

THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004

Published Quarterly

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

July 2014

MISSION STATEMENT

The Alden Historical Society, founded in 1965, is a volunteer-supported organization whose mission is to preserve, promote and present the history of the Town of Alden and its people.

One Hundred Years Ago

The centennial of the opening of the Ewell Free Library in May and the upcoming centennial of the *Alden Advertiser* in October make one wonder about life in Alden one hundred years ago

The year was 1914. Ladies were wearing hobble skirts or tunics over long underskirts. Men were still in their three-piece suits. The most popular baby names were John and Mary. World War I began that July in Europe. Woodrow Wilson was President. The Toronto Blueshirts won the Stanley Cup. The Boston Braves defeated the Philadelphia A's to win the World Series. Wrigley Field opened in Chicago. Edgar Rice Burroughs published *Tarzan of the Apes*. The #1 song was "It's a Long Way to Tipperary." The life expectancy for a man was 52 years, for a woman 57 years.



1914 Model T Touring Car

Ford Motor Co. went to an 8-hour day. Minimum wage was \$5 for a day's labor. The price of a Model T was \$440. 1.7 million automobiles were registered in the US. The first red & green traffic signal was introduced in Cleveland on August 5th.

The first commercial flight—between St. Petersburg, FL and Tampa, FL—took off with one pilot and one passenger who paid \$400 (\$9,200 in 2014 dollars) for the flight.



A Benoist XIV over Tampa Bay, Florida 1914



Otto Wende
Town Supervisor
1914



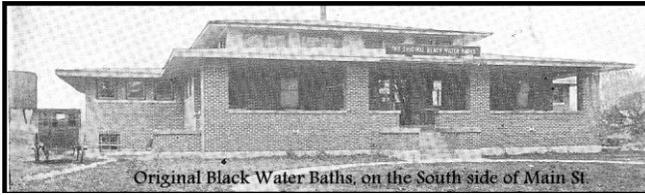
Frank Young
President of Alden Village
1914

In Alden, Otto Wende was Town Supervisor and Frank Young was President of the Village. (Within the next ten years, Mr. Wende would be encouraging the Erie County Board of Supervisors to locate the new Erie County Penitentiary in Alden.)

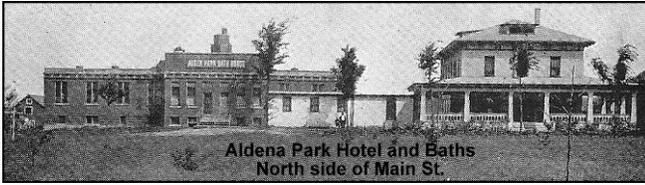
Women, of course, still did not have the right to vote. It had been argued that, with their big sleeves, women would be able to hide numerous ballots and vote more than once! In 1914, there were suffragist and anti-suffragist rallies in Buffalo and even one in "The Grove" (Alden Firemen's Memorial Park) that July.



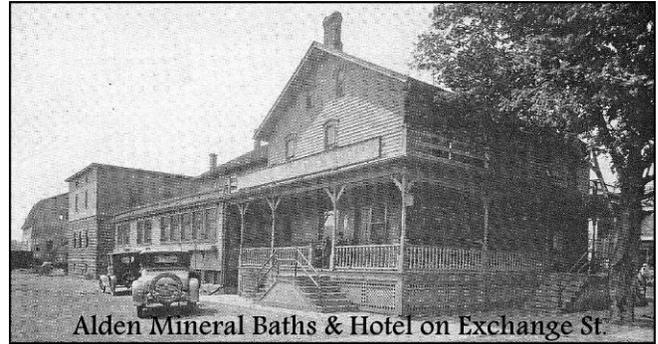
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Original Black Water Baths, on the South side of Main St.



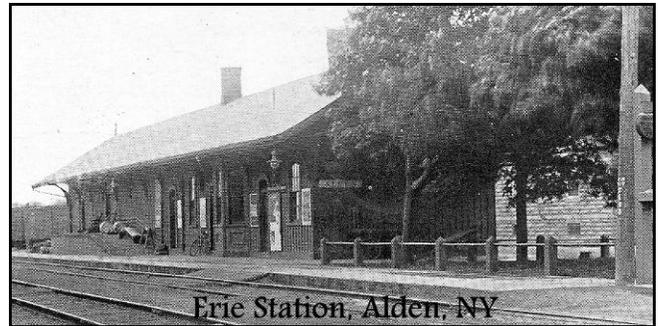
Aldena Park Hotel and Baths
North side of Main St.



