



The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

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Archivist

Historical Society Historian
Town and Village Historian
Karen Muchow

Curator
Kris Rogers

A Poetical Testimonial to the Benefits of Alden's Black Water Baths

The first Black Water Bath House opened in November 1904. People came from all over the eastern United States to soak in the mineral rich water. Two other bath houses joined the Original (now St. Aidan's Church)—one on Exchange Street and one on the north side of Main Street. It was said that 75% of the patients were cured and 90% were benefited from the recommended twenty-one baths treatment. The last of the bath houses closed in 1965.

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

All American citizens between California and Maine
Who are suffering from rheumatic pains
And desire to enjoy life while on earth you do remain.
Just read the following testimonial of one Dan Lane.

TESTIMONIAL

As I was telling a friend how I suffered with rheumatic pain,
"You better go to Alden Park Hotel," he said, then began to explain.
To take those black water baths, and with each one a good sweat
And you will find theirs are not hard on your pocketbook.

Now as he has taken a course of treatment there
I thought it to be only just and fair
To allow that with his experience he probably knew
As to whether all his statements were true.

So I considered them over and took his advice
And said to be cured I would be willing to go twice.
Then I packed up and started as soon as I could
And when I got there found the people kind and good.

Everything around was clean and neat,
And at the table we had of the very best to eat.
It was cooked and served in the best of way
And no one need go hungry during their stay.

A few baths made them feel better, I knew it by hearing them talk;
And in a few more days they would shoulder their crutches and take a walk.
They would not go far before casting theirs along the road,
And I am told that village boys gather them up by the load.

Each day while there I was given a good bath,
And very soon found I was on the right path;
I gained so fast that in a very short spell
I got to feeling so good that I knew I was well.

When starting for home I was invited to take a free bus,
And of course I accepted without any fuss.
Now right there I wish to say (if the owner does not mind)
That it was one of the very, very best of its kind.

As I pondered it all while at the depot
Right back to the hotel I was tempted to go;
Then realizing that I ought to refrain,
As soon as it arrived I got on the train.

While homeward bound and as we glided along
It got impressed on my mind very, very strong
That if ever again in my life I saw even one sick day
I would pack my grip and take the first train that way.

I tell the truth, I was in my sixty-eighth year,
But that now I am much younger to me is very clear
So to prove to you how much younger I must feel
I will inform you that I have just bought my first automobile.

And as to its being one of the best there is no mistake,
For it is a special six of the Studebaker make;
Now when I wish to go to Alden, whether in sunshine or rain,
I can get in my car and not have to wait for any train.

The treatments while there make me feel so sublime,
So not being a poet I have tried to write this in rhyme;
And remembering that when I started for home there were many nearby,
I think it best to give them an opportunity to testify.

Dan Lane
Painted Post, NY
June 1921

Daniel F. Lane was working as an assembler in a washing machine factory at the age of 76. He died in September 1942 at the age of 89.

Photos and article submitted by Karen Muchow



Black Water Baths
NATURE'S cure for rheumatism, nervousness, and that run-down condition. Hotel and baths under same roof. Every facility for your comfort and convenience; pleasant home-like rooms, each with steam heat, running hot and cold water; excellent food, wholesome and nourishing. Black water direct from our own wells on premises. Open all the year.
TWENTY MILES FROM BUFFALO.
WRITE FOR BOOKLET.
JOHN K. HEALY
OWNER-MANAGER.
Park Hotel & Black Water Baths
Phone Alden 5 Alden, N. Y.

Message from the President

As I sat to write this column on the afternoon of December 12, I realized that in a non-pandemic world, I would be at the Alden Heritage Center, helping to show visitors around our building during the Bake Sale. It made me miss this annual, special day. The Heritage Center would be decorated for the Holidays, with poinsettias throughout and our vintage Christmas decorations on display. Most of our Trustees would be present helping with the Sale throughout the day, some with their spouses and families. The day would be our biggest of the year in terms of visitors, some familiar faces; some new. Jennifer and I would usually then take a break and stroll down the sidewalk along Broadway to take in some of the other Christmas in the Park festivities in the Village. We'd stop at Alden Pharmacy to check out some nice gifts on sale during their Open House – maybe have a yummy cookie. We'd go inside Legion Hall and check out the Holiday Bazaar inside, where you could find anything from wine to alpaca-knitted mittens. We would check out the events at Firemen's Park, where kids and teens from the various non-profits were putting the finishing touches on their decorated trees by the bandstand. The smell of hot chili would waft through the air. Santa would be posing for a photo with a happy child on his knee. We'd next stop at Carbone's for a free slice of delicious hot pizza and then wind up at the Community Center to peek in on the arts & crafts for the children, with a horse-drawn carriage nearby offering rides through Town Park.



