

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
13213 BROADWAY
ALDEN, NY 14004

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ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM
 Chartered by the Board of Regents
 New York State Education Department 1971

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THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004

Published Quarterly

July 2007

WHY GRANNYTOWN?

The story is that when the early settlers met in 1823 to decide on the name for their town which had been newly separated from the Town of Clarence, Seth Estabrook suggested "Alden". He said the town was as small and as sweet as his mother-in-law, a lineal descendant of John and Priscilla Alden of Mayflower fame. Realizing their town had been named after a grandmother, the settlers affectionately referred to Alden as "Grannytown" for some years.

OFFICERS

<i>President.....Roberta.Vincent</i>	<i>Society Historian Janet Koelbl</i>
<i>Vice President... Sal Sardella</i>	<i>Alden Town Historian:.....</i>
<i>Secretary.....Laura Loehr</i>	<i>.....Leonard Weisbeck</i>
<i>Treasurer.....Ralph Davis</i>	<i>Alden Town Board Liaison:.....</i>
<i>Curator.....Karen Muchow</i>	<i>..... Arlene Cooke</i>
<i>Archivist.....Ruth Davis</i>	<i>Editor Carl Matthies</i>

TRUSTEES

<i>Fred Blowers</i>	<i>Sal Sardella</i>
<i>Judy Hotchkin</i>	<i>Ralph Stoos</i>
<i>Joe Kipfer</i>	<i>Roberta Vincent</i>
<i>Carl Matthies</i>	<i>Paul Werner</i>
<i>Marlene Roll</i>	

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

New members are always welcome. Your support will ensure that our museum will continue to grow and prosper for years to come. Please make your check out to ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

DUES

Single.....\$5.00
Family.....\$10.00
Lifetime...\$50.00

NAME.....
ADDRESS.....
.....
PHONE..... E-MAIL.....

SEND TO:

Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 1400

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MUSEUM:

The museum is located in the ALDEN HISTORICAL BUILDING at 13213 Broadway in the village across from the bank. The purpose of the museum is to show how the people of Alden have lived and worked and played. Here you may study the everyday things they made, used, wore, and cherished.

MUSEUM HOURS:

The museum is open to the public every Saturday from 10 to 2 pm.

Also open during the Alden Art Show in Sept. and during Christmas-in-the-Park in early December.

Special Children's Activity Days are planned for school holidays.

Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 937-6400 or 937-9256.

MEETINGS:

Meetings are held every second Thursday from September thru June. Business meeting begins at 7:30 pm. Everyone is invited to attend...doors open at 7 pm so you have time to tour the museum.

An interesting and informative program follows a brief business meeting, many times with a guest speaker. You are very welcome to come and share your memories and experiences about the evening's program. Afterwards stick around for a social complete with home made refreshments and informal socializing.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We have had a super spring with a field trip to Graycliff and the birthday party for our building. Our fall season promises to be an exciting one also. The open houses on Sat. are helping many Aldenites find out about the history of the town. We are always looking for new members and new programs to keep us informed and entertained. Please share this newsletter with your friends and family and plan to attend a meeting or two. We'd love to see you.

Roberta Vincent

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Being able to contact members easily is one of the Secretary's jobs. You can help the Historical Society keep current with your correct address. Please notify us if you have a change of address. Also please send us your e-mail address to help keep mailing costs down. If we can e-mail the Gazette to you, that's one less stamp to purchase. Send your e-mail address to the Alden Historical Society, to the attention of Laura Loehr, Secretary. Thanks for your help!

Laura Loehr

CURATOR'S CORNER

NEW ACQUISITIONS

The people of Alden continue to think of the Historical Society when they come across items of local interest—whether it be in their own attics or on E-Bay. Since January the Society has received: Blizzard of 77 items, Korean War papers, advertising items from Neeland's Dairy, Ames & Bells bags, a knitted cotton bedspread given as a wedding gift in 1896, Boy Scout Troop 68 scrapbook, Masonic jewels, a 1944 Navy Bluejacket's Manual, Bob Airey's Army uniform, two dresses found in the attic of 12920 Broadway, a framed watercolor painting of the "Houses of Crittenden Road" by Faith Wendling, Dr. Tyler's wife's journals from 1905-1925, more Alden postcards, a handmade Davy Crockett doll, and a number of children's historical reference books. Most of the items are on display and the others will be rotated in. Stop by if you wish to see them.

Karen Muchow

PIECES OF THE PAST

Deciding to display some of our quilts in the Fireman's parade on June 30th was an easy decision. We have many quilts, and each is different. You marvel at the amount of time, work and skill put into each one and wish that each could tell us its history. Who made it? For a special occasion? Where did the fabric pieces come from? An old dress? Curtains? Yes, each quilt has its own story.

The many items in the Historical Society's building also have stories. They, too, are pieces of the past. Together they tell Alden's story from a little frontier town in the early 1800's, through a time of great popularity due to the Blackwater Baths, to the present time as one of the outer ring of suburbs.