Alden Mineral Baths & Hotel on Exchange St.

The Black Water Bath business was booming in 1914. All three bathhouses were in operation by then—the Original on the south side of Main Street, the Aldena Park Hotel and Baths on the north side of Main Street and the Alden Mineral Baths & Hotel on Exchange Street. The Original had just opened its new brick building (now St. Aidan's Episcopal Church) considered at the time to be the finest and most modern bath house this side of Hot Springs, Arkansas. With the hotels attached to the bathhouses and the other hotels in town unable to house all the bathers, nearly thirty private homes were opened as boarding houses.

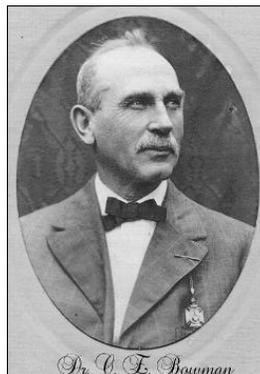
The railroad was the principal means of transportation, although automobiles were making their appearance. Four railroad lines ran through the town, with the Erie station on Exchange Street probably being the busiest, carrying passengers and freight to and from Buffalo. The NY Central Station in Crittenden was also very busy, with traffic west to Buffalo, and east to Batavia and Rochester.



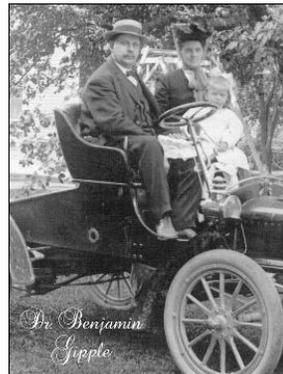
Erie Station, Alden, NY

There was telephone service in the village in 1914, but no electricity. That would come in 1921; 1930s in the rural areas. Ralph Stowell did install a gasoline-engine powered generator in the basement of the pharmacy in 1915, supplying electricity to the pharmacy, a barbershop next door and Baldwin's wagon shop on Exchange Street. There was natural gas for lighting, heating and cooking, the village having been piped for gas between 1890 and 1893. Outside the village, people still relied on kerosene, wood and coal.

There were three doctors in the village—Dr. Carlos Bowman, Dr. Benjamin Gipple and Dr. Clarence Tyler. Each had an office in his home, plus made house calls. Dr. Tyler's wife writes in her journals of the doctor's long days and nights visiting his patients from Cowlesville to Akron—by auto in good weather, by sleigh in the winter.



Dr. C. E. Bowman

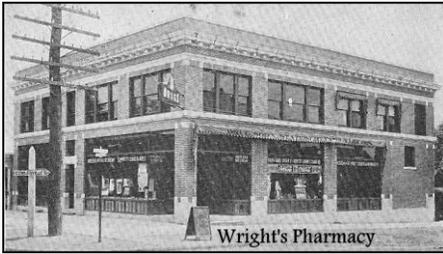


Dr. Benjamin Gipple

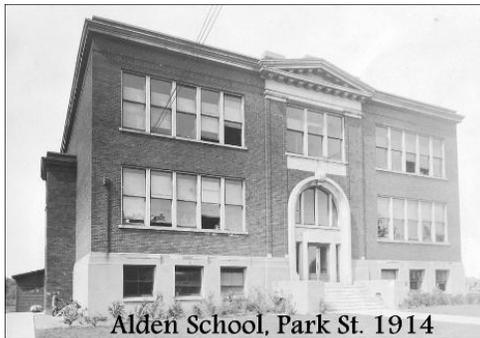
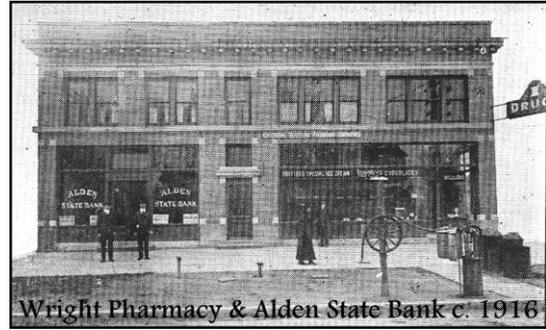


