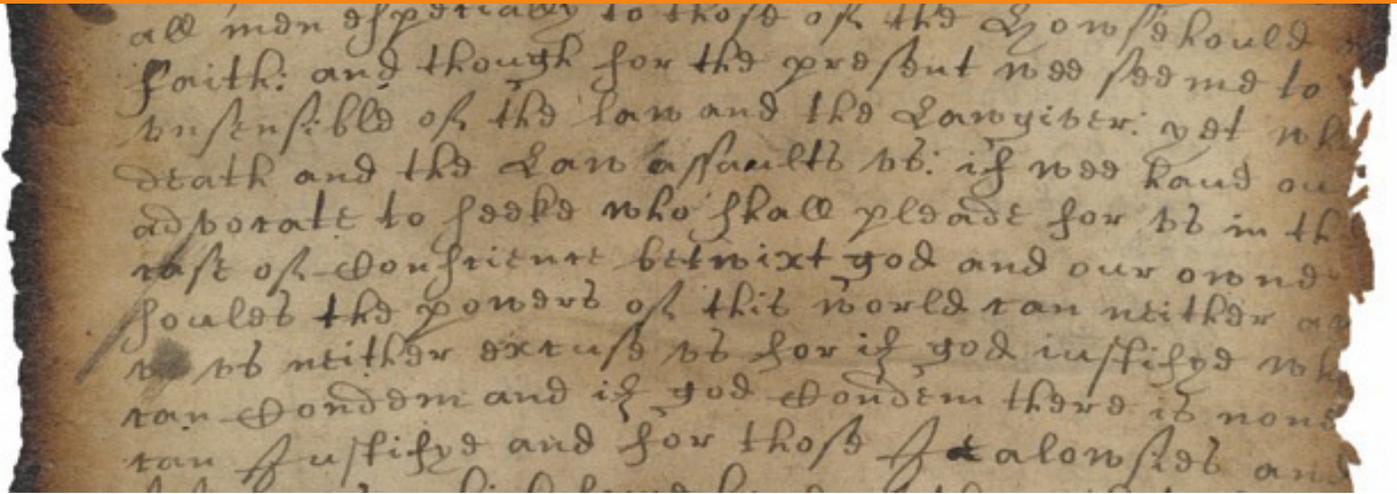




RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

LET US STAY:

The Struggle for Religious Freedom in Dutch New Netherland 1650-1664



OVERVIEW

Students will analyze a 17th-century text to gain insight into the struggle for religious freedom in New Amsterdam, and will debate the success or failure of this early form of activism.

STUDENT GOALS

- Students will learn about activism in 17th-century New York.
- Students will identify the key figures in the debate over religious toleration in New Amsterdam.
- Students will analyze the style and substance of the Flushing Remonstrance to consider its enduring legacy.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Grade 4:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.4.8

Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

Grade 7:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.8

Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is sound and the evidence is relevant and sufficient to support the claims.

Grades 11-12:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text.

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KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY

- Amendment
 - Constitution
 - Landmark
 - Religion
 - Tolerance/Toleration

 - Quaker
-

ACTIVISTS

- John Bowne
- Petrus Stuyvesant

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INTRODUCING RESOURCE 1

Edward Hart, “Flushing Remonstrance.” Petition. Flushing, New Amsterdam, December 27, 1657.

<http://flushingfriends.org/history/flushing-remonstrance/>

Remonstrance of the Inhabitants of the Town of Flushing to Governor Stuyvesant, December 27, 1657, is a petition signed by 31 men, in response to the governor’s actions against Quakers.

In 1657, 31 settlers in the Dutch colony of New Netherland (now New York and New Jersey) risked arrest and banishment when they came to the defense of members of the Society of Friends—known as Quakers—who had been banned from the colony. Afraid this new group would destabilize the colony, Stuyvesant ordered Quaker preachers to be expelled and fined any colonists who welcomed them into their homes. In December 1657, 31 residents of the village of Flushing signed a petition against Stuyvesant’s ban on Quakers. “If any of these said persons [Quakers] come in love unto us, we cannot in conscience lay violent hands upon them,” the petitioners wrote, justifying their appeal to overturn the law. Stuyvesant denounced the petition as a “detestable letter of defiance.”