I missed all of that, as did everyone else, this year. Hopefully, life will eventually return to normal and we can all gather again at this time next year. I wish all our members and supporters a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays. Stay safe and thank you for your continued support.

Photo and article submitted by Christopher Gust



Annual Dues are Payable by April 1



We value your membership in our Historical Society, and we would like to thank you for your continued support. Your dues help to continue our mission of preserving Alden's rich history. Please remit your dues promptly.

If you have a new address or phone number, please notify us so we may keep our membership roster current. Thank you.

**YOUR
MEMBERSHIP
MATTERS**

Individual Renewal

Michael Manicki
Suzanne Pilon
MaryAnn Sardella

New Members

Gerald & Marian Butler (Couple)
Kathy Van Every (Individual)
Jennifer Gust (Individual)

Business Renewal

Reserve Gas Company Inc.

Donation in Lieu of Dues

Helen Merle

Bake Sale Donations

Harriet Aldinger
Clarke & Jane Burke
Annette Fitscher

Bake Sale, continued

Laura Loehr
Carl & Ann Matthies
Sheila Metzger
Beverly Nebrich
Judy O'Neill
Stephen Overton
Martha Roberts
Judy Hotchkin in memory of Gordon & Eileen
Weisbeck

Historical Society Bake Sale Cancelled, Launches Fund Appeal

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and to protect the health of the public and its volunteers, the Alden Historical Society has cancelled the Annual Bake Sale, traditionally held in conjunction with the Alden Chamber of Commerce's Christmas in the Park event. The Bake Sale has always been the Society's largest fundraiser and an important budgetary item, so a decision has been made to go forward with a "No Bake" Fund Appeal for this year.

The Society requests, for those financially able, to consider making a monetary donation matching previous years' participation in the Bake Sale, either through the donation of baked goods or the purchase of baked goods. For those that regularly patronize the Bake Sale through a monetary contribution, the Society asks that consideration be made to still make a contribution.

The Society hopes, with the public's help, that the negative financial impact of the cancelled Bake Sale will be very small. No contribution is too large; none is too small and everything is gratefully appreciated, especially during this challenging year. The Society has already received a couple of early contributions toward the Fund Appeal and the Society is thankful.

For any contributions, the Society asks to please note on the check "Fund Appeal" and mail to: Alden Historical Society, 13213 Broadway, Alden NY 14004. The Society has also recently established a Paypal account to receive funds. Just go to Paypal.com or the Paypal app and search for "Alden Historical Society". You may also go to our website, www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org, and click on the 'Help Us' button. There is a 'Donate' button that will take you to a page where you may enter the amount you wish to donate. Please note that the Society is not a 501 c(3) organization and donations are not tax deductible.

The Historical Society appreciates their member and public support over the years, allowing them to continue its mission to preserve, present and promote the history of the Town of Alden and its people. The Society wishes the Alden community a Merry and Safe Christmas.

Article submitted by Christopher Gust



*Alden
Historical Society*
Established 1965

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Two Bicentennials in the Offing

Yes, not one, but two bicentennials coming soon. The first is the bicentennial of Erie County beginning in April 2021. Before 1802, all of New York State, west of Seneca Lake, had been Ontario County, except for the part taken off to create Steuben County. In 1802, Joseph Ellicott, surveyor of the Holland Purchase, persuaded the New York State Legislature to create Genesee County out of all the land west of the Genesee River. In 1806, land of Genesee County was taken off to create Allegany County. By 1808, the residents of the rest of Genesee County felt there were enough of them to justify further subdivision.

In March of 1808, a law was enacted that all the land north of Cattaraugus Creek and west of the line between fourth and fifth ranges of townships (Darien is in Range 4, Alden in Range 5) should form Niagara County. The counties of Cattaraugus and Chautauqua were formed at the same time, but remained in Niagara County until each had 500 voters. The land north of the center of Tonawanda Creek were formed into the Town of Cambria; all that part between Tonawanda Creek and the center of the Buffalo Creek Reservation became the Town of Clarence, including the then Village of Buffalo.

