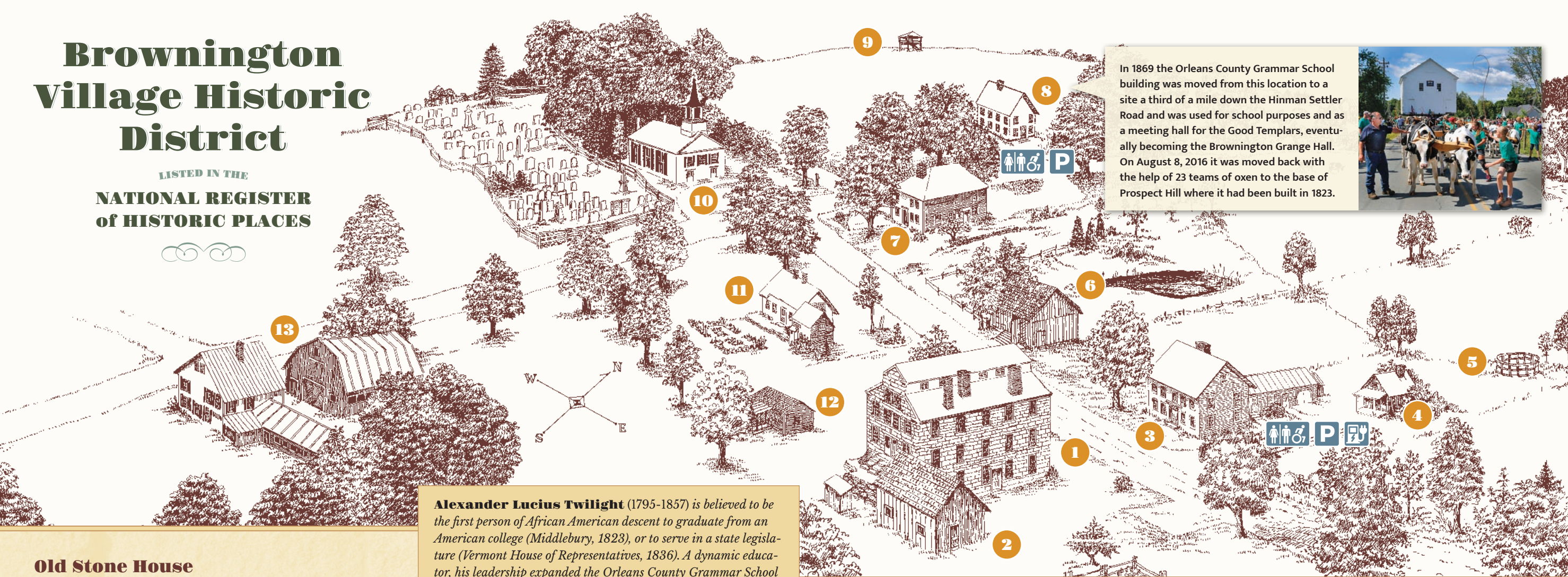


Brownington Village Historic District

LISTED IN THE
NATIONAL REGISTER
of HISTORIC PLACES



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.



Old Stone House

1 When Alexander Lucius Twilight became headmaster of the Orleans County Grammar School in 1829, enrollment grew rapidly. To accommodate the students, he built this four-story granite dormitory (from 1834-1836) which he called “Athenian Hall.” More commonly known as the Stone Boarding House, and eventually the Old Stone House, for almost 25 years the stately building housed young male and female scholars. The dormitory was closed in 1859, two years after Mr. Twilight’s death. His widow, Mercy Ladd Merrill Twilight, ran a boarding house and tavern in the building for several years before selling it and moving to Derby.

When it appeared that the building might be torn down so that the granite blocks could be reused as construction materials, the Orleans County Historical Society sprang into action, and purchased the Old Stone House for \$500 in 1917.

In 1925, the Society opened the house as a museum focused on the history of the region and its people. Known today as the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village, it

Alexander Lucius Twilight (1795-1857) is believed to be the first person of African American descent to graduate from an American college (Middlebury, 1823), or to serve in a state legislature (Vermont House of Representatives, 1836). A dynamic educator, his leadership expanded the Orleans County Grammar School and led to the building of the “Old Stone House.” His work is the foundation of the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village.

houses exhibits and thousands of artifacts that tell the stories of Mr. Twilight, the Orleans County Grammar School and the history of Orleans County and the surrounding region.

