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Students Learn How to Tell a Story at the Old Stone House - Full Story

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Bill Tulp is the author of a graphic biography of the life and times of Alexander Twilight. (Photo by Ed Barber)

BROWNINGTON - On Saturday afternoon author Bill Tulp unveiled a graphic biography of the life and times of Alexander Twilight, a minister, legislator, and teacher. Twilight built the Old Stone House (now a museum) as a dormitory for students from Orleans County in Vermont as well as across the border in Canada. Through Tulp's graphic biography, students learned the full life story of Twilight.

Dana Karuza, associate education director at the Old Stone House Museum and Historic Village said the presentation is a part of an enrichment program for home schooled children. There are also programs for all students throughout the area.

Interest in educational programs at the Old Stone House increased during the Covid pandemic. The non-profit organization offers classes in sketching, nature, phenology (a study of nature through the seasons), maintaining bee hives, and a plethora of other programs.

Tulp walked the students through his graphic rendition of the life of Twilight (a lot of research was involved). Students had a hands-on opportunity to create their own graphic panels and add them to the book.

Students were encouraged to bring their drafts home and complete them.

In 2021 the Old Stone House Museum and Historic Village challenged teaching artists in the areas of music, theater and visual arts for an Open For Interpretation competition. This public arts project engaged community members and animated the museum's Alexander Twilight Educational Trail, a one-mile outdoor walking trail named for Twilight, who once lived and taught in the historic village that surrounds the museum. Tulp's book is published by Onion River Press in Burlington, Vermont, He received a grant funded through Northeastern Vermont Development Association, Northern Border Regional Commission and the Vermont Arts Council. His proposal was one of four chosen by the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village's team of jurors as part of an "Open For Interpretation Artists" event.

Twilight is believed to be the first African American to earn a Bachelor's degree in America and the first to serve in a state legislature. Alexander Lucius Twilight (September 23, 1795 – June 19, 1857) earned a bachelor's degree from Middlebury College in 1823. He was ordained as a Congregational minister and worked in education and ministry all his career.

In 1829 Twilight became principal of the Orleans County Grammar School. There he designed and built Athenian Hall, the first granite public building in the state of Vermont. In 1836 he was the first African American elected as a state legislator, serving in the Vermont House of Representatives; he was also the only African American ever elected to a state legislature before the Civil War.