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 Museum Hours:
 Tues, Sat, Sun: 2:30 pm to 4:30 pm

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NEWSLETTER

WORKING TO PRESERVE OUR PAST IN ORDER TO PROTECT OUR FUTURE

WINTER 2017



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Holiday Historic House Tour

With mirth and laughter let old wrinkles come, as the jolly Gratiano tells us in Shakespeare’s Merchant of Venice. Indeed it was a happy occasion on December 11th, 2016 when seven unique historic houses: Lewis H. Latimer House, Voelker Orth Museum, Friends Meeting House, Flushing Town Hall, Lewis Armstrong House Museum, Bowne House and our very own Kingsland Homestead, opened their doors to visitors for our 29th Annual Holiday Historic House Tour. Guests at Kingsland Homestead were greeted with cheer and string quartet music, compliments of students from The Island Trees High School Chamber Orchestra. Kirsten Krick (cello), Tim Maines (bass) and Lilly Kljyan (violin), already experienced at performing classical opuses across NY State as well as at Washington, DC and Philadelphia, warmed up the holiday spirit on this joyous occasion. In addition, hot cocoa, sweets and savories were available for guests in need of some

warming up on that frosty Sunday. Various vintage holiday novelties and trinkets were offered at discounted prices. Visitors were also able to walk down memory lane and unleash their inner nostalgia by looking at our toy exhibit items and vote for their favorite one. Our museum docents played a vital role by providing house tours during the Holiday Tour. The team of Barbara Kearney, Annika Ottman and Lexi Dunlap did a wonderful job of bringing Queens history and people together with every tour they led. A special thanks goes out to our dedicated Board members who were spreading the holiday joyfulness by making everyone feel welcome.

We are hoping to see you all in the upcoming year for our jubilant Holiday Historic House Tour’s big 30th Anniversary. Celebrate the Tour’s big 3-0 with us and experience an exciting set of new exhibits and featured programs in 2017.

A letter from the Executive Director

Branka Duknic

Dear Readers,

A year's end is neither an end nor a beginning, but a *going-on* with all the experience acquired. I hope this year we make mistakes, because the more we're making them, the more we're trying out new things, the more we learn, the more we change ourselves. Making mistakes is how we, at the

Queens Historical Society, improve each year. I'm pleased to announce a range of events taking place during our late Winter/Early Spring season. Our "It's Electric" workshop will be launching on March 8th. I'd like to invite all 7th and 8th graders and their parents to join us for this free, after-school program, where students will be fully engaged in learning more about the history of power use, with a focus on electricity consumption and energy conservation. Feel free to contact our Educational Programs Department for more details.

The "*Toys from our Attic and Beyond*" exhibit has been a great success and a source of much joy to adults and children. However, it's time to announce the upcoming exhibit

The Sport of Kings in Queens - exhibition dedicated to thoroughbred racing in Queens, its contemporary significance and past glories. This exhibit will showcase aspects of the sport with accounts from people from different social strata. Jockeys, immigrant workers, owners and attendees will bring to light the social complexities of the world's most beloved event of leisure from behind the scenes to its media splendor.

To learn more about all our new and invigorating set of events, visit us on Saturday, February 25th at 3pm for a Grand QHS Spring Season Preview. Our visitors, city dignitaries and press are welcome to join us for the personalized tours of the house, light refreshments and talks on the upcoming event topics. Come by for a tour, a chat or simply to enjoy one of Queens' world neighborhoods. As always, your contributions are much appreciated and we're looking forward to meeting new volunteers and interns in the upcoming months.

A Message from Queens Historical Society President

Patricia B. Sherwood

Happy Winter!

My best wishes to all for a very healthy 2017. No time for hibernation; it's reflection season at the Queens Historical Society.

Many changes are happening in 2017. We processed resignations from four Board of Trustee members. These decisions placed a significant void on the Board. I wish all of them the best of everything and treasure the many years of support that they gave the Society. To find replacements will be our main thrust. Their responsibilities included re-uniting our collection, providing "TLC" for our Moore-Jackson Cemetery, being fund raisers, and chairing events as well as being available whenever they were needed.

Anybody interested in becoming more involved in the Society? Plans and meetings are still being formulated for the roof replacement. More information will follow.

In 2016, we lost our previous accountant Marshall Lipner. Marshall was instrumental in the formation of the Society. Our warmest condolences are sent to his family.