Mitchell Agricultural Barn

2 Constructed on the footprint of the original 1836 barn that was removed prior to 1925, this 25' x 40' timber frame structure was erected in the summer of 2012. Students from the North Country Career Center helped mill the lumber and build the deck. Elementary school students whittled the pegs which anchor the mortise and tenon joints. The Timber Framers Guild cut and raised the frame. The barn contains artifacts related to agricultural life in Vermont.

Alexander Twilight House — Visitor Center & Trailhead

3 The Alexander Twilight House (circa 1830) was built soon after Alexander and Mercy Twilight arrived in Brownington. The size of the house enabled the Twilights to board Orleans County Grammar School students. They continued to board students in their home even after the Old Stone House was constructed. The Alexander Twilight House later became the property of others, including Stanley Marsh, the first caretaker of the museum, and then of his successor, Ezekiel Perry.

Purchased by the Orleans County Historical Society in 1999 from Leon and Mary Perry, the building serves as the museum visitor center and main office. In 2010, an archival vault, workroom and ramp entrance were constructed on the footprint of the original ell.

The Twilight Educational Trail was created in the

summer of 2020. Beginning in the Alexander Twilight House parking area, and roughly one mile long, the trail includes educational signs on the many subjects taught by Mr. Twilight, especially his lessons on the natural world. Don’t miss the incredible view from Prospect Hill Observatory! A shorter family-friendly circle is also available.

Blacksmith Shop

4 The timber frame structure housing this teaching blacksmith shop was erected in the summer of 2009 with the help of children from the museum’s Time Traveler’s Day Camp. The shop contains a brick forge as well as portable forges and anvils that can be set up outside. Classes range from teaching beginners to advanced techniques.

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. After 16 years of use it was strengthened and repaired in 2024 by museum volunteers and staff.

Lawrence Barn

6 This English-style barn, built during the first half of the 19th century, resembles the 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 dismantled and reassembled at its present site in 1997. The barn now houses large artifacts like agricultural equipment, carriages, sleighs, boats, sugaring and logging equipment.

Samuel Read Hall House and Heritage Apple Orchard & Arboretum

7 Built in 1831, this Federal-style house was the home of Samuel Read Hall from 1856 to 1877. Hall was a trailblazer in education (see box) who taught at the Orleans County Grammar School, served briefly as its principal, and also served as minister of the Brownington Congregational Church.

Samuel Read Hall (1795-1877) was a pioneer in American education who introduced the use of the blackboard (Rumford, Maine, 1816), founded one of the first teacher-training or “normal” schools (Concord, Vt, 1823), and published the first teacher training book in America (Andover, Mass, 1829).

In 2005, the Orleans County Historical Society purchased the Hall House from the Herrick family. It is used as a meeting and educational programming space, a vacation rental and for private events. Experience the past first hand in this historic house!

The Heritage Apple Orchard & Arboretum was planted in 2008

by North Country Union High School students. More trees were added in 2018 with the help of students from Orleans Elementary School and Northwoods Stewardship Center.

continued

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. During construction, Dennis Sabin, one of the builders, fell from the second story to the cellar. Fortunately, he survived the near fatal fall, earning the distinction of being the first person who “went through” the school.

In 1869, the belltower on the front of the building 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. The second-floor became the meeting hall of Brownington Grange #251 in 1875 and they continue to meet there 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 Orleans County Historical Society. On August 8, 2016, it was moved back up the road to its original site with the help of 23 teams of oxen, led mostly by 4-H youth teamsters. The building continues to be used for community events in addition to museum educational programs, continuing its legacy as a place of learning.

Prospect Hill & Observatory

9 In 1898, William Barstow Strong, a Brownington native, graduate of the Orleans County Grammar School, and President of the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, had an observatory tower built at the top of Prospect 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 to the observatory.

Views of the surrounding countryside include

continued ➞

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 of the interior and purchased a large bell and spire for the belfry. The gravestones of Alexander Lucius and Mercy Ladd Merrill Twilight are at the front of the church cemetery, facing the Old Stone House. Strong’s grandparents, Elijah and Sylvia Strong are also buried there.

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 Alexander Twilight build the Old Stone House. Two of Mr. Eaton’s sons and one daughter were among Mr. Twilight’s students. The house was acquired by the museum in 1971. The building now houses a research library and a seasonal work space. Behind the house is a historically inspired perennial garden, created and beautifully maintained by the Four Seasons Garden Club of Newport, Vermont.

