



For Immediate Release
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Book Release:
The Life and Times of Alexander Twilight

St. Johnsbury author and illustrator Bill Tulp has released a graphic biography, published locally by Onion River Press, that embraces a notable, Vermont-native historic figure: **Alexander Lucius Twilight**. Readers will learn the full life story with text and illustration of the first person of African American heritage to earn a Bachelor's degree in the United States. Against a pre Civil War backdrop, Alexander Twilight also rose to being the first African American to serve in a state legislature. He was a beloved teacher and headmaster of the Orleans County Grammar School in Brownington from 1829-1857. He was the architect and builder of the Old Stone House which still looms today as the centerpiece of the Old Stone House Museum's Historic Village; a testament of vision, skill and fortitude. For these reasons and more, Alexander Lucius Twilight is the central figure of the Old Stone House Museum's interpretive story.

In 2022, author and illustrator Bill Tulp was chosen by an Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village team of jurors to be one of four "*Open For Interpretation Artists*". The project was supported by grant monies from the Vermont Arts Council and the Northeastern Vermont Development Association, via the Northern Border Regional Commission.

Tulp conducted meticulous research from the museum archive and received assistance from scholars affiliated with the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village in Brownington. His illustrations show us Twilight's story and provide an accurate visual portrayal of the times (1795-1857) in which he lived. Only one photograph of Mr. Twilight exists in the museum archives: a daguerreotype which was the first commercially successful photographic process (1839-1860) in the history of photography. Beyond interpreting Twilight's visual features and skin



tone, Tulp's story provides an accurate interpretation of the clothing, architecture, agriculture and landscape of 19th century northern Vermont.

A portrait of Alexander Twilight, painted by Katie Runde, is now displayed in the halls of the VT Statehouse. His **birthday, September 23, is officially designated as Alexander Twilight Day**, emblazoning his story as one of importance in Vermont and in national history. Tulp's book, along with Mr. Twilight's portrait ensures that Twilight's story is accessible to all Vermonters.

Tulp is continuing his work with the Old Stone House Museum and groups such as VSARN (Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network) to integrate the book with Vermont history standards, and he hopes to further familiarize VT students of Twilight's important story.

On March 18th, Tulp will explore his graphic biography methodology by offering a class to families at the Old Stone House Museum's Grammar School. Titled *Graphic Stories, The Life and Times of Alexander Twilight*, the author/illustrator will reveal his methods of graphic storytelling. After reading the story and conducting a question and answer session with Tulp, program participants aged 6 to 12 will embark on building their own illustrated storyboard based on their own significant life experiences, with the assistance of family members and the artist himself. Middle school, highschool and/or adult groups interested in learning storyboard techniques and a similar course format should contact the author at BillTulpArt@gmail.com or the Old Stone House Museum at outreach@oldstonehousemuseum.org for further information.

The book, published and distributed by Onion River Press, will be retailing for \$12.99 at local bookstores in February and at the Old Stone House Museum Gift Shop bookstore on May 15th. Wholesale distribution prices by inquiry to the author directly at BillTulpArt@gmail.com.

A book release gathering celebrating Tulp's work is slated to take place at the Old Stone House Museum's Grammar School on Hinman Settler Rd., next door to the Brownington Church, on Sun. Feb. 26th, from 1:30-3:30 PM (snow date on March 5th 1:30-3:30 PM). The event will begin with Tulp leading a short presentation on the process he used in creating the work. The event is free and open to the public.



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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, theater 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.