The staff continues to manage with their enthusiasm and motivation in making the museum a viable entity of Flushing.

The calendar is filled with school groups, programs, tours, and other events. Maybe even a picnic in July!

Staff meetings are always abuzz with the bouncing of ideas! An ongoing fund raiser is the opportunity of winning the granny stitch afghan handmade by one of our volunteers.

I would like to acknowledge the recent contributions made to the Society by Daniela Addamo, Fran Varon, the Euler-Revaz Family Foundation, Fred Eisinger, One Point of Light, Allan Roberts, Meryl Strassner, Jane Henson Foundation, *Aida Gonzalez, Historic House Trust, Con Edison, and dedicated volunteers.

I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

Public Programing Updates

Daniela Addamo



Image Credits: Katherine Avalos

QHS has an adventuresome and extensive schedule of programs and events for the Winter and Spring.

In honor of Black History Month, we have scheduled additional sessions of our ongoing educational program "The Road to Freedom: Paper Quilting" to fifth grade students on a daily basis.

Archaeology workshops for students will resume in the Spring. This continues our successful hands on workshops from 2016. These classes are appropriate for all grade levels.

We're also continuously grateful for all the help our interns have provided with assisting these classes as well as the many administrative tasks needed to make these programs a success. Of course, additional students or volunteers are always needed and welcomed to reach out and join the team at QHS!

We are proud to introduce our newest program, "Now It's Electric." This will be launched on Wednesday, March 8th at 3:30PM. This will be a FREE after school program that is open to all students in grades 7-8. Presented by Con Edison, the class will trace the history of energy and power from colonial times to the present. The advent of electricity in the late 19th century has paved the way for the age of modern technology. Students will be introduced to various aspects in the scientific field. This 5 week program will consist of 10, 45 minute classes, twice per week.

We are excited about our upcoming evening lecture this month on Wednesday, January 25th at 7:00pm. Dr. Jack Eichenbaum, the Queens Borough historian, will be giving an insightful lecture on the History and Commerce in Old and New Netherlands.

In addition, we have a packed schedule of public programs during the winter and spring. These events include film screenings, insights from authors, historians, and even photographers in Queens! Be sure to check the Programs and Events page in the back for more details.

Timing is Everything

Richard Hourahan



Image Credits: Katherine Avalos

Why would the incorporated Village of Richmond Hill, County of Queens, issue a “Sidewalk Improvement Bond” on June 1, 1897 when on May 4, 1897 the charter of “Greater New York” became law—thereby annexing it? The title of the law was: An act to unite into one municipality under the corporate name of the City of New York, the various communities lying in and about New York harbor, including the City and County of New York, the City of Brooklyn and the County of Kings, the County of Richmond, and part of the County of Queens, and to provide for the government thereof. Since the charter went into effect on January 1, 1898 and the Consolidation Act provided for equal taxation and the assumption of all



Image Credits: Katherine Avalos

municipal debts by the new city, Richmond Hill seized this financial opportunity. The Newtown Register observed that with the knowledge that their debt was to be spread among all the residents of the new city the “various villages and towns” in Queens Count that were to become part of Greater New York were all: taking time by the forelock in the matter of public improvements. Jamaica surpasses all her neighbors in this respect and throughout the town wherever one goes are found gangs of men building macadam roads, laying sewers or making other improvements . . . And building sidewalks! The Village of Richmond Hill was a part of the Town of Jamaica.

Coming This Fall

Richard Hourahan



Image Credits: New York Racing Association

“The Sport of Kings in Queens”

A New Exhibition Tells the Story of the Rich History of Thoroughbred Horse Racing in Queens

King Charles II not only created the colony of New York and the county of Queens, but being an avid horse owner and racing aficionado, he established the first official race course in the British North American possessions in Queens.

This exhibition traces the many “firsts,” “seconds,” and “thirds” which took place at the racetracks of Queens. You will meet four centuries of the culture of horse racing and the owners, trainers, grooms, jockeys, exercise riders, hot walkers . . . and fans who made Queens the home of the “Sport of Kings.” Rare photographs, films, paintings, horse-racing paraphernalia are being gathered together for the first time for presentation in this ground-breaking exhibition.

