kingsland Homestead?**

Both the Kingsland Homestead and surrounding Weeping Beech Park are available for weddings, business meetings, bridal showers, children's parties and other private events. If you are interested in finding out more information on site rentals at the Kingsland Homestead, please contact us at:

☎ 718.939.0647

🌐 info@queenshistoricalsociety.org

BECOME A MEMBER!

Enjoy the benefits!

Free museum admission

Discounted admission to our programs

Invitations to our special events and Exhibition Openings

Copy of our quarterly newsletter

10% discount on all publications in our gift shop

**See the following page for instructions on how to
become a member of the Queens Historical Society.**

DONATE

Tax-deductible!

Donations are tax deductible and can be made to support any of our programs or for general operating purposes.

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QUEENS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES, I would like to become a member of the Queens Historical Society or give a gift of membership. My contribution will help preserve the Kingsland Homestead and the history of the Borough of Queens.

Individual (annually) \$30 _____

Senior (annually) \$20 _____

Student (annually) \$15 _____

Family (annually) \$50 _____

Business (annually) \$300 _____

Life \$500 _____

Benefactor \$1000 _____

Gift Membership _____

Donation (tax deductible) _____

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TOTAL _____

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First time Member _____ Renewal _____ Gift Membership _____

Name: _____

Telephone: _____

Address: _____

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Your donation could easily double (or triple) at no extra cost to you. Many firms have generous "MATCHING GIFT" programs which they encourage their employees to use. Ask if your company has such a program.

Membership in the Queens Historical Society begins in May and ends in April of the following year. Please make checks payable to the **Queens Historical Society at 143-35 37th Avenue, Flushing, NY 11354.**

____ I am interested in becoming a Volunteer or Docent at the Queens Historical Society. Please contact me at the above phone number.

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