Dr. Clarence Tyler

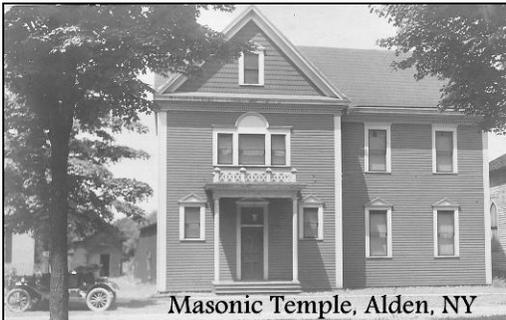
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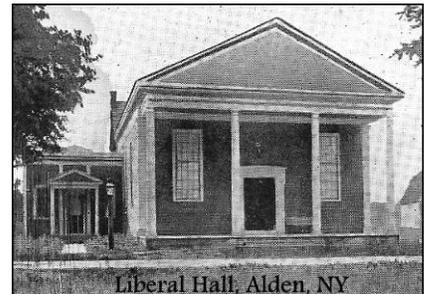
Wright's Pharmacy (now Alden Pharmacy), on the corner of Exchange Street and Main Street (Broadway) opened around 1914. The new Alden State Bank would move into part of the building in 1916.



In 1914, the new red brick school on Park Street, designed by local architect Herbert Swain, was nearing completion. It replaced the three-story frame building, built in 1902, which was considered obsolete. There were only four graduates in 1914, one of whom died of typhoid fever that summer.



Social life in 1914 centered around the home and community organizations. Five Hundred, a combination of euchre and bridge, was the favorite card game of the card clubs that sprang up. The Masons and the Grange were growing. All sorts of activities—lectures, dramas, dances, dinners—were held at Liberal



Hall (now the Legion Hall). The Liberal Club (a women's organization) was very active, as were the fire companies. The Alden Hose Company was declared one of the best drill companies in New York in 1914.

A simpler life in 1914? Perhaps. A difficult life? Yes, if you consider a life without electricity difficult. They were certainly entering an age of new inventions, and soon a world at war.

Karen Muchow, Archivist

Alden Hook & Ladder Fire Company's Heritage & Reunion Parade



On Saturday, June 21, the Alden Historical Society participated in a parade for the Alden Hook & Ladder Fire Company's Heritage & Reunion Carnival. Special thanks to Lenny & Leo Wagner for the use of the vintage pickup truck. This year, we were assisted with vintage bicycle riders of all ages, reminding everyone that the Historical Society building is open to the public the 1st and 3rd Sunday of each month, from 1 to 3 pm.

For all you antique truck buffs, Leo's truck is a 1935 Chevrolet, 6 cylinder engine with provisions for a hand crank, a custom 12' bed and only 17,000 miles of travel. Original sticker price was just under \$800. Leo's dad, Leonard, of Wagner's Agway, purchased the truck in 1975 from Mr. John Schunk of Alden.

Historic Clean-Up



On Saturday, May 31, a crack team of Society members and trustees, armed with brooms, clippers, Windex, a vacuum, and other tools of improvement, met at the Town Park, where a couple hours of labor freed the former Henskee Road schoolhouse from the intrusions of recent time. This gem of Alden's past was made ready to shine for the current generation of students.



Letters Received from Alden Central 5th Grade Students Regarding Their Field Trip with the Alden Historical Society

Tuesday, June 3, 2014
Dear Alden Historical Society,
Thank you for teaching us about Alden's past. It was pretty interesting. My favorite part was the one room school house. I liked Annie-Anne-Over. I also liked the museum scavenger hunt. Reading Samuel Young's actual words was interesting too. That was probably one of my favorite field trips.

Tuesday, June 3, 2014
Dear Alden Historical Society,
Thank you for taking the time to teach us about the history of Alden. It was so cool to learn about the black water baths. My favorite part was the spelling bee. I also liked the name tag idea.

Tuesday, June 3, 2014
Dear Alden Historical Society,
Thank you for showing us how Alden was back then. My favorite part was making the butter and hunting for the little bath tub. The butter was really, really good on the crackers. It was fun, interesting and I had a wonderful time. Well, maybe I will see you again.

Fifth Grade Field Trip

At the Historical Building

The five fifth grade classes from the Alden Middle School again visited the Historical Society Building and the Henskee Road Schoolhouse in June. Each class is divided into two groups with one group visiting the building in the morning while the other group visits the schoolhouse. They meet in the Town Park for lunch and then switch. The black bear wandering Alden changed a few of the arrangements this year—lunch was eaten in the Community Building and the children were transported by bus.

