

The Bowne House Historical Society, Inc.

Bowne House

circa 1661



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FLUSHING'S BOWNE HOUSE MUSEUM FEATURED IN BEST SELLING BOOK ABOUT NEW YORK CITY'S HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE

**1661 Bowne House one of just twenty-seven buildings selected from among thousands that tell the story of New York City's history

**Only building in Queens featured in a new book by *New York Times* writer Sam Roberts

**Bowne House figures prominently in the American struggle for freedom of conscience and the guarantees of freedom of conscience enshrined in the First Amendment

New York Times writer Sam Roberts' recently published *A HISTORY OF NEW YORK IN 27 BUILDINGS: The Four Hundred-Year Untold Story of an American Metropolis* has been described as "a love letter to the Big Apple." Released in October by Bloomsbury Publishing, the book focuses on twenty-seven buildings – both famous and relatively unknown – that have contributed to the rich history of a city nearing its four hundredth anniversary. Among the handful of buildings featured is Flushing's Bowne House, the only structure in Queens included among structures as diverse as the Domino

Bowne House • 37-01 Bowne Street • Flushing, NY
11354 T 718.359.0528 • F 718-359-0873
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Sugar Factory in Brooklyn, Harlem's Apollo Theater, and the Flatiron Building and St. Paul's Chapel in Manhattan.

Sam Roberts' book opens with a chapter devoted to the Bowne House. One of New York City's oldest buildings, the 1661 rural farmhouse is now a museum attracting visitors from around the world. Located in a small city park steps from the heart of Flushing, the house exists today in what has been described as the most diverse community in the world.

Home to nine generations of an English family, it was the family's patriarch – John Bowne – whose defiance of strict Dutch Reformed rule was the impetus for the institution of religious freedom throughout the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam. This right derived from the 1645 Flushing Town Charter which guaranteed all inhabitants of the colony the freedom to worship as they pleased. Pre-dating the Bill of Rights (as the first of ten amendments, ratified December 15, 1791, to the United States Constitution) the Flushing Town Charter is the earliest known experiment granting freedom of conscience in America.

ABOUT BOWNE HOUSE

The Bowne House (ca. 1661) is the oldest building in the Borough of Queens and one of the oldest in New York City. It was built by John Bowne, who emigrated from England to Boston in 1649 and eventually settled in Flushing when New York was under Dutch rule. Over the course of 300 years, the

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family left its mark on American culture, participating in events of both regional and national significance. Perhaps best known was John Bowne, the family patriarch, whose defense of religious freedom led to the creation of the principles later codified in the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments of the United States Constitution.

The Bowne House Historical Society offers tours and special events throughout the year for the general public as well as customized tours for students of all ages. Most of the approximately 5,000 objects in the Museum's collection are original to the House; a rarity found in few cultural institutions open to the public. On view are fine examples of English and American furniture and decorative art, paintings, textiles, costume, household artifacts, rare books and manuscripts, and toys.

The Bowne House archives, an extensive collection available to readers by appointment, document the history and civic activities of the Bowne and Parsons' families – occupants of the house from the 17th through the 20th centuries.

For the media: For further information, interviews and for images to enhance articles about Bowne House please contact Rosemary Vietor; rrvietor@aol.com; Kieran Gannon, bownehouseeducation@gmail.com; 718-359-0528.

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For educators: To book school tours of Bowne House please contact David Silvernale, bownehouseeducation@gmail.com ; 718-359-0528.

To request access to the Bowne House archives please contact bownehouse-archives@gmail.com.

GF/11-2019

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