



THE LANDMARK

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Continuing the Tradition ~ Preserving Our History

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

Latino Arts Builds Pride in Community through History



Tour of Dexter Street led by a Community Docent

Marta V. Martinez will give the Christine Nowak Lecture at the Blackstone Valley Historical Society on May 19. This presentation will focus on how Rhode Island Latino Arts, through *Nuestras Raíces*, the Latino Oral History Project of Rhode Island, builds pride and stimulates civic activity among Latinos in Central Falls, through *pláticas* (collective conversations), oral history collection, *barrios* (neighborhood) tours

and historical research.

We are excited to welcome Martinez, who is the founder and executive director of [Rhode Island Latino Arts](#), founder of *Nuestras Raíces*, and adjunct professor at Providence College. Her book, *Latino History in Rhode Island: Nuestras Raíces*, was the basis for “La Broa” (Broad Street) a play recently performed at Trinity Repertory Company.

Refreshments will be served after the talk.



A location in Cumberland significant to Latino history in the Blackstone Valley. Find out about it on May 19.

Sunday, May 19

1:30 pm: Annual Meeting

2:00 p.m.: Talk by Marta Martinez

Latino Arts and History in Central Falls

BVHS, 1873 Old Louisquisset Pike

Lincoln, RI 02865

Annual Meeting

The BVHS will be holding its annual meeting on May 19th at 1:30 p.m. on May 19.

The Nominating Committee for the BVHS announces that the slate of officer nominees for 2024-2025 remains the same:

Jason Dionne - President

Lori Melucci - Vice President

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Historical Cemetery News



David Lapham stone
Picture from Facebook
River Road, Blackstone
River, and Canal
Cemeteries

Lost and Found: Long-lost Gravestone Returns Home to Lincoln after 30 Years at Boston College

Donald Hafner, professor of political science and director of the University Fellowships Program at Boston College noticed a gravestone in an office in the college, and decided to investigate. It turned out that the gravestone had been confiscated from a dormitory about 30 years ago. The inscription on the stone was for David Lapham, who died on November 11, 1753, just short of his 21st birthday. After some research on Findagrave, Hafner identified David Lapham, 1732-1753 from Rhode Island, and realized that the stone was originally from the Lapham-Wilcox lot, Lincoln Historical Cemetery #36, near Handy Pond in Lincoln.

Although 5 inscribed headstones were recorded in the lot in 1896, by 1995

only one was found in place, and the lot had been badly vandalized. From the information on Findagrave, David Lapham had been buried near a baby brother and a younger sister. The three died days apart; the brother on November 7, and the sister on November 13. The close proximity of the deaths made Hafner suspect an epidemic.

Melinda Stoops, associate vice president for student health and wellness and student affairs at Boston College learned about the stone from Hafner, and decided to reach out to the Lincoln Conservation Commission. Stephanie Santos of the Conservation Commission promptly contacted Ken Postle, cemetery coordinator for the BVHS, who instantly recognized the missing stone.

In the course of his work to find and restore historic cemeteries, he had actually created the page RI Historical Cemetery Lincoln #36, on the FindaGrave website. He believes that the pilfered stone was a replacement stone from the early 19th century for a earlier fieldstone marker. Postle went to the Handy lot to work on the cemetery on April 20, and to find a place to put the stone. He found more fieldstone burials (it seems likely up to 30 burials), and he also spoke to Mr. Al Pytka, who thinks he may have seen the inscribed stones in the 70s and 80s. See full Valley Breeze story at <https://www.valleybreeze.com/news/resurrecting-history-the-recovery-and-return-of-david-laphams-18th->



Knocked-down stones at
Walnut Hill Cemetery

Desecration of Walnut Hill Cemetery

The Walnut Hill cemetery at 200 Armistice Blvd in Pawtucket was severely damaged by the use of heavy machinery to clear undergrowth in a section of the cemetery, knocking down headstones and running over them. The cemetery is privately owned.

The City of Pawtucket and the State Archeologist's office have visited the cemetery and are working to demand that the cemetery be restored at the owner's expense. Please do not hesitate to express support for their efforts to the city of Pawtucket.

The state archeologist's office cited the laws established to protect cemeteries: "RIGL 23-18 which prohibits ground disturbance within 25 feet of a cemetery, and RIGL 11-20-2, which makes it a felony to "destroy, mutilate, deface..... a gravestone."

**Most events are free.
Everyone is welcome.
Donations are gratefully accepted.**

Upcoming Events

1:30 pm Annual Meeting; 2:00 pm Christine Nowak Lecture, Sunday, May 19: Marta V. Martinez will talk about Latino history in Central Falls. Martinez is an oral historian who is the author of *Latino History in Rhode Island*, which inspired the recent Trinity Rep production of La Broa' (Broad Street) which ended February 18.

10:00 am to 4:00 pm, Saturday, September 21: Great Road Open House Day.

6:30-7:30 pm, Monday, October 14: Ashley Selima, Director of RI State Archives & Public Records Administration, will give a talk on *RI Civic Participation, Voting, and Voter Suppression*.

Honor Veterans with Flags



Picking up the flags on May 7



Boxes of flags ready for flagging veteran's graves

Volunteer to put fresh flags on veteran's graves for Memorial Day. Ken Postle, BVHS cemetery coordinator, picked up the flags this week, and will be doing St. Francis Cemetery on 163 Smithfield Avenue in Pawtucket on Saturday, May 18 (all day), and Oak Grove Cemetery on Central Avenue, also in Pawtucket, on the morning of May 25. See his [Facebook page](#) for details.

BVHS Executive Board

President: Jason Dionne

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Email: jjhdio70@gmail.com

Vice President: Lori Melucci

Secretary: Francine Jackson

Treasurer/Property Manager:
John Houghton

Members-at-Large

Gail Harris, Bob Ferri, Don Coelho

BVHS Annual Meeting

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Francine Jackson - Secretary

John Houghton - Treasurer

Members at large:

Gail Harris

Bob Ferri

Don Coelho

around the historical origins of the Blackstone Valley, please contact the committee chairman, Don Coelho at don.coelhojr@icloud.com. Nominations will also be taken from the floor during our annual meeting on May 19.

All are welcome to attend board meetings, which are the fourth Monday of the month at 6:30 pm at Northgate.

If you are interested in joining the board, which organizes historically-related activities, lectures, and exhibits, cares for North Gate and its artifacts and collections, and works to build awareness and community



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