



Friends of John Jay Homestead *Inc.*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HUGUENOT EXHIBIT OPENING AT JOHN JAY HOMESTEAD

On Friday, December 4, 2009, Friends of John Jay Homestead will host a cocktail reception for 100 people to celebrate the opening of *From Oppression to Freedom: John Jay and His Huguenot Heritage*. The event, beginning at 6:30 p.m., will take place in the period rooms of the Main House at John Jay Homestead, where the exhibit will be held in the refurbished back parlor. Event proceeds will benefit the Friends' preservation, restoration, and education programs.

From Oppression to Freedom will explore the religious persecution the Jays suffered as Protestants in France during the 17th century, their flight as refugees, and John Jay's grandfather's arrival in North America in the 1680s, founding the American branch of the family. John Jay's religious and political convictions will be examined in the light of his family's experience. Finally, the impact that the persecution of religious minorities had on Americans will be covered, as will how this inspired the freedom of religion and the separation of Church and State now enshrined in the United States Constitution.

The exhibition will include what is believed to be the oldest surviving Jay family document of American origin: the letter of denization that allowed Auguste Jay, John Jay's grandfather, to live and conduct business in the English colony of New York. Signed in 1686, it was recently acquired for the Homestead by the Friends, with the generous assistance of Mr. Alec Cobbe, a John Jay descendant. Also on view will be an oil portrait of Auguste, his son's (John Jay's father's) silver seal, and the family's 1724 oversized copy of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The Honorary Chairs of the exhibit opening party are Mr. Cobbe and his wife, Isabel, who will travel from England for the event. Mr. and Mrs. Cobbe reside at Hatchlands Park, a National Trust site, where Mr. Cobbe displays to the public his distinguished collection of portraits, old master paintings, books, furniture, and keyboard musical instruments, from his ancestral home of Newbridge House in County Dublin, Ireland.

Featured guest, Count Pierre F. de Ravel d'Esclapon, will make brief remarks at the reception. Count d'Esclapon is a lawyer in the firm of Dewey & LeBoeuf LLP and is a Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur and a Chevalier de l'Ordre National de Merite of France. He is currently writing a book about the French in New York.

Tickets for the exhibit opening at John Jay Homestead are \$100 per person for Friends' members and \$125 per person for non-members. Valet parking will be available. John Jay Homestead State Historic Site is located at 400 Route 22, Katonah, NY. For further information or to purchase tickets, call the Friends' office at (914) 232-8119, email friends@johnjayhomestead.org or visit their website for updates at www.johnjayhomestead.org.