The time at the Historical Building is broken into three parts. We first meet in the Big Room and discuss what they do know about the history of Alden, how Alden got its name and the Black Water Baths. Then we tour the building. The children get a chance to look at the exhibits in the Big Room, and then move through the Work Room into the Hamlet Room. There we tell the story of Town Line's secession from the Union during the Civil War and the children look through the Military Room, the Organizations Room and the Parlor. In the Parlor they come across the first "Try Its"—a View Master and a stereopticon.

We then move upstairs, first to the Clothing Room, then into the Attic. After a brief introduction to the sections of the Attic—Kitchen, General Store, Early Settlers' Tools and other Farming Tools—the students look at the displays and try the dial phone, manual typewriters, cash register and play the xylophone.

The second part of the time has been used in several different ways. One year we made a homemade thermal toy that used to be hung over a kerosene lamp to twirl in the rising heat, and collect the soot. Another time we looked at some of the advertising fans in the collection and then made our own. This year, after being told of their interest in the Civil War (especially after their field trip to an encampment at Letchworth State Park), we looked at the letters Samuel Young of Four Rod Road wrote to his parents during his two years serving in the Union Army, from his enlistment in Buffalo to his death at age twenty in Louisiana. The students had a chance to look at the actual letters we have and then at two of the thirty-two letters transcribed by his mother or sister. They learned more about life as a soldier during that time and marveled that mail did go back and forth, even though it may have taken a month or more.

Churning butter and going on the "Great Bathtub Hunt" comprise the final part of the time. We use a vintage paddle churn to make the butter with each child turning the paddles at least twenty times. Crackers are provided in order to taste the butter. The hunt for the small numbered (there are 36) paper bathtubs allows the children to revisit all the rooms and search for the tubs in the displays. This is always a favorite activity.

Karen Muchow, Archivist

At the Henskee Road Schoolhouse

During their visit to the Henskee Road Schoolhouse, the students followed a simulated late 19th century-early 20th century schedule. They were greeted at the door to the school and given nametags identifying actual students from school censuses of that time period. Next they were instructed to follow the conventions of the day which included greeting their teacher by curtsying for the girls and bowing for the boys. Upon their entry to the building, students pledged their allegiance to the 48 star American flag. The pledge was followed by a brief history of the schoolhouse and its 1976 move from the original Henskee Road location to its present Alden Town Park location.

As the early 20th century classes were multi-age, the students varied in age from 6 to 16. While one academic level reviewed their work with the teacher, the other levels worked on their assignments. Although there was only one teacher for all of the levels, older students could assist the beginning learners. Similarly, if younger students were ready to learn the older students' material, they had the opportunity to benefit from the advanced lessons. Subjects covered included reading, arithmetic, and spelling. In addition to schoolwork, students in earlier times had additional chores, including hauling firewood for the stove and pumping and bringing in water for drinking and hand washing.

The students' favorite part of the day seemed to be interactive activities such as the spelling bee that concluded our lessons and recess. Popular outdoor games included Pom-pom Pullaway, Annie- Annie Over, and Red Lion.

The day was a comfortable one, neither hot nor cold, but we imagined what it would be like to have attended during the frigid winters when those closest to the central wood-burning stove would be sweating and itching in their woolen clothing, while those nearest to the drafty outer walls would be freezing. The trek to school was no easy matter, either, as students were expected to walk up to three miles each way. Of course, there was little traffic in those days, and it moved at a slower pace.

The students' simulated school day enabled them to glimpse an Alden school of the past and gain a better understanding of how things have changed.

Historical Society members who volunteered as teachers included Sandy Dussault, Roberta Vincent, Carl Matthies, Conrad Borucki, Laura Loehr, and Elli DeFilippo.

Elli DeFilippo, Editor

Notes from the President

Historical Sign Project

Some time ago, your Board of Trustees approved the Alden Presbyterian Church as our 2nd Sign Project. I am pleased to report that we have been working diligently with church officials and have come to an agreement on the wording for the sign.

The church will provide a beautiful base that matches the face of the main building, and our presentation of historical facts will be a testament to

the 200 plus wonderful years of community service the church has given to Alden.

