



For Immediate Release
August 3, 2022

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Old Stone House Day 2022: Modern Art Animates Historic Grounds

Historic Brownington Village, Vermont—Old Stone House Day has brought people from all over New England and beyond to Historic Brownington Village for almost a century. This year the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village will unveil the year-long work of the four artists selected to take part in the *Open For Interpretation* art project at Old Stone House Day 2022 on Sunday, August 14 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Each artist has completed a teaching residency for the museum and worked with area schools while completing their unique work.

“Our artists have done amazing work, from a graphic novel about Alexander Lucius Twilight to interpretive dance, weaving grasses and an assembly quilt made from organic yard waste and perennial plantings,” Molly Veysey, the museum’s Executive Director, said. “Join us as they unveil their work. You won’t want to miss it. Each artist was selected with help from middle school students at Brownington Central School.”

Old Stone House Day will also feature farm animals, rock painting, field games, crafts and self portraits for families with children, heritage arts, museum open house and a pie auction. On the main stage throughout the day, listen to the tunes of the Michael Hahn Trio and Just Havin’ Fun with Debbie Hampson, Vicki Moore and Paul Whittall. Area artists will demonstrate the heritage arts, including rug braiding, weaving, spinning, felting, needle-point, knitting, paper cutting, basket weaving and caning.

Thanks to generous support from the museum’s event sponsors, you can also sample free cheese from Jasper Hill Farm and Cabot Creamery Co-Operative, ice cream from H.P. Hood with cones from The Pick and Shovel and (for adults over 21-years-old) beer from Frost Beer Works and Dirt Church Brewing Company as well as hard cider from Eden Specialty Ciders. Also free with admission will be kettle coffee and roasted corn as there has been for each of the past 100 years.

You can even get a head start on your holiday shopping at a craft vendor market. The apiary manager of the museum’s very own Brownington Beekeepers will be there demonstrating honey extraction and offering honey for sale. Lunch will be available for a small price from the Ladies Aid Society of Brownington.



Pies can be entered and bid upon during the live pie auction featuring the region's best bakers. Free admission will be given to all those who enter a pie. Email publicevents@oldstonehousemuseum.org if you plan to share your baked goods.

“There’s something for everyone in your family at this year’s Old Stone House Day,” Kristal Wood, the museum’s Associate Director of Public Events, said. “Bring your whole family to enjoy some great food and tour the museum at no cost. Make sure to see the artists’ work and even catch one of the live performances. You’ll want to sign up early as seating is limited for some of our performances. Then plan to stay for lunch by the Ladies Aid Society of Brownington.”

Early bird tickets are on sale now for \$10 per vehicle. Admission costs \$15 per vehicle the day of the event. Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village members are invited to enter free. Find all the details and get tickets at www.OldStoneHouseMuseum.org.

It is never too late to become a museum member. If you purchase a membership between now and Old Stone House Day 2022, the museum will give you a free ticket to its summer raffle. Details on the raffle can be found at: <https://www.oldstonehousemuseum.org/summerraffle/>

Old Stone House Day 2022 is made possible by generous support from The Barton Chronicle and The Ladies Aid Society of Brownington, as well as the businesses listed above for the products they have donated. Funding for the *Open for Interpretation* art project was made possible by the Vermont Arts Council and a Northern Forest Destination Development Initiative grant from the Northeastern Vermont Development Association, Northern Forest Center and Northern Border Regional Commission.

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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, 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.