



For Immediate Release
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**Alexander Lucius Twilight Exhibit Unveiling, Museum
Grand Reopening and FREE Tours**

Historic Brownington Village, Vermont—Join us for the museum’s grand re-opening (after Covid19) and the unveiling of our new exhibit celebrating African American Alexander Lucius Twilight on Saturday, June 19 at 11:00 AM. Light refreshments will be provided for the exhibit dedication with museum tours until 3:00 PM. All completely FREE to attend.

This ceremony will take place on Juneteenth, the holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States. The museum celebrates this day in 1865 when enslaved people were set free in Texas by executive decree some two years after the Emancipation Proclamation. This day is now seen as the official end to slavery in the United States and also falls only eight years after Mr. Twilight died here in Brownington, Vermont.

The exhibit will return Mr. Twilight’s artifacts to the home he constructed, the Alexander Twilight House, where they will be on prominent display in his parlor. The items on display include Mr. Twilight’s desk, trunk, bible, sermons, iron bar, ox yoke and books. His wife Mercy Ladd Merrill Twilight’s own coffee set and silver spoons will also be available for viewing along with framed photographs of the couple.

“The exhibit will offer a renewed look at this amazing man with some new, fresh interpretation,” Molly Veysey, Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village Executive Director, said. “Come and enjoy the essence of the day!”

The new exhibit will also include the proclamation United States Representative Peter Welch read into the Congressional Record in 2020 recognizing Twilight's 225 anniversary. In addition, the concurrent resolution passed last year by the Vermont State House, recognizing Mr. Twilight’s birthday, September 23, as Alexander Twilight Day will also be included.



In addition to recognizing this holiday, the museum has adopted a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion statement. This statement was adopted by the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village Board of Trustees at their February 11, 2021 meeting:

“The Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village aspires to be the space for open dialog around the interconnected issues of inequality in our shared society.”

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About Alexander Lucius Twilight

Born on September 23, 1795 Alexander Lucius Twilight graduated from Middlebury College in 1823, becoming the first African American graduate of any United States college or university. In 1829 he was hired to be principal of the Orleans County Grammar School and was minister to the Brownington Congregational Church. In 1836 he was elected to the Vermont House of Representatives, becoming the first African American to serve in a state legislature. Under his leadership, the Orleans County Grammar School thrived as a co-educational institution attracting both boys and girls from throughout New England who came from as far away as Boston and Montreal. Between 1834 and 1836 Mr. Twilight designed and built a four story granite dormitory, which he called Athenian Hall.

Mr. Twilight’s father Ichabod was born in Boston in July 1765. Both he and Mr. Twilight’s mother Mary were free and mixed race, most likely of African slaves and English colonists. Ichabod served in the Revolutionary War in a New Hampshire regiment and later moved with his family to Vermont where he and his wife were listed as “the first negroes to settle in Corinth” where they bought property, moving from Bradford on November 28, 1798.

Typical for children of his class, Alexander began working for a neighboring farmer when he was only eight. Reading and studying mathematics while performing farm labor, he was able to enroll in the Randolph Orange County Grammar School in 1815 at the age of 20. He enrolled in Middlebury College in 1821, graduating as the first known African American to receive a degree from any institution of higher learning in America in 1823.



In 1826, Mr. Twilight married Mercy Ladd Merrill from Unity, New Hampshire and taught in both New York and Vermont before assuming his position as principal at the Orleans County Grammar School. In addition to acting as minister for the Brownington Congregational Church, he led worship services and delivered sermons in numerous other churches. In 1847, he relocated to Quebec where he taught briefly. However, without his leadership the Orleans County Grammar School experienced declining enrollment. He was persuaded to return to Brownington where he resumed duties as both teacher and pastor. In 1855 Mr. Twilight suffered a stroke and retired. He died on June 19, 1857 and is buried along with his wife Mercy in the Brownington Congregational Church Cemetery.

About the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village

Listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village was established by the Orleans County Historical Society and has been operating as a museum since 1926. It has now grown from one building to become an impressive historic site with seven restored buildings and three neighboring structures, all dating from the early 1800s. Dedicated to its mission to preserve, educate and inspire, the museum annually attracts nearly 10,000 visitors from across the country and abroad.

Education has long been a cornerstone of activity in Brownington, Vermont. The former granite dormitory is not the only historic building at the museum to tell the story of progressive education and diversity. Alexander Lucius Twilight's 1830 Federal style home houses his books and letters, along with letters from his students, in an archival vault. Further up the hill an 1831 Federal-style Hall House stands as a testament to Samuel Reed Hall, a recognized pioneer in progressive education. Hall founded America's first teacher training college in 1823 in Concord, Vermont, invented the chalkboard, and published the first teacher-training textbook in 1829.

Through unique educational programs that use select items from its permanent collection as teaching tools, the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village embraces hands-on, experiential learning as a way of connecting individuals to a way of life that still has much to teach us. Notable past activities have included a barn raising with area vocational students and a tree trimming and replanting project that was incorporated into the 3rd grade science curriculum at the Brownington Elementary



School. A thriving adult education program teaches such traditional crafts as blacksmithing, rug hooking, stone wall building, and tree pruning. Spring and Fall Field Days for area schools, as well as its summer “Time Travelers Day Camp” emphasizes hands-on craft activities, theatre, and the scientific exploration of the garden and grounds.

The Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village is located in the Brownington Historic District just off Hinman Settler’s Road in Vermont’s scenic Northeast Kingdom. The museum is open Mid-May to Mid-October 11:00-4:00 PM on Wednesdays through Sundays. For more information, call (802)754-2022 or visit www.OldStoneHouseMuseum.org.