



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Celebrate Juneteenth and Museum  
“In A Different Hue” Exhibit Opening**

**Historic Brownington Village, Vermont**—All are welcome to celebrate Juneteenth at the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village where a new exhibit, *In a Different Hue: Race and Representation*, will be unveiled. The festivities start at 11:00 AM on Sunday, June 19 and conclude at 4:00 PM. They include a museum open house, light refreshments and, for families, children’s activities and ice cream.

“Everyone is welcome,” Kristal Wood, Associate Director of Public Events, said. “The new exhibit is thought provoking and we are excited to reveal it to the public on the second anniversary of our nation’s newest holiday. We hope you will join us.”

The date of Juneteenth is the day 250,000 enslaved Black Americans in Galveston, Texas were told they were free in 1865. That was 2.5 years after the Emancipation Proclamation issued by United States President Abraham Lincoln (which was signed on January 1, 1863) went into effect.

The new exhibit was put together by the museum’s collections team using locally sourced artifacts from the collections and vaults as a portal for deeper exploration into issues of race and representation. It examines the themes of politics, narrative imagination and racial stereotypes in relation to Orleans County history.

In the process, the new exhibit offers a broader context for understanding the complexities of shared memory and meaning making—especially in times of political polarization and partisanship when there are no agreed upon facts.

“Please join us for the museum’s newest exhibit on disenfranchised people in the Northeast Kingdom,” Molly Veysey, Executive Director, said. “Hours of research and forethought went into this exhibit’s creation. “We hope it will elicit constructive conversations about race and identity today.”

The Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village is dedicated to celebrating the life and legacy of Alexander Lucius Twilight, the nation’s first African American college graduate and legislator. His portrait painted by Vermont Artist Katie Runde



was unveiled in the Vermont State House this past May 2022 in part due to the efforts of many at the museum.

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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 the children 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. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.OldStoneHouseMuseum.org).