## Orleans County Grammar School

**8** At the base of Prospect Hill sits the Orleans County Grammar School. Built in 1823, it was paid for by William Baxter, a prominent town resident and lawyer. He stipulated that worship services be held on the second floor of the school until a permanent church could be built.

When erected in 1823 the building was on the base of Prospect Hill and had a belfry on the front. In 1869 the belfry was removed and the schoolhouse was moved 1/3 mile down the road to the middle of Brownington Village by the Good Templars, a temperance society. Their second floor hall soon became the Grange Hall, which it still is today. The downstairs remained a school until 1912, when the trustees of the Orleans County Grammar School transferred ownership of the building to the town.

In 2015, the Town of Brownington gave the building to the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village. On August 8, 2016, the building was moved back up the road to its original site with the help of 23 teams of oxen, mostly led by 4-H youth teamsters. It was placed on a full foundation and running water and central heat were introduced. The building was brought up to current safety and accessibility standards and is again available for community events as well as museum educational programs and exhibits.

## Prospect Hill & Observatory

**9** From 1823 until 1869, the classroom building of the Orleans County Grammar School stood at the foot of Prospect Hill on what was then the town common. It also served as the Brownington Congregational Church until 1841. Students would often climb the hill for evening vespers.

In 1898, William Barstow Strong, a Brownington native, a graduate of the Orleans County Grammar School and the President of the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, had an observatory tower built at the top of the hill. The tower was recreated by the Grange in 1975 in preparation for the national bicentennial and was rebuilt again in 1998. Visitors can walk or drive up Prospect Hill to the observatory.

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Views of the surrounding countryside include Willoughby Gap to the Southeast, Lake Memphremagog to the North and Jay Peak to the West. On clear days, you can see Mt. Mansfield to the Southwest and the White Mountains to the East.

## Brownington Congregational Church & Village Cemetery

**10** The church building was completed in 1841. In 1899, William Barstow Strong paid for extensive remodeling for the church interior and for a large bell and spire for the belfry.

The gravestones of African American Alexander Lucius Twilight and Mercy Ladd Merrill Twilight are at the front of the church cemetery, facing toward the Old Stone House.

## Cyrus Eaton House

**11** Built in 1834 by Cyrus Eaton, a businessman who emigrated from Canada, this is a late Federal-style house partially remodeled in the vernacular Greek Revival Style. Mr. Eaton was a trustee of the Orleans County Grammar School and helped African American Alexander Lucius Twilight build the Old Stone House. Two of Mr. Eaton's sons and one daughter were among Mr. Twilight's students. In 1971, the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village acquired the Cyrus Eaton House from Alan Lafoe. The building now houses a research library and changing exhibits. Behind the house is a mid-19th century perennial garden, created and maintained by the Four Seasons Garden Club.

## Original Twilight Homestead

**12** Originally a small house on the site of the Alexander Twilight House it became part of the new Twilight House in 1830 and connected to a small barn. The original Twilight Homestead was given to the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village by the Perry family in 1978 and moved into the field beside the Old Stone House where it serves a variety of purposes including for educational programming and art gallery space.

## Rice & Going Hotel

**13** Built in 1815, this farmhouse once operated as the Rice and Going Hotel. The house is privately owned today.

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**E**arly in the 19th century, Brownington was a thriving community and a center for political, economic and educational life in Orleans County. It was located on the stage route from Boston to Montreal on what is now called the Hinman Settler Road, the first road built through Orleans County.

The Brownington Village Historic District includes the six buildings of the Old Stone House complex and three neighboring structures, all dating from the first half of the 19th century.

## Alexander Lucius Twilight & Samuel Read Hall

**ALEXANDER LUCIUS TWILIGHT**

**SAMUEL READ HALL**

Brownington was home to two figures of national historic significance: African American Alexander Lucius Twilight (1795-1857), the first person of black ancestry to graduate from an American college (Middlebury, 1823), or to serve in a state legislature (Vermont House of Representatives, 1836); and, Samuel Read Hall (1795-1877), a pioneer in the field of education who introduced the use of the blackboard to the American classroom (Rumford, Maine, 1816), founded one of the first teacher-training or "normal" schools (Concord, Vermont, 1823) and published the first teacher-training textbook in America (Andover, Massachusetts, 1829).

