



For Immediate Release
September 17, 2021

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Second Annual Alexander Twilight Day and the Return of the Apple and Cheese Festival

Historic Brownington Village, Vermont—African American Alexander Lucius Twilight was enigmatic and magnetic. He was driven and visionary. He also literally built the Old Stone House at the heart of the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village. Join the museum totally FREE to celebrate his 226th birthday Sunday, September 26 from 1:00-5:00 PM with local drinks (alcoholic and non-alcoholic), Vermont cheeses, apples (and pressing), LIVE Music, games for children and more.

“We’re delighted to be able to throw a Covid19 safe birthday bash for Mr. Twilight,” Molly Veysey, Executive Director of the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village, said. “We’ll hold this event outdoors, ask that participants wear masks, and be taking RSVPs for a guaranteed time slot on Sunday, September 26 as space is limited to keep our numbers safe. Walk-ins will only be allowed in as space is available, so please RSVP to guarantee your spot.”

All participants should RSVP to guarantee admission:
<https://www.oldstonehousemuseum.org/alexander-twilight-day-2021/>

This year’s celebration will kick off with speeches from Vermont State Representative Katherine Sims and Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village Board of Trustees President Carmen Jackson. Tastings of cheeses from Cabot Creamery Co-operative and Jasper Hill Farms and sample drinks from Hill Farmstead Brewery, Eden Specialty Ciders and others will be available. The museum will be picking and selling fresh apples from our Heritage Apple Orchard, with cider pressing also to be demonstrated. Of course, there will be fun for families with children, a museum open house from 2:30-5:00 PM, LIVE music with Bill Tobin and food for purchase.

In 2020, Alexander Twilight Day was made official. The first annual Alexander Twilight Day last year included United States Representative Peter Welch reading a proclamation into the Congressional Record recognizing Mr. Twilight. In addition, the Vermont State House passed a concurrent resolution recognizing Mr. Twilight’s birthday, September 23, as Alexander Twilight Day. The museum always celebrates on the closest Sunday to Mr. Twilight’s birthday.



The Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village is committed to preserving the safety of our community and will be taking the utmost precaution with regard to Covid19. The event will be outdoors (with the exception of the museum open house) and capacity will be limited. You are requested to wear masks as you walk about and only remove them when you are seated with your group. You are required to wear masks indoors. Hand sanitizer will also be available. All participants should RSVP to guarantee admission:

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Volunteers are needed to run the party as well and can bring their entire family for free. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Gillian Dacierno at publicprograms@oldstonehousemuseum.org.

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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.