



# Friends of Historic New Utrecht

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## Friends of Historic New Utrecht

Eds: Photos from the Liberty Weekend 2006 events - including pictures of the new scaffolding outside the old church building - are available at 917-345-9000. The events were held Friday, June 2 through Sunday, June 4. Photo discs also may be obtained for your photo libraries.

### IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### With Church Still Closed, Over 100 School Children Get 'Outside History Lesson'

BROOKLYN - With the old [New Utrecht Reformed Church](#) in Bensonhurst still closed for a nearly \$2 million restoration, over 150 Brooklyn school children were given an "outside history lesson" during the 2006 Liberty Weekend sponsored by the [Friends of Historic New Utrecht](#), the [New Utrecht Liberty Pole Association](#) and the church.

Until December 2003, most of the Friends' educational programs were centered inside the 1828 church building, on 18th Ave. and 84th St. (Liberty Pole Blvd.). "We are determined to carry on while the renovation takes place," said Robert Buonvino, president of the New Utrecht history organization. "Nowadays, the community can tell by the scaffolding outside the building that progress is being made."

Each year hundreds of visitors participating in the Liberty Weekend activities walk through a Civil War Encampment prepared by the 14th Brooklyn Regiment, Co. 'H', on the church lawn, featuring the Cannon of Winslow Battery 'D'.

Some 160 youngsters from public and private schools in School Region 7 attended "outside classes" as a "living history" program was conducted on the church grounds with an emphasis on the Revolutionary and Civil Wars.

Participants included New York State Spanish re-enactors who led a parade to the church's old Dutch cemetery, which dates from the 17th century, where a wreath was placed near the monument of Gen. Nathaniel Woodhull, who was imprisoned by the British at the site and later died of his wounds.

Also during the Liberty Weekend, a wreath was placed at the New Utrecht Liberty Pole in honor of American veterans of all wars. The [New Utrecht High School](#) band led the raising of the colors of a replica of the Betsy Ross flag at the 106-foot flagpole on the church lawn. The first such pole was erected there 223 years ago in celebration of the departure of the British.

Over 125 people attended a concert given by the [Interscholar Orchestra Concert Band](#) under the direction of Brian P. Worsdale.

Government representatives who joined in the Liberty Weekend celebration included state senator Martin Golden and city councilman Vincent Gentile. Also participating was Brooklyn attorney Stephen A. Harrison, Democratic candidate for Congress.

Those in attendance saw the progress being made near the start of restoration of the old Dutch church building with scaffolding put up outside and protection given to its famous stained-glass windows.

During an [all-faith worship service](#) in the Parish House, some worshippers wore costumes from the days of the Civil and Spanish-American wars.

The New Utrecht Reformed Church, within the mainline [Reformed Church in America](#) (RCA) denomination, dates back almost 330 years in Brooklyn. Its sanctuary has been closed about 2 1/2 years and until recently the only scaffolding had been inside, to make certain the roof did not collapse from the weight of snow in winters.

Persons interested in learning more about Brooklyn's early history are invited to call (718) 256-7173 or (718) 234-9268. They also may log onto the Friends of Historic New Utrecht's Web site at [www.historicnewutrecht.org](http://www.historicnewutrecht.org). Contributions for repair and restoration of the landmark are welcome at Friends of Historic New Utrecht, 1831 84th St., Brooklyn, NY 11214. Checks, tax deductible, may be made out to the Friends of Historic New Utrecht Restoration Fund.

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