Both men were connected with the Orleans County Grammar School that was established in Brownington in 1823 and was, for years, the only secondary school in the county.

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## VISITING

**MUSEUM HOURS**
11:00 AM to 4:00 PM
Open Wednesday through Sunday
Mid-May – Mid-October
Closed Mondays and Tuesdays

**The Museum Shop** is open during regular museum hours and features light refreshments, historical publications, traditional crafts and old-time toys.

**Visit OldStoneHouseMuseum.org** for information or to register for adult and children's educational programs and public events.

## FIND US...



**From Interstate 91, take Exit 26 East.** Then take Route 58 East and continue through the Village of Orleans. Follow the signs for our — Historic Village at Tarbox Hill Road on the left as you drive on Route 58. Tarbox Hill Road changes to Frog Pond Road as you change townships of Orleans to Brownington. Follow Frog Pond Road to Hinman Settler Road. Our historic village begins at the junction of Hinman Settler Road and Old Stone House Road.

## ADMISSION

**Visit our website for current admissions prices.**
**Group rates** are available with advance reservations.
**Members** are admitted to the museum free of charge.
**To inquire** about membership or to schedule a group tour, please call the museum office at **(802) 754-2022.**

OLD STONE HOUSE
*Museum & Historic Village*

**For more information,** visit the museum's web site OldStoneHouseMuseum.org

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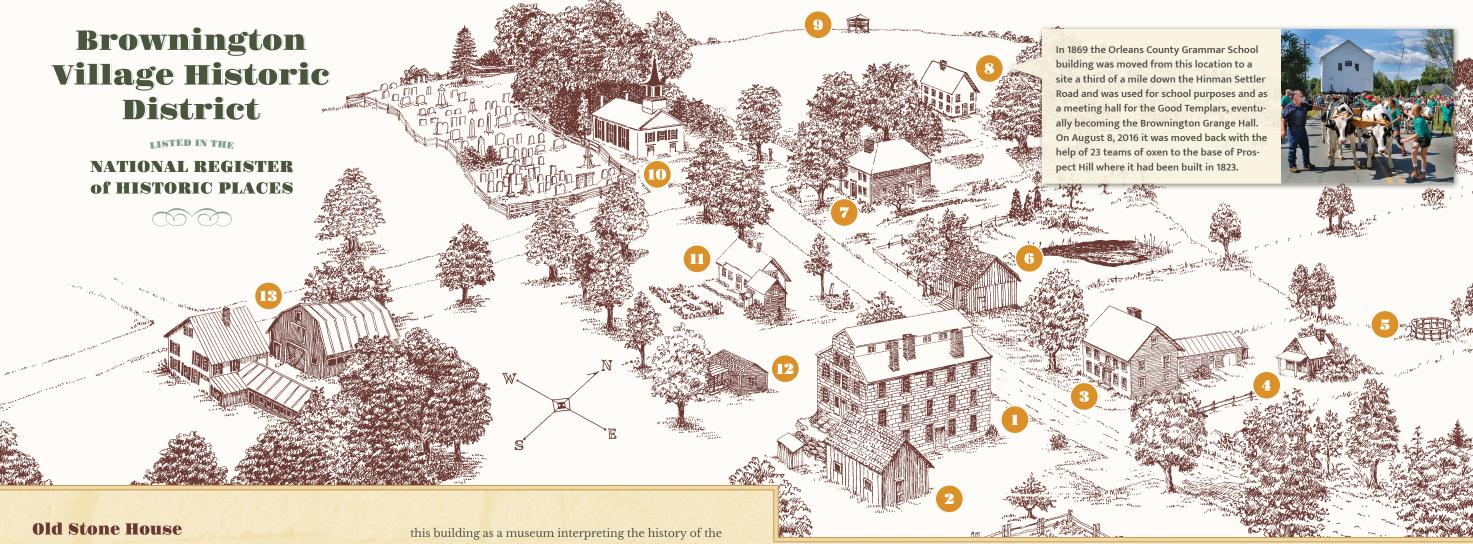
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OLD STONE HOUSE
*Museum & Historic Village*



**OldStoneHouseMuseum.org**

# Brownington Village Historic District

In 1869 the Orleans County Grammar School building was moved from this location to a site a third of a mile down the Hinman Settler Road and was used for school purposes and as a meeting hall for the Good Templars, eventually becoming the Brownington Grange Hall. On August 8, 2016 it was moved back with the help of 23 teams of oxen to the base of Prospect Hill where it had been built in 1823.

