

**Flushing Remonstrance Special Resource Study
Summary of Community Discussion
September 19, 2017**

How long will the study take?

The NPS should complete the study within 3 years.

Is the NPS conducting other similar studies?

Yes, the NPS is conducting other special resource studies including another in New York City where we are evaluating the Prison Ship Martyrs Monument in Brooklyn.

What is the likelihood of this becoming a national park?

The NPS conducts the special resource study and evaluates the proposed property according to set criteria. Only Congress through legislation or the President through the use of the Antiquities Act can create a national park.

Are there other sites that are similar?

We are currently identifying national historic landmarks and sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places that have been recognized for their history related to the Bill of Rights and specifically to the First Amendment and the free exercise of religion. The national park system does not have a park that we are aware of that is interpreting the Flushing Remonstrance or freedom of religion in Dutch colonies.

Are there national parks that interpret the history of religious freedom?

Roger Williams National Historic Site located in Providence, Rhode Island commemorates the life of the founder of Rhode Island and a champion of the ideal of religious freedom. Williams, banished from Massachusetts for his beliefs, founded Providence in 1636. This colony served as a refuge where all could come to worship as their conscience dictated without interference from the state.

<https://www.nps.gov/rowi/index.htm>

Touro Synagogue in Newport, Rhode Island was designated a National Historic Site in 1946 and is one of the most historically significant Jewish buildings in America. The congregation was founded in 1658 by the descendants of Jewish families who fled the Inquisitions in Spain and Portugal and who themselves left the Caribbean seeking the greater religious tolerance that Rhode Island offered. The building was dedicated in 1763, it still serves an active congregation and each year greets over 30,000 visitors who come to see the magnificent interior and hear its remarkable story.

<https://www.nps.gov/tosy/index.htm>

Are there examples of active places of faith within national parks?

Yes, there are active places of worship located within the national park system. Touro Synagogue National Historic Site in Newport, Rhode Island is an affiliated site and an active house of worship. Gloria Dei (Old Swedes') Church National Historic Site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is another affiliated site and active house of worship.

Holy Trinity (Old Swedes') Church in Wilmington, Delaware is located within the boundary of First State National Historical Park. The church is owned and operated by the congregation and an associated non-profit group provides interpretive programs.

I am concerned that the federal government will take over things. The Meeting House and Bowne House are managed by non-profit organizations. Are there more opportunities for young people to participate in this process and tell this story?

There are many models for the management of a national park and the ownership of the resources located within the park boundary. The National Park Service does not own and manage all of the resources located within all national parks. For example, at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, the NPS does not own either Independence Hall or the Liberty Bell but rather we work in partnership with others to preserve, protect and interpret these nationally significant resources.

A special resource study does not create a national park or convey private land into federal ownership. A special resource study evaluates specific resources according to established criteria. Only the United States Congress through legislative action or the President through the use of the Antiquities Act can create a national park.

The best way to participate in the study is to attend community meetings such as this and to submit your comments on our website: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/flushing>. Expressions of support or opposition are considered during the analysis of the study criteria.

Is the study completed by professionals?

Yes. The study is led by park planners who assemble an interdisciplinary team who contribute to the development of the study. The NPS often engages consultants with expertise in areas relevant to the subject to address factual questions and to inform the NPS team in their analysis. For the Flushing Remonstrance Special Resource Study, the NPS is working with historians with particular knowledge of New Netherlands to inform our analysis of national significance.

How has the study process progressed since the first community meeting in October 2016?

The primary focus has been investigating the factual history of the Flushing Remonstrance and situating that event into historical context in the evolution of free exercise of religion in the American colonies through the ratification of the Bill of Rights.

This information will help inform the analysis of the first criterion, national significance. This research takes a lot of time since this area of history has not been researched in depth by the NPS through a theme study or historic context. We are also doing a preliminary analysis of the next two criteria: suitability and feasibility.

The Flushing Remonstrance was a very important document, but it did not bring religious freedom to New Netherland. Bowne's arrest and return to New Netherland brought religious tolerance. Will that be part of the story?

That is an aspect of the story that we are researching now. Legislation requesting this special resource study stated that the study would include not only the Flushing remonstrance document but the era of the signing of the document, so we are researching that aspect.

Bowne House has a number of deeds from the 1650 – would they be helpful?

Yes

Peter Stuyvesant is buried in St. Mark's burial yard in Manhattan. Do burial sites play a role in the study?

Burial sites are typically excluded from consideration for national significance. One exception is if the burial site or cemetery is recognized for significance in design.

Are any other sites besides the Meeting House and the Bowne House being considered in the study?

We are in the process of researching that but are unaware of any structures still standing that are related to the Flushing Remonstrance. We understand that the building where the remonstrance was signed was located at the current site of the Armory building.

In addition to questions, community members offered suggestions for repositories that may contribute to the understanding of the Flushing Remonstrance and its related history and resources. These suggestions included:

- Series of deeds related to the Bowne House and property at the Bowne House
- King George III of England's map collection may be a source of a map of Flushing C. 1664
- New York State Archives in Albany contains a copy of the Flushing Remonstrance document.
- The Jamaica, Queens branch of the New York Public Library has an archival collection that may contain a copy of the Flushing town charter.
- The Holland Society in Manhattan
- Research related to the handwriting of the Flushing Remonstrance document and line-by-line biblical references may inform an understanding of the document and its signers.