Known today as the Flushing Remonstrance, this petition is one of New York State’s most cherished documents, and is considered a landmark of New York’s heritage of civil and religious rights. It had no immediate impact at the time, beyond getting four of its signers jailed.

Right Honorable

You have been pleased to send unto us a certain prohibition or command that we should not receive or entertain any of those people called Quakers because they are supposed to be, by some, seducers of the people. For our part we cannot condemn them in this case, neither can we stretch out our hands against them, for out of Christ God is a consuming fire, and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Wee desire therefore in this case not to judge least we be judged, neither to condemn least we be condemned, but rather let every man stand or fall to his own Master. Wee are bounde by the law to do good unto all men, especially to those of the household of faith. And though for the present we seem to be unsensible for the law and the Law giver, yet when death and the Law assault us, if wee have our advocate to seeke, who shall plead for us in this case of conscience betwixt God and our own souls; the powers of this world can neither attach us, neither excuse us, for if God justifiye who can condemn and if God condemn there is none can justifie.

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And for those jealousies and suspicions which some have of them, that they are destructive unto Magistracy and Ministrye, that cannot bee, for the Magistrate hath his sword in his hand and the Minister hath the sword in his hand, as witness those two great examples, which all Magistrates and Ministers are to follow, Moses and Christ, whom God raised up maintained and defended against all enemies both of flesh and spirit; and therefore that of God will stand, and that which is of man will come to nothing. And as the Lord hath taught Moses or the civil power to give an outward liberty in the state, by the law written in his heart designed for the good of all, and can truly judge who is good, who is evil, who is true and who is false, and can pass definitive sentence of life or death against that man which arises up against the fundamental law of the States General; soe he hath made his ministers a savor of life unto life and a savor of death unto death.

The law of love, peace and liberty in the states extending to Jews, Turks and Egyptians, as they are considered sons of Adam, which is the glory of the outward state of Holland, soe love, peace and liberty, extending to all in Christ Jesus, condemns hatred, war and bondage. And because our Saviour sayeth it is impossible but that offences will come, but woe unto him by whom they cometh, our desire is not to offend one of his little ones, in whatsoever form, name or title hee appears in, whether Presbyterian, Independent, Baptist or Quaker, but shall be glad to see anything of God in any of them, desiring to doe unto all men as we desire all men should doe unto us, which is the true law both of Church and State; for our Saviour sayeth this is the law and the prophets.

Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us, we cannot in conscience lay violent hands upon them, but give them free egress and regress unto our Town, and houses, as God shall persuade our consciences, for we are bounde by the law of God and man to doe good unto all men and evil to noe man. And this is according to the patent and charter of our Towne, given unto us in the name of the States General, which we are not willing to infringe, and violate, but shall houlde to our patent and shall remaine, your humble subjects, the inhabitants of Vlissing..

Written this 27th of December in the year 1657, by mee.

Edward Hart, Clericus

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Additional Signers

<i>Tobias Feake</i>	<i>Nathaniell Tue</i>
<i>The marke of William Noble</i>	<i>Nicholas Blackford</i>
<i>William Thorne, Seignior</i>	<i>The marke of Micah Tue</i>
<i>The marke of William Thorne, Jr.</i>	<i>The marke of Philip Ud</i>
<i>Edward Tarne</i>	<i>Robert Field, senior</i>
<i>John Store</i>	<i>Robert Field, junior</i>
<i>Nathaniel Hefferd</i>	<i>Nich Colas Parsell</i>
<i>Benjamin Hubbard</i>	<i>Michael Milner</i>
<i>The marke of William Pidgion</i>	<i>Henry Townsend</i>
<i>The marke of George Clere</i>	<i>George Wright</i>
<i>Elias Doughtie</i>	<i>John Foard</i>
<i>Antonie Feild</i>	<i>Henry Semtell</i>
<i>Richard Stocton</i>	<i>Edward Hart</i>
<i>Edward Griffine</i>	<i>John Mastine</i>
<i>John Townesend</i>	<i>Edward Farrington</i>

Edward Hart, "Flushing Remonstrance." Petition. Flushing, New Amsterdam, December 27, 1657.
<http://flushingfriends.org/history/flushing-remonstrance/>

DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- Who is the petition written to? Who is the petition from?
- What are the two arguments laid out in the first paragraph?
- The last paragraph states, "Therefore if any of these said persons come in love unto us." Who are the different groups mentioned in the body of the petition? What does that tell us about the inhabitants of New Amsterdam?
- How was this petition a form of activism and why do you think it is still referenced and revered over three centuries later?

