



The Bowne House Historical Society, Inc.

# Bowne House

circa 1661



November 18, 2014

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Dear Members and Friends of the Bowne House Historical Society:

This has been a busy and productive year for Bowne House. We are thrilled that Phase I, the Exterior Restoration, is now complete. This phase included work on the outer envelope of the house; new cedar roofing, new siding, door and window restoration, some foundation work, and structural stabilization. Lastly, the house received a fresh coat of paint, selected to be in keeping with the earliest set of paints as determined by analyzing the many layers found on the exterior. Bowne House looks refreshed and is looking forward to many more years of service.

It was a challenge to remain on site and to maintain our community presence during this prolonged period of construction work, but we were able to do this throughout and even accommodate some visitors by appointment outside the hours when work was underway. Our community outreach programs are a vital part of our mission to serve the public.

Over the past months we focused our efforts on researching our archives, reviewing our extensive collections, preparing an updated interpretive and furnishings plan, and improving our educational programming. Through the restoration process, we learned more about the house, its occupants and its structural history. We acquired information which will be incorporated into our interpretive and furnishing plans and in our educational programming.

Other activities included the following:

- We welcomed interns from the Bard Graduate program; the interns chose to focus on our textile collection. The work will be highlighted in an upcoming exhibit opening next month.
- We held our annual volunteer appreciation day picnic in the garden.
- We hosted our annual benefit cocktail party and award ceremony on October 10. This year's honoree was the architect of record for Phase I, Michael Devonshire of Jan Hird Pokorny Associates.
- We again took part in the Yale University Day of Service, this year we had a record number of volunteers and were featured on the YDS website.
- In October, we participated in Open House New York, a city-wide weekend tour of sites across the five boroughs. Visitors were able to see the exterior work underway and they enjoyed a presentation on the restoration process.
- We continued to welcome interns from local schools. The interns honed their skills in a variety of tasks, in line with their interests. Their projects included historical research, photographic documentation, preservation and architectural observation. Interns and volunteers for community-based projects included those from these high schools: Flushing International, John Bowne, Townsend Harris, Stuyvesant, Bayside, Bronx Science and East West. Colleges and universities included: Queens, La Guardia, CUNY, SUNY Binghamton, Columbia and Yale.

Two events are planned for December:

- The Historic House Holiday Tour is planned for December 7th. The tour includes 7 historic sites in Flushing and Corona, including Bowne House.
- Our Bard interns have organized an exhibit about our collections of costumes. This will be held at the Queens Library, Flushing branch, located on Main Street in downtown Flushing. The exhibit will open December 5th and may be seen through January 5. There will also be a workshop for children. Our collection of costumes is extensive and quite extraordinary and has never been on public display before, so we are very much looking forward to this exhibit.
- Also, in October 2015, we are planning a special event in conjunction Landmarks 50. There will be a city-wide celebration of the 50th anniversary of the NYC Landmark law this year and next. Plans are in formation, so please check our website for additional details.

We are looking forward to an active year in 2015. We will be planning for the restoration of the interior. Donald Friary, the chair of our museum advisory committee, is working on an interpretive plan for the museum. As director of Historic Deerfield for 27 years, Don is well equipped to guide this process and to provide professional advice which will make our interpretation accurate, exciting, and engaging. We have many layers of stories to tell; 300 years of occupancy by a family which kept extensive and detailed records has given us a lot of material to draw from. In addition to John Bowne, there are other family members and members of the household who led interesting and notable lives. They will be included in the narrative.

In closing, we would like to thank you for your continued support of the museum. We would particularly like to thank our local elected officials; former Queens Borough President Helen Marshall and her staff, whose encouragement and guidance were instrumental to getting this project underway; Councilman Peter Koo, and NYS senator Tony Avella. We are grateful to Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison, LLP, and to Bolton St. John for their pro-bono assistance. We would like to thank the following foundations: Acorn, Baumbusch, Bray's Island, Gerson Family, Nautilus, New York Community Trust, the Colonial Lords of Manors in America, Valley Foundation, Inc., and our many loyal members and descendants. Without your help, we could not have achieved the goal of restoring Bowne House.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of our resident manager and volunteer coordinator, Anne Perl de Pal, who continued to watch over the house during the restoration work while coordinating interns, visitors, and local civic groups in our community outreach efforts.

Please consider making a donation to our operating, restoration, education, endowment or collections conservation funds. While the exterior project is complete, we still have work ahead of us. You may designate your desired purpose on the enclosed form. All gifts are fully tax deductible.

Have a Happy Holiday season and a Healthy New Year.

Sincerely,



Morris Hylton III