



For Immediate Release
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Local Historic Figure, Alexander Twilight's Birthday Party, and You're Invited

Brownington, Vermont—On Sunday, September 25th from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM, there will be a birthday party at the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village in honor of Alexander Lucius Twilight, and everyone is invited to join in the fall festivities.

Autumn is a wonderful time to celebrate our local historic landscape and the people who have helped shape it. Alexander Lucius Twilight accomplished many things in his lifetime. He was the first African American to graduate college in the United States, and he was responsible for the construction of the stone boarding house, known as the Old Stone House, in historic Brownington Village. It stands today as a beautiful and impressive landmark in the Northeast Kingdom. In light of all of Mr. Twilight's accomplishments, the state of Vermont recognizes his birthdate, September 23rd, as "Alexander Twilight Day."

This year, the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village has planned a birthday bash to remember. Twilight's Cake Bake-Off Contest will kick off the event, showcasing birthday cakes honoring Alexander Twilight. Bakers (young and old, new and seasoned) are challenged to bring the best birthday cake. Contact Kristal Wood, publicevents@oldstonehousemuseum.org, if you would like to enter a cake in the contest. All cakes entered will be served at the party. Great prizes will be given out for the most outstanding cakes.

Contest cakes and ice cream will be served to guests followed by a rousing birthday sing-a-long sure to be heard by Mr. Twilight himself. The Bash will also offer heritage apple tastings, old-fashioned apple pressing (bring your apples to press!), cider and fall fun with donuts-on-a-string and other games.

The Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village is an exceptional place to celebrate this area's history and fall traditions. Admission for the event is free, and donations are welcome. Come and join the party!

This Alexander Twilight Day party is made possible by generous support from Hill Farmstead Brewery, H.P. Hood, and The Pick and Shovel.



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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.