



THE LANDMARK

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Continuing the Tradition ~ Preserving Our History

bvhsri.org ♦ 1873 Old Louisisett Pike (Rte 246) ♦ PO Box 125, Lincoln RI, 02865

Central Falls ♦ Cumberland ♦ Lincoln ♦ North Smithfield ♦ Pawtucket ♦ Woonsocket

2015 IS HISTORY!

*Blackstone Valley Historical Society
wishes everyone to had a graceful and
happy entrance into the year of 2016.*



Calling All Bowlers!

This fundraiser is just ducky!



WHEN

January 24

WHERE

Town Hall Lanes,

DETAILS

Teams of 5 are invited
to compete for the super

15.00/person,

CONTACT

bvhs58@gmail.com

*BVHS has recently joined the Alliance of
Rhode Island Historical Associations (ARIHS)
whose mission is to increase and encourage
public interest in local historical and cultural
institutions by fostering cooperation, sharing
expertise, promoting programs and events of
the groups involved.*

*Proceeds from this fundraiser benefit the
ARIHS*

In RI's northeast corner, before the National Heritage Corridor existed and before any Worchester to Providence canal system, before any water-powered textile mills, even before Roger Williams – there was **William Blackstone**, the eponymous and enigmatic English forefather of the area. As rare a story as his life is, it got far stranger after death.



Ordained an Anglican minister at Cambridge University, Blackstone departed with Robert Gorges' 1623 expedition to America. This settlement was short-lived, and when the majority returned to Europe, Blackstone moved northwest to what was then called Shawmut Peninsula. In 1625, he built his home on the west slope of Beacon Hill, becoming Boston's first English settler. He's known to have amassed a great library, planted English roses, raised animals and cultivated apples.

Beginning in 1629, Puritans crossed the Atlantic en masse, settling in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Early records of Charlestown grouped the "Episcopal clergyman [whol lived at Shawmut]" in with frontiersmen Samuel Maverick and Thomas Walford, saying, "the precise date when these pioneers of civilization first pitched their tents is not known." Blackstone invited these new settlers to his side of the river for potable water and relations went well enough at first, but this pioneer soon fled the harshening intolerance of Puritan civilization. He sold his land and bought more animals to load up for his journey.

In 1635, Blackstone traveled southwest and settled near another hill that overlooked a river overflowing with salmon and lamprey, known as the Kittacuck, or "great tidal river." Roger Williams left Salem the next year and founded Providence. Blackstone's hill became known as Study Hill and his home Study Hall, and the river that had been called numerous things took his name colloquially then officially. Blackstone lived at Study Hall until his death in 1675, continuing to build his library and raise animals. He planted the Yellow Sweeting, often credited as America's first apple cultivar. Not exactly a recluse, he became friends with natives, Roger Williams and Richard Smith of Cocumscussoc (now Wickford) and traveled often to visit and preach. He's noted for riding a saddle-broken bull and wearing his Anglican vestments.

At age 64, Blackstone met the widowed 34-year-old Sarah Stevenson in Boston. They married July 4, 1659 and had one son a year later, John Blackstone. William Blackstone died on May 26, 1675, two years after Sarah, and was buried near his home. Early that June, Study Hall was torched during King Philip's War, and the accumulated books and records were lost. Over time, Study Hill went back to nature. Around the 180th anniversary of Blackstone's death, in 1855, RI had a revival and interest grew for a proper monument. The Blackstone Monument Association was formed to fanfare and speeches, but nothing came about.

Part II of this story will appear in our February Newsletter.
Patrick Burke's writing normally appears in Shop in RI Magazine.

Q

years ago..

**Before the blizzard of '78, there was the December 1969 Nor'easter.
Tell us what happened to you and how you got through the storm!**

Send us your story for possible future publication!
e-mail blvsri@gmail.com or mail PO Box 125 Lincoln, RI 02865

Watch Out!

Baby in the Blackstone!

After reading about Christian de Rezendes' Slatersville project last month, G (one of the youngest BVHS members) decided to pop into the historic town. Do you know where he went?



CONGRATULATIONS to KATHY HARTLEY!

...for being named a "2015 Rhode Islander of the Year in Rhode Island Monthly."

Kathy is the founder and president of Friends of the Hearthside. Her tireless work in historical preservation within the Blackstone Valley is amazing and inspiring!

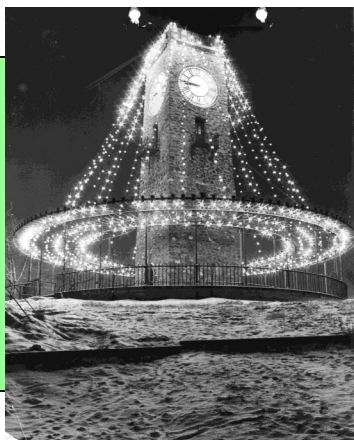
In November BVHS voted to support Ken Postle in his efforts to uncover lost cemeteries. On December 7 the effort received a boost when Vice President John Houghton stood before the Lincoln Conservation Commission and was granted 600 dollars to use towards restoring gravestones in the town.

However, still at issue is the current obligation of a 25 foot buffer zone when doing construction near cemeteries. Houghton and Postle urged the commission to look into creating a committee to help oversee the implementation of this law and assure that the plots are not destroyed when land is developed. While technically the restriction is in place, there are loopholes that developers frequently take which threaten historic sites.

Postle has dedicated 4 years to recovering lost gravesites. Donations to help him in his mission can be submitted to BVHS.

Found in the Archives ...

Starting in the summer of 2015, Pat Armitage, Lori Melucci and Jocelyn Dube starting the arduous process of cataloging the collection that BVHS has been building since 1971. Check out these snowy photos from Central Falls that were recently logged.



2015 - 2016 Capital Campaign



As you know, the society has applied for and received a grant to repair and paint North Gate. In the process other issues arose including foundation stabilization, new walkway and parking lot barriers. The Capital Campaign will fund this needed work and allow for continued upkeep of The Lonsdale Arnold Bakery, The Fire Station and the exterior and interior spaces at North Gate.

Help us meet our goal!

The BVHS would like to thank Joyce and Jim for their generous donation kicking off our capital campaign!

BVHS EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Jason Dionne

401-862-4202

Email: jjhdio70@gmail.com

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