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INTRODUCING RESOURCE 2

U.S. Congress, 1st Amendment, 1st Cong., 1st sess., 1789.

<http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution/amendments/amendment-i>

The 1st Amendment of the Constitution, Passed by Congress September 25, 1789, the first of the ten amendments that make up the Bill of Rights, mandating the freedom of religion, speech, and press.

Almost a 150 years after the Flushing Remonstrance was written, the first amendment of the Constitution was passed by Congress in 1789 and ratified in 1791. The first amendment mandates the freedom of religion, speech, and the press, and was the first of ten amendments that make up the Bill of Rights.

RELIGION, SPEECH, PRESS, ASSEMBLY, AND PETITION

Passed by Congress September 25, 1789. Ratified December 15, 1791.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

DOCUMENT BASED QUESTIONS

- The first amendment covers topics related to freedom of expression. What are the methods listed? Why do you think these actions are banded together? What do they have in common?
- How is freedom of religion similar to freedom of speech and assembly?
- Why do you think this amendment was the first one to be adopted? Why would the tenets expressed be so vital to the founding fathers?
- What similarities do you see between the Flushing Remonstrance and the first amendment?

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ACTIVITY

The Bowne House Historical Society was founded in 1946 by a group of local Flushing residents for the sole purpose of purchasing the house and opening it to the public as a museum. The Society purchased the house from the last family occupants, the Parsons sisters, and has operated it as a museum since 1947.

In 1662, five years after the Flushing Remonstrance, Stuyvesant banished an English-born Quaker, John Bowne of Flushing, for hosting illegal religious gatherings in his home. Bowne protested to the Dutch West India Company in Amsterdam, which in 1663 instructed Stuyvesant to moderate his policy. "Allow everyone to have his own belief," the directors wrote to him, "as long as he behaves quietly and legally." Bowne's activism helped extend protection to the colony's other religious minorities. His house, one of the few surviving 17th-century buildings, became a landmark in American Quaker history and a symbol of the early struggle for religious freedom in New Netherland.

In preparation for a visit, review the history of the house at http://www.bownehouse.org/house_history.htm and ask students to consider the following questions:

1. What is the difference between a *museum* and a *historic house*?
2. Do you think it is important to preserve historical sites? Why or why not?
3. The Bowne House is landmarked. Visit <http://www.nyclandmarks50.org/> to learn what that means and review the House's designation report here: <http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/lp/0143.pdf>
When was it designated a landmark? What was the argument for its designation?

Based on what students learn during this lesson, invite them to write their own argument for the preservation of the Bowne House.

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ADDITIONAL READING

Life in New Amsterdam Educator Resource Guide, Museum of the City of New York.

This resource guide includes original essays written by leading scholars on the history of New Netherland. Additionally, it contains lesson plans with vocabulary lists, activities, and images of primary sources from the Museum's collection – 17 of them were newly digitized for this guide. Lessons include contemporary connections that examine the Dutch influence still recognizable in New York today through its geography, diversity, tolerance, and entrepreneurial spirit.

<http://www.mcny.org/content/educators-guides>

CONTEMPORARY CONNECTIONS

"A Colony with a Conscience" by Kenneth T. Jackson, December 27, 2007, is an op-ed that recounts the steps leading up to and following the writing of the Remonstrance.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/27/opinion/27jackson.html>

"The Melting Pot on a High Boil in Flushing" by John Strausbaugh, May 2, 2008, visits Flushing 350+ years after the Remonstrance to visit the variety of religious institutions flourishing on the very same streets.

http://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/02/arts/02expl.html?_r=0&pagewanted=all

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Jacobs, Jaap. *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009.

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