

Letters to the editor

Old Stone House Museum supports efforts to achieve equity

To the editor,

The Old Stone House Museum's staff, board of trustees and members of our advisory board support efforts to achieve equity for all members in our community. As an institution that seeks to both preserve and interpret the history of the area, we feel this is a vitally important issue — one that must be continually addressed in order for each generation to advance.

Orleans County has been home to a diverse assembly of people who made important contributions to history here in Vermont and nationwide. Alexander Twilight is a familiar example who was the first Black person to graduate from an American college when he graduated from Middlebury in 1823 and went on to serve as our country's first Black legislator in the Vermont House of Representatives in 1836. Twilight became the main protagonist of the Old Stone House Museum's story in his role as headmaster of the Orleans County Grammar School from 1829 to 1855, a progressive educator who taught both male and female students. Because of him, the museum is more than simply a collection of historic buildings. We are a museum that serves as a place where a positive

Thank you Jack

To the editor,

The residents of Glover and West Glover have been very fortunate to have Jack Sumberg as a select board member for a nine-year term and chair for the last three. Although there are three select board members, many of the important contributions over the last nine years seem to have Jack's handprint on them:

A new maintenance and truck garage, the upgrading of the recycle barn, working with the regional solid waste district to reduce the fees for recycling, working with the Shadow Lake Association with lake height and dam improvements, involvement in both Glover and West Glover septic issues, and finding resources to improve ditching to prevent runoff of melting snow and severe rain. Jack took a leadership role on the Glover Energy Committee and town plan preparation and, finally, he helped Glover residents save their energy dollars by bringing the "Window Dressers" program to well over 200 windows in our town.

We are indebted to Jack and so greatly appreciate his dedicated service to Glover and West Glover. Thank you!

Larry and Sara Gluckman
Glover

story about the African American experience is made manifest.

However, Twilight is not the only example of a notable African American who once lived and worked here. George Henderson, a former principal and teacher in Craftsbury and Newport grammar schools, was born a slave in Clark County, Virginia, in 1850. Although functionally illiterate when he arrived in Vermont in 1865, Henderson eventually graduated first in his class from UVM in 1877 and was the first African American initiated into Phi Beta Kappa. He went on to receive a bachelor's of divinity degree from Yale University in 1883 and studied in Europe. After the tragic death of his wife and infant son, Henderson left Vermont and moved south where he published several literary works, including *First Memorial Against Lynching*, which he sent to the Louisiana State Legislature in 1894.

The Old Stone House Museum is also witness to contributions of many whose achievements have been historically diminished. Our permanent collection holds baskets woven by Native Americans who once lived in the area, and it's home to numerous tools and farming implements handcrafted by French Canadian farmers. We remember the women, who not only created the quilts and hooked rugs we exhibit, but were also politically active in the nineteenth-century temperance and suffrage movements. Orleans resident Abigail Chandler, for instance, was a pioneer in the women's suffrage movement, at one time being president of the Women's Suffrage Association of Vermont. In the early fall of 1920, at age 90, she cast her first vote.

Sadly, the stories and efforts of notable people tend to fade, but in this moment of a renewed investment in building a diverse, equitable and inclusive community, it is helpful to study the hard, personal work of those Orleans County marginalized residents who came before. Stories from our local history can provide evidence we need to reject the existence of racism and narrow-mindedness that is unfortunately still alive in our community and serve to remind us that we are ALL just fleeting visitors to this amazing landscape.

The Old Stone House's board of trustees has recently approved the following Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement, which reads:

"The Old Stone House Museum and Historic Village aspires to be the space for open dialogue around the interconnected issues of inequality in our shared society."

The essence of the statement is being woven into all of the museum's programs and events. We are proud of the work we have done around Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the reading of Frederick Douglass's words on July 4, and our recent celebration of the anniversary of Alexander Twilight's birth. We continue to expand our work to explore interconnected issues of equity, and hope our community can evolve beyond conflicts

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Solution, tips and computer program at www.sudoku.com

The answer is on page ten.

that have shaped and still impact our country. We can only do this if we learn to appreciate our common humanity and the legacy of a history we're creating together.

Signed by:

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