The Daffodil Project

Joseph R. Brostek



Image Credits: Joseph Brostek

James Trikas is a lifelong resident of Flushing and a very active member of the community.

James Trikas and I attended a recent monthly meeting of the NYPD 109th Pct. Community Council where I had the pleasure of presenting a “Cop of the Month” award that was sponsored by QHS. When Mr. Trikas heard of my QHS connection, he spoke with me and offered to plant daffodils at the Kingsland Homestead.

Of course, we were happy to take up his kind offer. So on two days in October – one was pouring rain – he came and planted 700 bulbs! We look forward to seeing them bloom beautifully in the Spring.

Trikas takes part in a program called New Yorkers for Parks which started in 2001 as a 911 Memorial called the Daffodil Project. It is a partnership with the Parks Department. Each fall free daffodil bulbs are distributed to anyone willing to plant them in public places. Contact NY4P.org for complete information. Note: the “Cop of the Month” is presented to Officers of the 109th precinct who have performed outstanding duty.

From the Ghetto to an Interwoven Fabric: A Century of the Peopling of Queens

Part 2: From World War II to 1980

Dr. Jack Eichenbaum, Queens Borough Historian

Part 1 of this article, “From World War I to World War 2,” appeared in the Summer 2016 issue of the Queens Historical Society Newsletter. Originally this was to be a two part article. Then the topic kept expanding! Part 3: “From 1980 to the Present” will appear later this year. Each part will thus span what is considered a ‘generation.’

At the onset of World War 2, and again subsequent to the war, Queens was the focus of two international events, which, at first, had a small but very significant effect on population change. Prior to the opening of the 1939-1940 World’s Fair in Flushing Meadows, public expenditure on transportation infrastructure and the creation of the park from wetlands that had degraded into a dump made the area attractive not only to fair visitors but also to eventual investment in residential developments in adjacent areas. New York City was chosen as the site of the United Nations after the war. Robert Moses, who usually prevailed in planning decisions in Greater New York, envisioned Flushing Meadows as a campus-like setting for the world government organization. In this case, he was trumped by John D. Rockefeller Jr. who purchased the land on the East River in Manhattan where the UN complex was built. But from 1946-1952, before the UN complex was completed, its headquarters was temporarily located in Lake Success on the Queens-Nassau boundary (on the grounds of the Sperry Gyroscope Co.) and the General Assembly met in the former New York City building (now the Queens Museum) in Flushing Meadows Park.

In 1946, people from all over the world came to work for the UN when housing in New York City was scarce. Most residential real estate in the area was racially segregated, which made housing options for non-white people particularly limited. Still, needing housing for its employees, the UN signed a lease with Parkway Village, under construction at the time at Main St, north of the Grand Central Parkway. The UN housed employees without regard to race or origin which made Parkway Village an unusually integrated community for its time. Though the UN’s involvement in the property ended in 1952, many of its employees continued to live there. While Queens had earlier pioneered in the interaction of residents of different European backgrounds,

Parkway Village, opened more than seventy years ago, was globally inclusive. Contemporary with the Parkway Village experiment, major changes in inter-ethnic relations were occurring on a national scale. In 1947 the Oscar winning movie was *Gentlemen’s Agreement* which focused attention on the subtler forms of anti-Semitism. Jackie Robinson (who in 1947 had sparked the integration of major league baseball) and other wealthier African Americans for a time integrated the Addisleigh Park neighborhood in St. Alban’s. In 1948, President Truman desegregated the military. Sociologists began to promote the concept of multiculturalism after World War 2 when the horrors of institutionalized racism and ethnic cleansing became almost impossible to ignore in the wake of the Holocaust and the collapse of the European colonial system. The key promise of multiculturalism was that cooperative interaction between ethnic groups could reduce prejudice and inter-group hostility.

During the following decade, the 1950’s, vast changes occurred in the USA that affected the demography of New York City. A peacetime industrial boom was fueled by the production of automobiles and other consumer goods. Together with Federal Interstate Highway construction, inexpensive housing flourished in outlying areas of the city and nearby suburbs made accessible by the automobile. The denser, more developed boroughs of NYC (Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn) each experienced a net loss in population, a total of 399,000. Queens, with much land to develop beyond the reach of rapid transit, gained 259,000 people. But this was not enough to offset the losses elsewhere and for the first time in its history, NYC as a whole, lost population (100,000*).