We have a few more t's to be crossed and i's to be dotted, but shortly we hope to announce the dedication ceremony....hopefully late this summer.

Watch your Alden Advertiser for updated information.

P.S. - - - - following the completion of the newest sign project our marker fund will be seriously depleted. Please consider a donation so we might start thinking about our next project in 2015. Thank you.

Congratulations Trustee Carl Matthies

For completing a 30 mile bike ride to raise funds for the American Diabetes Association on June 7. His efforts raised \$533, nearly tripling the target he had for the day. He said the course was flat and well identified along with perfect weather. Carl maintained an average speed of 14 mph or 4.29 minutes a mile for 2 hrs 9 minutes total time.

Considering his ripe old age of #\$.%^&* he did extremely well. He did mention he may do it again next year! We all look forward to supporting him again.

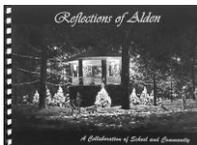
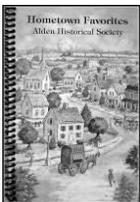
Nice going Carl!!! We are so proud of you.....



Long time society life member Helen Merle is now home following hospitalization and rehabilitation. She is doing well with a little help and glad to be home. A card or phone call would be welcome and very much appreciated.

Her address and phone no. are as follows.....

Mrs. Helen Merle
1605 Lindan Av
Alden, NY 14004
716 937-9415



If you are looking for a special gift -we still have a few of the acclaimed Reflections of Alden Book and Alden Historical Cookbook for sale at our building and next door at the Alden Pharmacy. Stop in and pick one up for that special someone!



Incidentally, we do have a new supply of the Century Home signs if your Alden abode is 100 years plus. They are only \$35.00 and nicely done. Visit the museum and pick one up, or give us a call.

CURATOR WANTED

We are looking for someone to serve as Curator. If you are interested, contact Gil Dussault at 937-6246, or any trustee.

Gilbert Dussault Jr., President

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

July 2014 Summer Break

August 2014 Summer Break

September 11, 2014 The Buffalo Central Terminal
7 PM, Community Center



Bands, flags, and numerous speeches marked the opening and dedication of the Buffalo Central Terminal on Saturday, June 22, 1929. At its height, Buffalo was second only to Chicago in rail traffic, and although the Central Terminal on Paderewski Drive was not Buffalo's only station, it was certainly its grandest. Time has not been kind to Buffalo's last remaining station; but, after years of neglect and abuse, there is optimism.

Join us as we observe the past, present, and future of the Buffalo Central Terminal as presented by members of the Central Terminal Restoration Terminal (CTRC). It promises to be an enlightening program. A bonus to the evening's presentation will be a brief discussion of Alden's railroading history.

Conrad and Carol Berucki, Program Committee

Walking Tour of Nature Trail

On June 7, botanical authority David Kieber and his wife Chris led interested persons on a tour of the Joe Panza Nature Trail. Mr. Kieber had done an earlier "Home Remedies" program and promised to do a follow-up tour when the weather permitted. About 30 people turned out for the informative tour which lasted over two hours. Mr. Kieber identified numerous plant species and the pointed out the healthful benefits of many. He cautioned not to pick anything for consumption unless absolutely certain of its identity.

HISTORICAL TRIVIA

Personal hygiene left much room for improvement... As a result, many women and men had developed acne scars by adulthood. The women would spread bee's wax over their facial skin to smooth out their complexions. When they were speaking to each other, if a woman began to stare at another woman's face she was told, 'mind your own bee's wax.' Should the woman smile, the wax would crack, hence the term 'crack a smile'. In addition, when they sat too close to the fire, the wax would melt. Therefore, the expression, 'losing face.'

In the late 1700's, many houses consisted of a large room with only one chair. Commonly, a long wide board folded down from the wall, and was used for dining. The 'head of the household' always sat in the chair while everyone else ate sitting on the floor. Occasionally a guest, who was usually a man, would be invited to sit in this chair during a meal. To sit in the chair meant you were important and in charge. They called the one sitting in the chair the 'chair man.' Today in business, we use the expression or title 'Chairman' or 'Chairman of the Board.'

With Deepest Sympathy

Thelma (Suyers) Hoffman The Alden Historical Society extends heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of Thelma Hoffman, who passed away on March 17, 2014. Thelma is survived by her husband Herbert and sons Curtis (Theresa) and Craig (Kelly) and grandchildren. Thelma was a lifetime member of the Historical Society.