Village illustration by C.R. Michaud

## Old Stone House

**1** This four-story granite building, completed in 1836, was constructed as a dormitory by African American Alexander Lucius Twilight, headmaster of the Orleans County Grammar School. Dubbed "Athenian Hall" by its builder, the dormitory was more commonly called the Stone Boarding House, the Stone House and eventually the Old Stone House. For almost a quarter of a century it housed young scholars.

In 1859, only two years after Mr. Twilight's death, the dormitory closed. Mr. Twilight's widow, Mercy Ladd Merrill Twilight, ran a small boarding house and tavern in the Old Stone House for several years before selling the building and moving to Derby.

The Old Stone House remained in private hands until 1918 before being purchased by the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village for $500. In 1925, the organization opened this building as a museum interpreting the history of the region and its people. Today the building serves as the main interpretive space of the museum and historic village. It houses thousands of artifacts that tell the story of Mr. Twilight, the Orleans County Grammar School and the greater history of Orleans County and the surrounding region.

## Old Stone House Barn

**2** The 25' x 40' timber frame barn was erected in the summer of 2012 on the footprint of the original barn that was constructed just after the Old Stone House was built in 1836. North Country Career Center students helped cut and mill the lumber and built the deck. Elementary students whittled the pegs which anchor the mortise and tenon joints. The Timber Framers Guild cut and raised the frame. The barn now holds an exhibit on the history of farming in Orleans County. The original barn was removed in 1924 before the Old Stone House opened as a museum.

## Alexander Twilight House, Archival Vault & Trailhead

**3** Across the road from the Old Stone House is the Alexander Twilight House (circa 1830). It was built only a short time after Alexander Lucius Twilight and his wife arrived in Brownington. The size of the house enabled the Twilights to board Orleans County Grammar School students. They continued to board students in the home even after the Old Stone House was constructed.

The Alexander Twilight House later became the property of Stanley Marsh, first caretaker of the museum, and then of his successor, Ezekiel Perry. Purchased by the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village in 1999 from Leon and Mary Perry, the Alexander Twilight House serves as a visitor center for the museum and as the organization's main office. It has a handicap accessible restroom. In 2010, on the footprint of the original ell, an archival vault, workroom and ramp entrance were constructed.

In the summer of 2020, the Twilight Educational Trail was developed. It's trailhead is found in the parking lot of the Alexander Twilight House. The trail honors the varied curricula taught by Mr. Twilight, especially his lessons on the natural world. It is roughly one mile long with numerous educational signs along the way. It leads up to the Prospect Hill Observatory and includes a shorter family circle.

## Blacksmith Shop

**4** The timber frame structure was erected in the summer of 2009 by children from the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village's Time Traveler's Day Camp. This teaching blacksmith shop has a big brick forge as well as portable forges and anvils that can be set up outside. Classes range from beginning skills through more advanced techniques. At monthly open forge hammer-ins, students can practice with guidance from an instructor.

## Round Horse Pen

**5** In 2008, Orleans County students built a cedar rail pen for horse training demonstrations and to accommodate animals brought in for education programs.

## Lawrence Barn

**6** This English-style barn, built during the first half of the 19th century, is similar to one originally associated with the Alexander Twilight House. The barn was donated to the museum by the Ruth and Roland Lawrence family of Albany, Vermont and was moved to its present site in 1997. The barn now houses agricultural equipment, carriages, sleighs, boats and sugaring and logging equipment.

## Samuel Read Hall House and Heritage Apple Orchard

**7** On the corner of Old Stone House Road is a gold Federal-style house built in 1831. From 1856 to 1877, it was the home of Samuel Read Hall (1795-1877). Mr. Hall briefly served as principal and teacher in Orleans County Grammar School during the 1850's and was a minister of the Brownington Congregational Church. In 1823 Mr. Hall founded one of the first teacher training schools in the United States at Concord, VT, and promoted the use of the blackboard for instructional purposes.

In 2005, the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village purchased the Hall House from the Herrick family. It is used for the museum's expanding educational programs, as an AirBnB and for private events. Book your next stay at the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village in this historic house.