Internal movements in the city were primarily dictated by two factors. Low wage industrial jobs in New York City were being filled by African-Americans migrating from the South and by Puerto Ricans. Rapid demographic change in older, poorer, denser neighborhoods of Manhattan, the Bronx and Brooklyn accelerated “white flight” to other parts of the city and suburbs. In addition to this “push” factor, these movers were “pulled” by the modernity of newer housing and the relative ease of automobile use in less dense areas.

In Queens beyond the subway termini, vast tracts of former fields, forests, landfill and golf courses were developed as low density housing. Free-standing one and two family houses, three family row houses and low density garden apartments were typical. In older Victorian areas (like Elmhurst, Flushing and Jamaica), elevator apartment buildings with internal garages and modern kitchens and bathrooms replaced older housing on large plots of land in no longer prime residential neighborhoods. Most of this housing was affordable to the middle and lower-middle classes. Another wave of people of varied European backgrounds came to Queens.

Immigration was not significant in the 1950’s. Due to the quotas imposed in the 1924 only a trickle of immigrants, mostly from NW Europe, came to the USA. But refugee movement, especially from Communist countries, was significant. In Queens, some early refugees from Castro’s Cuba settled along the Roosevelt Ave. corridor between Woodside and Corona before the largest Cuban community in the New York area, emerged in Union City, NJ.

Even more unprecedented change was introduced during the 1960’s. The second World’s Fair was held in Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in 1964-65 and, also in 1965, US immigration laws were completely changed by the Hart-Celler Act. Instead of national quotas or racial exclusion, immigration was codified to favor those with needed professional expertise (such as doctors, nurses and other health professionals who were in short supply domestically with the advent of Medicare) or those seeking reunification with family members already in the country. The professionals who staffed the large pavilions in the two year fair were lodged in nearby Queens communities. The Taiwanese and South Koreans, particularly, lived in nearby Flushing. Many stayed as new immigrants and formed the core of the new skilled immigrant communities now centered in Flushing.

The new immigrants were predominantly middle class in their countries of origin and had middle class aspirations in New York City. Rather than settling in the poorest parts of the city, they found housing in older parts of Queens. Here the native middle class was leaving the city due to death, suburbanization

or retirement elsewhere. They were not being replaced by younger native people who were instead drawn to opportunities in other parts of the USA. Vacancies for new immigrants abounded in these areas. Latinos (particularly Dominicans, Mexicans and South Americans) were drawn to neighborhoods in Corona, Elmhurst and Woodside. South Asians (Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis) settled in Elmhurst, Jackson Heights and Jamaica Hills. Immigrants from the Caribbean concentrated in southeast Queens.

Continued immigration may have been the only positive change for Queens and the city as a whole during the early 1970's. Rising crime rates, the decay of the public transit and public school* systems, and the loss of jobs and middle class residents culminated in economic collapse, memorialized by the famous (though inaccurate) Daily News headline: "Ford to New York: Drop Dead" in 1975. During the decade, the city as a whole lost 817,000 residents and Queens accounted for 95,000 of them. Yet the foreign born population of Queens rose by 124,000, representing nearly 29% of the total population of the borough and surpassing the proportion in 1910. These immigrants were primarily young Asians and Latin Americans rather than the Europeans who came at the beginning of the century.

By the end of the decade, under the Koch mayoralty, the federal and state governments did help restructure the city's debts. The I LOVE NY advertising campaign focused positive attention on the city. The burgeoning immigrant population was large enough in certain areas to support commerce (particularly groceries and restaurants) and cultural institutions (particularly churches, mosques and temples) which in turn made it easier to support subsequent immigration.) Immigrants invested in land and businesses along the Number 7 train which became known as The International Express. Queens became known for its "diversity" manifested in food, language, clothing and performing arts.

"Voting Toys at the Queens Historical Society"

Joseph R. Brostek



Image Credits: Katherine Avalos

Everyone knows that 2016 was an exciting year for voters. It was also a fun time at the Kingsland Homestead ballot box. Visitors to the "Toys & Games from the Attic & Beyond!" exhibit were invited to vote for the favorite toy in their lives. Almost 200 ballots have already been cast at the display which will be in place through June 2017.

At the mid-point, girls and women voters outnumbered boys and men. Dolls of all kinds are the big favorite. This includes many votes for Barbie, Beanie Babies, Teddy Bears, Raggedy Ann and G.I. Joe. Trains rolled in second.

