



# THE LANDMARK

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*Continuing the Tradition ~ Preserving Our History*

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

## Great Road Open House

BVHS's Northgate hosts visitors during Lincoln's free historic open house day, 11 am to 4 pm Saturday, Sept. 23

On Saturday, Sept. 23, the Blackstone Valley Historical Society's Northgate on Louisquisset Pike will welcome visitors from 11 am to 4 pm during Great Road Open House Day and Smithsonian Museum Day Live.

This free, annual event showcases several historic properties in the town of Lincoln, including Hearthside, the Hannaway Blacksmith Shop, the Pullen Corner School (a.k.a. "The Hot Potato School"), the



THREE CENTURIES IN THREE MILES

Eleazer Arnold House, The Saylesville Friends Meeting House, The Valentine Whittman House and more.

The BVHS Open House is part of Smithsonian Museum Day Live, a national event coordinated by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC. Described by the

museum as "America's Annual Celebration of Boundless Curiosity," the event is meant to recognize "the extraordinary power of museums and other cultural institutions to provide visitors with insight and inspiration" and "a commitment to ...the pursuit of knowledge wherever you are." For more information see [www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/museum-day-live-2017](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/museumday/museum-day-live-2017).

At BVHS, the Arnold's

Original Lonsdale Bakery will be open, and Northgate will feature an original historical exhibition about the Cumberland Ballou family (see related story). Refreshments will be served, including Toll House Cookies in honor of the building's historic role as a toll house on the Old Louisquisset Pike. If you are interested in participating as a volunteer docent for part of the day, call Susan Clarke at 401-451-0921.

## 'An Elaborate History': The Cumberland Ballous

*Mysterious album donated to BVHS reveals local roots of a famous family*

Last summer, the BVHS received the donation of a mysterious and intriguing old photo album. Enclosed was a note from Arnold Robinson, a professor at Roger Williams University and director of its Community Partnerships Center, with an explanation: He'd been given it along with books that related to his research (continued on page 2.)



In 1888, Cumberland-born Adin Ballou published his book, "The Elaborate History and Genealogy of the Ballous in America," a 1323-page story of his family since 1646. The BVHS received a photo album with pictures of buildings and sites relating to the Ballou family. This house, above on right, was pictured in the album and also in the "Elaborate History" and in both places identified with Nathaniel Ballou. It may have been located off West Wrentham Road. (picture from the album)

Below, what we presume are two of the Ballou descendants who apparently visited and photographed family homesteads and landmarks around 1900. The location was not identified in the album, although the last picture was taken from Iron Mine Hill and this striking rock may have been located nearby. Anyone recognize it?



(continued from page 1)  
by the family of the late Anne “Pete” Baker, a prominent preservationist architect, who was associated with the Westport Historical Society.

Robinson thought that BVHS might be interested, since the album appeared to contain old photographs of homes in Cumberland belonging to a notable local family, some

of the area’s earliest residents, the Ballous. The album showed few people, and many of the houses pictured were derelict.

With some assistance from genealogist Diane Boumenot, a Ballou descendant who writes a blog called “One Rhode Island Family,” BVHS researchers pieced together some of the history illustrated by the album and constructed a hypothesis about why it was created.

The 20-odd photographs (captioned with a handwritten note enclosed in the album, and post-it notes), were cross-referenced with historical maps of Cumberland and “The Elaborate History.”

Images from the album will be featured in an exhibit, “An Elaborate History: The Cumberland Ballous,” during Great Road Open House Day from 11 am to 4 pm Saturday, Sept. 23. BVHS will feature pictures from the unusual album, along with historical maps and related materials that help fill out the story of this family and its place in Blackstone Valley history.

The Ballou family built many homes in the Blackstone Valley, but the family’s reach extended well beyond the state’s borders. The forefather, Maturin Ballou, was one of the earliest settlers in Rhode Island, a contemporary of Roger Williams. Members of the

family were instrumental in building the Elder Ballou Meeting House, a well-known building constructed around 1740. (It burned down in the early 1960’s.)

Famous members of the family include Hosea Ballou, who was a prominent theologian and Universalist minister in the 19th century, his grand-nephew Hosea, who was the first president of Tufts University, and the mother of President James Garfield, Eliza Ballou Garfield. (He served as president from 1881 until his assassination later that year.) Perhaps best remembered today is Sullivan Ballou, whose moving letter to his wife Sarah just before his death at Bull Run was prominently featured in Ken Burns’s documentary, “The Civil War.”



Arnold's Original Lonsdale Bakery

**Membership  
Renewal Forms  
will be mailed  
soon!**

## Arnold's Original Lonsdale Bakery will be Open!

The Bakery will be open on September 23. Come visit, view our new acquisitions, and pick up updated brochures about the Arnold family with new research by BVHS director, Gail Harris. Don't miss the wonderful panoramic photo from 1951 of the Arnold's newly purchased bakery trucks, donated by Steven Parent.



The Arnold's Fleet of Delivery Trucks, 1951 (section of photo)

## Upcoming Events at Northgate

Most events are free. All are welcome.  
Donations are gratefully accepted.

**11 am-4 pm, Saturday, September 23: Great Road Open House Day!** See lead article in this issue. Free.

**2 pm, Sunday, October 15:** *The General and the Adman*, a lecture by Madeleine O. Robinson, PhD (URI '80) about Rhode Island native son William "Bill" Edward Robinson, friend and advisor to President Dwight D. Eisenhower (see photo at right). Refreshments served after the lecture. Free.

