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Press Release

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FLUSHING'S LATIMER HOUSE JOINS THE HISTORIC HOUSE TRUST

The Historic House Trust of New York City is proud to announce the newest addition to its collection, the Lewis H. Latimer House at 34-41 137th Street in Flushing, Queens. This New York City Landmark has been officially transferred from the Department of Cultural Affairs to the Department of Parks & Recreation. Parks and the Historic House Trust will collaborate on conservation, interpretation and promotion of the house and property. The Latimer House continues to be operated as a museum by the Lewis H. Latimer Fund, Inc.

The house is a modest Queen Anne-style, wood-frame suburban residence constructed between 1887 and 1889 by the Sexton family. Lewis Howard Latimer, an African-American inventor and electrical pioneer and the son of fugitive slaves, lived in the house from 1903 until his death in 1928. The house remained in the Latimer family until 1963. Threatened with demolition, the house was moved from Holly Avenue to its present location in 1988. Today, the house represents an important piece of African-American history that is not only significant to Flushing and Queens, but also to New York City.

Under the leadership of its new director, Vivian Millicent Warfield, the Lewis H. Latimer Fund, Inc. plans to expand its exhibitions and public programs to highlight the importance of Lewis H. Latimer's and other African Americans' contributions to science and technology and New York City history. Beginning September 2, 2008, the museum will increase its hours to Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. for tours of the house and garden. Also, beginning in October, afterschool programs will be offered in Physical Sciences/Electricity and Social Studies/American History. In honor of Lewis H. Latimer's 160th birthday, there will be a series of special events during the fall season.

Lewis H. Latimer was determined to overcome his lack of formal education and taught himself mechanical drawing while in the Union Navy and became an expert draftsman. He worked with three of the greatest scientific inventors in American history, including Alexander Graham Bell, Hiram S. Maxim, and Thomas Alva Edison. He played a critical role in the development of the telephone and, as Edison's chief draftsman, he invented and patented the carbon filament, a significant improvement in the production of the incandescent light bulb. Over the course of his career, Latimer supervised the installation of street lighting and the construction of electric plants in many American cities, as well as London and Montreal.

The **Historic House Trust of New York City** is a nonprofit organization founded in 1989 to help the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation preserve its collection of historic houses. The Trust works with Parks and the nonprofit boards of each house to restore, interpret and promote the sites, which span 350 years of New York City life. From modest farmers' cottages to grand mansions, the 22 sites in the Trust's collection are located in all five boroughs and chronicle a wide range of cultural, historical and architectural aspects of New York City.

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History Begins at Home. Historic House Trust is a not-for-profit organization operating in tandem with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation. Our mission is to provide essential support for houses of architectural and cultural significance, spanning 350 years of New York City life. These treasures reside within city parks and are open to the public. WWW.HISTORICHOUSETRUST.ORG