Voters' ages were pretty evenly distributed. About 25% were 30 and under. 40% were between 31 and 60. And 35% were over 70. So far, the youngest voter was a 4 year old boy and the oldest a woman of 95.

All were invited to make comments on their ballots and there were many interesting replies. Here are but a few: "When I was 6 I had a bicycle which gave me independence moving around Astoria." "My dad was an engineer so I loved erector sets when growing up." A woman recalled using "Real vegetables" when she played with Mr. Potato Head.

A "hammer" was the favorite toy of a 72 year old farmer's son who grew up in rural Ireland. A young woman said her enjoyment of her toy piano encouraged her parents to get a real one. A man in his 80s said he relished building bicycles from discarded parts.

A young man said his favorite was a Fog machine which he used when "The children performed at many family events." A stuffed bunny was the best-loved of a teenage boy who brought it with him when he was adopted from South Korea. One guest said "Seeing the old toy commercials on your TV brought back great Saturday morning memories."

A woman remembered pushing her Judy doll on the swings at Grover Cleveland Park in Ridgewood. Another woman loved the Russian stacking dolls. She now collects them from around the world. A visitor who played with color forms said she stuck them on all the panels of the French doors in her home.

A Chinese couple said they were delighted seeing pictures of children playing games back in China. A man confessed that he took his Mr. Machine apart and could not get it back together again. A woman wrote how her mother created an "Imagination box." "She put all kinds of stuff from around the house into the box and we had to use our own creativity to play with it. I plan to do the same with my daughters."

It was amazing to hear that so many adults still have their Matchbox Cars, Barbie Dolls and Beanie Babies. Many visitors said they really enjoyed the exhibit. Grandparents said they would definitely come back with their grandchildren. All those planning to visit should check the website Queenshistoricalsociety.org to be sure that the regular visitors' hours are in effect.

Granny Stitch Handmade Afghan

In addition to all the exciting events happening this season, we also want to let you know about our raffle! In April, one winner will be selected out of a drawing to win a beautiful Afghan blanket handmade by one of our volunteers, Fran Varon. The Blanket is 3ft by 5ft, acrylic and can be machine washed and dried.

Ticket Price:

1 Ticket: \$3

2 Tickets: \$5

If you are interested in purchasing tickets, please fill out the ticket form, indicate how many tickets, the amount enclosed and mail to:

Queens Historical Society
143-35 37th Avenue
Flushing, NY 11354

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

Number of Tickets: _____

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

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

Museum Admission:
\$5 General,
\$3 Seniors/Students,
QHS Members are FREE

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

Exhibitions Now on View at Queens Historical Society



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 Winter 2017

Wednesday, January 25th
7:00 PM

"History and Commerce in the Old and New Netherlands"

Presented by Borough Historian
Jack Eichenbaum, PhD

Saturday, February 25th
3:00 PM

"Spring Season Opening"

Presented by QHS

Wednesday, March 8th
3:30 - 4:30 PM

"Now It's Electric!"

After school program for grades
7 - 8 begins.

Sunday, March 12th
2:30 - 4:30 PM

"Queens as the World's Borough"

Presented by photographer
Adolfo Steven Vasquez

Sunday, March 26th
2:30 - 4:30 PM

Screening of *"Saving Jamaica Bay"*

Presented by author/film maker and
environmentalist Dan Hendrick

Saturday, April 1st
2:30 - 4:30 PM

"Con Edison Closing Ceremony"

Presented by QHS

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

Sunday, May 7th
2:30 - 4:30 PM

Book Signing

"Lovely Toys from Long Ago"

Presented by Author Elizabeth Uhlig

Saturday, May 20th
2:30 - 4:30 PM

Award Ceremony

Art & History Student Contest

Presented by QHS

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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 shower, 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

Fall 2016 Newsletter layout designed by Katherine Avalos
www.avaloskatherine.com



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Copy of our quarterly newsletter

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

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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) \$250 _____

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First time Member _____ Renewal _____ Gift Membership _____

Name: _____

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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.

If you would like to share information with readers about Queens history or your life in Queens, please send to us at: 143-35 37th Ave Flushing NY 11354 Attn: Newsletter OR Email: info@queenshistoricalsociety.org