**3 pm, Sunday, November 5:** *Americana: Songs from America's History, from the Revolution to World War I*, a concert and fundraiser for BVHS, performed by pianist and vocalist Michael DiMucci. \$20 plus service fee. (\$21.69) A WWI-themed exhibit from the collection of Kevin Heskin will be on display. Tickets will go on sale at <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/3086746> on **Sept 15**. You may also purchase tickets at BrownPaperTickets by calling 1-800-838-3006 (24/7).

**2 pm, Sunday, December 3:** Christmas Party at North Gate! All Welcome. Free.

**2 pm, Sunday, January 21:** Movie Matinee. The Sequel! The long awaited second part of *Senetchonet to Manville: A Journey Through Time*, the historical documentary of Manville by Betty and Carlo Mencucci, which includes many pictures and other material collected by Roger Gladu. Upstairs at Northgate. Popcorn. Free.

**2 pm, Sunday, February 25:** Exhibit: The Lime Kilns of Lime Rock. Free.

**2 pm, Sunday, March 18:** Lecture by Jim Ignasher, Smithfield historian. Title to be announced. Free.

**2 pm, Sunday, April 22:** Lecture by Rick Beyer, author and documentary filmmaker, will speak on *The Ghost Army of World War II*, the deception unit in the U.S. Army. For more information, see <http://rickbeyer.net>. Free.

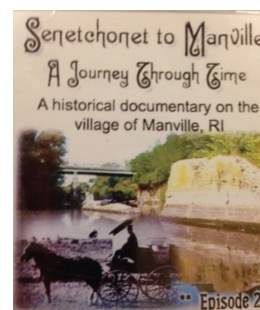
**2 pm, Sunday, May 20:** The Christine Nowak Lecture by Kevin Klyberg, Ranger, Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park. Title to be announced. Free.



President Eisenhower at Eisenhower House at Fort Adams, with William Robinson, Chairman of Coca-Cola, and George Allen, 9/14/1958. photo courtesy of Madeleine O. Robinson and the DEM.



Michael DiMucci



Movie Matinee!

## News from Ken Postle and the Cemetery Restoration Project

Ken Postle has restored dignity to historic cemeteries from Pawtucket to Millville, MA. He's been busy this summer as pastor of the New Hope Baptist Church, but he has shared some amazing Facebook posts this summer—too many to fit in this issue.



Flagging Veterans' Graves on May 22

The following stories with photos and excerpts are from Ken's Facebook site, River Road, Blackstone River and Canal Cemeteries.

On May 29, Ken's work organizing the cleaning and flagging of veterans' graves with groups including delegations from several Pawtucket schools, (52 children from Slater Jr. High!) was recognized by the City of Pawtucket

at the City Memorial Day Service. Ken posted: "I contrasted the difference between what Pawtucket has done and the horrible neglect of cemeteries just up the road in North Providence and said that Pawtucket cemeteries used to look that bad before volunteers from all spectrums teamed up to make a difference." (continued on p.4)

## Finding the Oak Grove Cemetery Bell



Barbara Zdravsky from the Preservation Society of Pawtucket on the track of the bell with Ken Postle.

**Sept 2:** “Amazing day of discovery at Oak Grove Cemetery in Pawtucket! I was asked by Barbara Z. from the Pawtucket Preservation Society to meet her to search for evidence of the semi-apocryphal bell that was supposed to have

been housed in the tower at one point on top of the lodge.. Bill Greenwood came to offer support.

Expecting to find a vandalized tower or at best a small bell that would have to be removed, I was stunned when I found myself in a cavern-

ous attic facing upwards to a sealed off, evidently untampered-with hatch door. The City had installed a modern thick stink pipe that smashed the wooden ladder to the tower backwards, but I was able to squeeze past and when I ever shoved the hatch back with a pole through the decades of accumulated leaf and insect detritus that I got showered with, we were floored to see not a tiny bell, but a large bell that had a clapper that was pulled by the rope instead of the entire bell.

Apparently the bell is stationary and the gong or clapper, that held a piece of wood, was pulled by a rope through a series of pulleys we

found going down into the building.

You know I had to ring the bell, so reaching up with a stick end of a shovel, I made contact and swung that back and forth ringing the bell for the first time in ??? Years—Wicked Cool!

The tower has a metal cap which we believe holds the bell in place, otherwise it would have crashed down long ago and in a future visit with a small ladder, we hope to somehow photograph the external part of the bell in the inner sanctum for words that might say where and when the bell and the assembly were manufactured...The best archaeology is right where we least expect it—Super Cool!”

## What's the 401?

Adam Mercier has been working on a podcast project on Rhode Island called “What's the 401?” He met with Ken and members of the Cumberland High School group on July 20.

**July 20:** “Great night tonight meeting Adam Mercier from Brown University and introducing him to the passion of Historical Cemetery restoration and research--I found him to be intelligent and thoughtful

and it was a pleasure to introduce him to three of the folk who made the cemetery restoration efforts in Cumberland come alive and shine...Heidi, Shelby and Justin shared their passion with Adam and encouraged him to pursue his research further and made a cemetery discovery date beyond the podcast...”

Adam Mercier's Rhode Island podcasts are at <https://whatsthe401.com/> but this one hasn't been released yet.

**(continued from page 3)**  
Ken wrote about the indoor Pawtucket Memorial Day Ceremony at Gatchell Post: “Lots of folk were there representing all the local Vet groups as well as Rep. Jean Philippe Barros, Representative Carlos Tobon, Councilman

Albo Vitali and Mark Wildenhain. Mayor Donald R. Grebien was there to give remarks on behalf of the City, and citations were handed out to the schools who flagged the City Cemeteries and participated in the essay contest, with PawSox tickets given to the winners...”

### BVHS Executive Board

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Gail Harris, Bob Ferri, Don Coelho



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Adam, with Justin, Shelby and Heidi from Cumberland High School on July 20 at Cumberland Historical Cemetery C09