Karen Muchow

ARCHIVIST REPORT

LETTER FROM THE CIVIL WAR

The Historical Society has photocopies and transcriptions of a set of twenty-five letters that were written during the Civil War. (This may turn out to be a long and complicated story.) In 1994, two faculty members from the York, Nebraska Middle School sent a packet of papers to Mrs. Ryan, the principal of the Alden Primary School. She gave them to the Museum.

The letters were written by Lyman Dayton Stilson. In addition to the letters, we received copies of photographs of his parents, a history of the company in which he served, cemetery records from York, obituaries for the Stilson Family, census records pages from "Old Settlers History of York County", court records, a lengthy poem written in honor of his parents fiftieth wedding anniversary and other documents – a considerable collection of information. The original letters are held by the York County Historical Society.

The letters are significant to us, because Lyman Stilson was an Alden native. He wrote to his parents and friends in Alden. Lyman was 22 when he enlisted in Buffalo in September 1861 in Company D, 49th New York Volunteers. His regiment served in the defenses of Washington for the first year and in various campaigns and battles after that. He was wounded several times and was discharged in December 1862 due to "physical disability". Lyman, or L.D. as he signed his letters, was a faithful correspondent. In most cases, the letters are written only a couple of days apart. In one of the early letters he asks his parents to save his letter. Because they did so, we are able to understand more of the war of another era.

After his discharge, L.D. returned to farm in Alden, married LaDelle Cushman and in 1870 moved to Nebraska. His parents joined him there about 1880. Information from the various papers indicates that Lyman and wife were pioneers in the settlement of York County and became important members of the young community.

The story has an additional twist. Lyman's parents were Joel and Elvira Dayton Stilson. They owned a farm south of Broadway and while their son was in the army they moved about four miles north into the village. Their house still stands at 12915 Broadway. In addition to L.D. they had a daughter, Emily. Emily had married Ralph P. Stowell. Their son Shirley Marcus Stowell was born in 1861. About a year after Lyman enlisted, Ralph also enlisted. Unfortunately, he was captured and died in the notorious Libby Prison. (continued next page)

Shortly after his death, Emily died, leaving their baby an orphan. Joel and Elvira Stilson then took over the care of their grandson. When the Stilsons decided to move to Nebraska, S.M. remained in Alden. He married and his son was the Ralph Stowell many of us remember as our pharmacist and as “Mr. Alden”, the first Town of Alden Historian.

The letter and other materials are interesting to study. Why not spend part of a Saturday reading them? The Stowell family also has interesting stories connected with Alden’s history. Perhaps you might want to contact the Historical Society’s Historian, Janet Stowell Koelbl about them.

Ruth Davis

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

JULY 2007 *No Meeting*

AUGUST 2007..... *No Meeting*

SEPTEMBER 15 2007.....*Progressive Dinner*

Join us for a fun filled evening at our second ever Progressive Dinner. We will begin with hors d'oeuvres at the Elma Historical Museum. After a brief tour we move on to the Marilla Historical Museum for the main course and a brief tour. The dinner concludes at our own Alden Museum with plenty of homemade desserts. Cost and time schedule for this event are to be announced. Contact any officer of the historical society.



*PHOTO TAKEN SOMETIME BETWEEN 1897 AND 1915
THE MARIA BOWMAN FAMILY SHOWN ON THE PORCH*



RECENT PHOTO OF THE ALDEN HISTORICAL BUILDING

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING CELEBRATED 40 YEARS

On June 14th the Alden Historical Society celebrated 40 years of being in the home on 13213 Broadway. Charter member Mr. Walden Roberts donated the building in memory of his wife, Francis Young Roberts. The only stipulation being that it is used for the Alden Historical Society. The formal dedication of the Historical Society’s new building was held on June 25th 1967. Charter members in attendance at the celebration this year included Mrs. Norma Sweet, Mrs. Janet Robinson and Mr. Jack Walters. Also in attendance were Walden Robert’s daughter-in-law Martha and grandson Charles with his wife, Barbara.

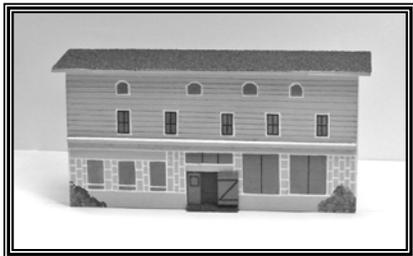
In behalf of the Alden Historical Society we again express our gratitude for this generous donation from the Roberts family, as well as all those whose efforts over the years formed this special time capsule of Alden history that we enjoy today!



**ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY AWARDED BEST FLOAT
AT THE ANNUAL HERITAGE AND REUNION CARNIVAL**

Trustee Judy Hotchkin (left) and President Roberta Vincent (right) proudly displayed several antique quilts in the Alden Fireman's Parade on June 30th. Members arranged the quilts in the back of a well-marked and decorated truck. As a result of these efforts the Parade Committee for the Alden Hook and Ladder Fire Company awarded the society "Best Float" along with a cash prize of \$50.00. The Alden Historical Society sincerely thanks the Alden Fire Company for this award.

As an extra note we would like to thank our new member Mr. Conrad Borucki for painting signs for the float.



**WAHL BROTHERS
REPLICA**



**OLD PHOTO OF ALDEN
VILLAGE LOOKING S.E.**

Wahl Brothers
The Old Reliable Store

SATURDAY SPECIALS
Come and see what we have to offer on Saturday of this week.

A Santous Coffee, regular 30c	25c
May Picking Tea, regular 60c	50c
Black and Green Gun Powder Tea	45c
Washing Powder, reg. 5c/pkg.	4c

Dry Goods, Groceries, Canned Goods,
Patent Medicines, Rugs, Notions, Men's
Furnishings, Men's, Ladies and Children's
Shoes and Rubbers.

Fruits and Vegetables in Season

AD IN PAPER OCT. 1914

LANDMARK COLLECTIBLES

The newest replica is the Wahl Brothers building. It was established on April 1, 1884 by William Wahl in partnership with August Wentz. The general store held this name for 61 years, despite the changes in partners over the years. It then became Momberger's Department Store, Diana's fashions, Special Things, Paul's Bike Shop, and presently (2007) Alden Medical Supply (located at 13185 Broadway).

The price for this replica is \$25.00 and is available now. You can call Marlene Roll at 937-4549 or stop in at the Historical Society on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm.

If you are interested in acquiring one of the former replicas call Marlene and she will put you on a list.



HENSKEE ROAD SCHOOLHOUSE
BUILT CIRCA 1834

The Henskee Road Schoolhouse located in Alden Town Park is starting to see some activity. Recently there were two flower gardens planted within the new fence as part of an educational program for kids. There will be some programs held there this summer in conjunction with the Historical Society for grade school students.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

<i>Doris Brade</i>	<i>Josh Lons</i>	<i>Antoinette Wiltberger</i>
<i>Carol Borucki</i>	<i>Keith Stone (Life Member)</i>	<i>Anna Walters</i>
<i>Buddy Czechowski</i>	<i>Mary Stone (Life Member)</i>	

WELCOME RENEWING MEMBERS:

<i>Margaret Rose</i>	<i>Delores Drogi</i>	<i>Ronald Savage</i>
<i>Sue Galbraith</i>	<i>Florence Kegler</i>	<i>Violet Savage</i>
<i>Ann Matthies</i>	<i>Willard Eastwood</i>	<i>Richard Savage</i>
<i>Carl Matthies</i>	<i>Susan Muench</i>	<i>Jack C. Walters</i>

DONATIONS

If you wish to donate artifacts to the museum please contact Karen Muchow at 937 6400. Our collection policy states that donations should be things that have an Alden connection. Monetary donations are also appreciated and may be designated as memorials.

HOUSE BUILT BEFORE 1907?

If your house was built before 1907 than it would qualify to be one of Alden's Century Homes. Your home has earned the right to proudly wear a century home plaque. Alden century homes are (with the owner's permission) photographed. These photos are kept in the historical society's archives. Century home plaques can be purchased from the Alden Historical Society. For more information contact Marlene Roll at: 937 4549.

**CENTURY OLD HOUSE
3647 CRITTENDEN RD.
CRITTENDEN, NY**

Tom and Diane Frys, owners/residents of our featured "Century Old House", offers the following historical account of their home.



CRITTENDEN SCHOOL HOUSE IN 1918



RECENT PHOTO OF THE FRYS' RESIDENCE

When the firemen moved to their new fire hall the school building laid vacant. It was temporarily used as a church when the local Presbyterian Church burned down. Otherwise, the building was then vacant until 1963 when the Schrock family converted it into their home.

In the early 1970's the Lesinski family bought the home and lived there for two years. We bought the home in 1976 and moved in on the Bicentennial weekend.

We love this home and have tried to keep the integrity of the exterior just as it was when it was the one room schoolhouse.

Tom & Diane Frys

The one room schoolhouse was erected to serve the children of the Crittenden area in 1852. It was named the Alden School District # 12.

Besides the Main room, the building also had a vestibule, cloak room and supply room. The ceiling was fourteen feet high. It was heated with coal with the flue pipe running the width of the main room to provide radiant heat.

The walls are solid brick fourteen inches thick with 1/2" wainscoting. The main beams are 12" x 12" to support a three inch thick floor. It has a full cellar with a cistern for water.

The structure was used as a school until 1948 with the creation of the Alden Central School System. It was sold to the Crittenden Volunteer Fire Department for a dollar with the stipulation that they maintain the small playground on the premises. The fire department used the building to hold their meetings and social functions.