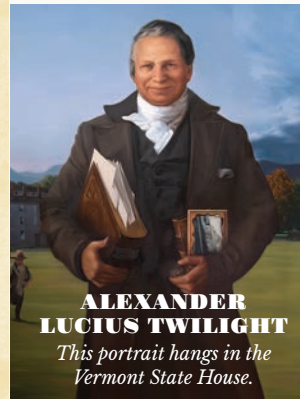
Original Twilight Homestead

12 The original homestead of Alexander and Mercy Twilight, this structure became part of the new Twilight House in 1830. The Twilight Homestead was given to the museum by the Perry family in 1978 and was moved to the field beside the Old Stone House, where it primarily serves as exhibit and educational programming space.

Rice & Going Hotel

13 Built in 1815, this farmhouse once operated as the Rice & Going Hotel and served as a stagecoach inn. The house is privately owned today.

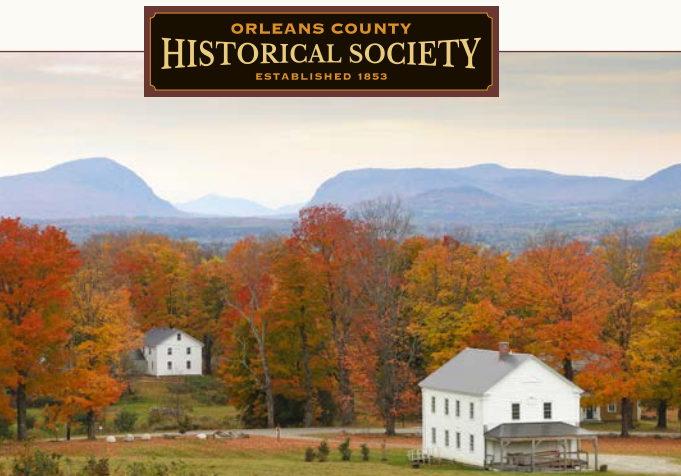
The Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village brings to life the history of Orleans County in ways that invite exploration, spark connection, and build meaning. We honor the life and legacy of its founder, Alexander Lucius Twilight. We believe history matters, that it has the power to ignite imagination, provoke conversation, and build a dynamic cultural hub for our community.



People have lived in Vermont for over 10,000 years, including the ancestors of the Wabanaki, Abenaki and Mohican peoples. The Town of Brownington was chartered by the Vermont legislature on October 2, 1790. On March 4, 1791 Vermont was accepted into the United States of America as the 14th state.

During the 1800s, this growing farm community emerged as a center for economic and cul-

tural life, education, and politics in Orleans County. Brownington’s status as a social hub was partially due to its being on the stagecoach route between Boston and Montreal, launched in 1824. Trains and railway systems, and eventually the highway, would change the landscape, and the resulting industrial development would shift to other downtowns during the 1900s.



VISIT US

The Old Stone House is open Mid-May – October. All are welcome!

Admission to the Old Stone House is by guided tour only. Enjoy the Historic Village grounds year-round for Free!

Visit OldStoneHouseMuseum.org for:

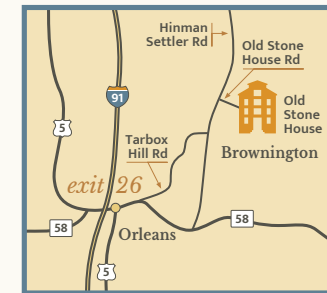
- Days, hours, Museum tour schedule and admission prices.
- To register for year round adult and children’s educational programs and public events.
- To book group or individual tours in advance.
- To inquire about membership.

Group rates are available with advance reservations. **Members** are admitted to the museum free of charge.



**Complete information at
OldStoneHouseMuseum.org**

FIND US



Follow Frog Pond Road to Hinman Settler Road. Our historic village begins at the junction of Hinman Settler Road and Old Stone House Road.

SUPPORT US!

Support the Old Stone House Museum & Historic Village in preserving and sharing the stories of Alexander Twilight and Orleans County Vermont. Your generosity helps us offer meaningful, hands-on education and vibrant community programs.

Consider making a donation, becoming a member, or sponsoring one of our events—every contribution helps keep history alive for future generations.



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BROWNINGTON, VERMONT



OLD STONE HOUSE
Museum & Historic Village



WHERE THE PAST IS PRESENT



OldStoneHouseMuseum.org