WELCOME MEMBERS

NEW MEMBERS:

Rosemary Dziedzic
Donald Eggert
Sheila Metzger
Leita Reed
Sherry Sojka

RENEWED MEMBERS:

Doris Brade
Helen Giczkowski
Marge Matuszewski
Laura Hacker
Wayne Weinsheimer

RENEWED COUPLES:

Allegra & Gregory Grenier
Violet & Ronald Savage

DONATIONS IN LIEU OF DUES:

Gwendolyn Koelbl Janet Koelbl Helen Merle Roberta Vincent

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

New members are always welcome. Your support will ensure that the Alden Historical Society will continue to grow and prosper for years to come. Please make check payable as noted below.

Please note that the membership year runs from April 1 through March 31, with annual payment due by April 1.

Thank you for your support.

DUES

Single	\$12.00	Name.....
Couple	\$20.00	Address
Family.....	\$25.00
Business.....	\$50.00	Phone.....	Email.....

A check payable to: *ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY* may be mailed to:

Debbie Crist, Membership Secretary
Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004

Debbie Crist, Membership

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

Please remember the Alden Historical Society in your estate plans.

A bequest in your memory or in memory of someone you love can help preserve the heritage of our community.

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

Phone 937 3700

General Fund and Other Donors

Recently the Alden Historical Society has received generous donations to the general fund from the following:

Elli DeFilippo Rosemary Dziedzic Patricia & Todd Mooney

Please be advised that donations to the Alden Historical Society are not tax deductible since it is not a 501(c)(3) organization.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING

The ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S many exhibits are located in the village at the Alden Historical Society Building, 13213 Broadway, across from Alden Sate Bank. The mission of the historical society is to preserve, promote and present the history of Alden and its people.

HOURS:

The Alden Historical Society Building is open to the public from 1 PM to 3 PM the first and third Sunday of each month except during January and February. Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 937-3700, 937-6400 or email aldenhistsoc@gmail.com.

MEETINGS:

Program meetings are generally held at the Alden Community Center on the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. Notices will be published in the Alden Advertiser in advance of the program. Open to the public, these programs are both informative and interesting. Many times a guest speaker is present. You are very welcome to come, share your memories and experiences about the evening's program, and enjoy an informal social complete with homemade refreshments. In the event of inclement weather, we will follow the lead of the Alden school system, postponing when after school programs are closed.

Trustee meetings are normally held at the Alden Historical Building at 7:00 pm. Meetings are held on the first Thursday of the month in February, April, June, August, October and December (even months). Trustee meetings are open to the membership.

<i><u>2014 Officers</u></i>		<i><u>2014 Trustees</u></i>
President - Gil Dussault	Publicity/Newsletter - Elli DeFilippo; Chris Gust, Carl Matthies, and Clarke Burke Program/Refreshments – Conrad & Carol Borucki / Roberta Vincent Building and Ground - Larry Kocher / Fred Blowers Fundraising - Gil Dussault Nominating - Elli DeFilippo and Jane Burke Audit - Chris Gust ; Clarke Burke and Larry Kocher Budget - Clarke Burke; Larry Kocher and Chris Gust Historical Marker/Signs - Gil Dussault Erie County Fair - Conrad Borucki	Fred Blowers
Vice President - Roberta Vincent		Conrad Borucki
Secretary - Diane Casell		Clarke Burke
Treasurer - Clarke Burke		Diane Casell
<i><u>Ex-Officio Appointments</u></i>		Debbie Crist
Curator - vacant		Elli DeFilippo
Archivist - Karen Muchow		Gil Dussault
Town Historian – Karen Muchow		Chris Gust
<i><u>Committee Chairs and members</u></i>		Larry Kocher
Membership - Debbie Crist		Carl Matthies
Collections - Larry Kocher	Roberta Vincent	

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY DATES TO REMEMBER SUMMER 2014	
PROGRAM MEETINGS Alden Community Center 7 PM	TRUSTEE MEETINGS Alden Historical Society Building at 7 PM
JULY.....<u>Summer Break</u>	
AUGUST.....<u>Summer Break</u>	AUGUST 7.....<u>Members Invited</u>
SEPTEMBER 11....<u>The Central Terminal</u>	

BUSINESS MEMBERS OF THE ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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