By the census of 1820, the population of the whole of Niagara County was 23,313, a number considered sufficient enough to justify a division. On April 2, 1821, a law was passed enacting that all that part of Niagara County north of the center of Tonawanda Creek should be a separate county called Niagara; the remainder would be known as Erie County.

Just two years later, on April 1, 1823, the New York State Legislature created the towns of Alden and Erie (later changed to Newstead to avoid confusion with an earlier Town of Erie) out of the Town of Clarence.

Plans are being made to celebrate Erie County 200, within the restrictions of the pandemic, and a committee is being formed to celebrate Alden's 200th birthday in 2023.

The Story of Erie County

In **1772**, the present **ERIE COUNTY** was part of **ALBANY COUNTY**, of New York Crown Colony.

From **1772 to 1789**, the present **ERIE COUNTY** was part of **TRYON COUNTY** which in **1784** was changed to **MONTGOMERY COUNTY**, New York

From **1789 to 1802**, the present **ERIE COUNTY** was part of **Town of Northampton, ONTARIO COUNTY**, New York.

From **1802 to 1804**, the present **ERIE COUNTY** was part of **Town of Batavia, GENESEE COUNTY**.

1804-1808-that part of present **ERIE COUNTY** in the 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th ranges of the Holland Land Company's survey (area west of the West Transit Line or present Transit Rd.) was part of the **Town of Erie**, Genesee County.

1804-1808-that part of present **ERIE COUNTY** in the 5th and 4th ranges of the Holland Land Company's survey (area east of the West Transit Line or present Transit Road) was part of the **Town of WILLINK**, Genesee County.

In **1808**, the **COUNTY OF NIAGARA** was created, consisting of that part of Genesee County west of the 4th range of the Holland Land Company's survey and north of Cattaraugus Creek.

In **1821**, the **COUNTY OF ERIE** was created, consisting of that portion of the **COUNTY OF NIAGARA** west of the 4th range of the Holland Land Company's survey, south of Tonawanda Creek and north of Cattaraugus Creek.

Dear Century Home Owner

If you are the proud owner of a house built 100 or more years ago, it qualifies as one of Alden's Century Homes. The Historical Society's mission is to protect, present and promote the history of the Town and Village of Alden and its people. By archiving photographs, histories, memories and unique features/stories of our treasured Century Homes, we continue to fulfill that mission. We are pleased that your home has earned the distinction and right to proudly be referred to as an Alden Century Home. In preparation for the Town of Alden's 200 year anniversary in 2023, we are mailing out 100 applications to different sections of the town for the next four years.

Please consider taking a moment to complete a Century House Application, listing as much information as possible.

It is free of charge, and is done to preserve our history in a reference book which is housed at the Alden Heritage Center.

Please contact Sue Galbraith at mustangcov@aol.com for information and an application. Century house signs are available for \$47.

Article submitted by Sue Galbraith



Business Member Spotlight—Cooke and Steffan, Attorneys



The building housing the law office of Cooke and Steffan at 13132 Main Street has a long history from being part of the George Bentley farm (now the Alden Memorial Town Park,) to an Italian-American restaurant and hotel, the Green Tavern Hotel, owned and managed by Frank Gaetano in the 1930s, to law offices for Richard T. Cooke and Edwin F. Steffan in the 1970s. A US President's name appears on the title to the property—Grover Cleveland—who sold the property, albeit in his role as Sheriff of Erie County.

Today, the law office is owned by Thomas Steffan, a nephew of Edwin Steffan. It is a full service law firm dealing with real estate closings, divorce, estates, wills, estate planning, business formation, bankruptcy and Medicaid planning.

The Alden Historical Society thanks all its business members for their support

Article submitted by Karen Muchow

History Repeats Itself 1918—1921



IMPORTANT TO THE PUBLIC.

The following instructions were issued yesterday by Dr. Edward A. Latham, local officer of the State Board of Health, and Dr. L. M. Powers, City Health Commissioner:

TO AVOID INFLUENZA.

1. Avoid the person who coughs or sneezes without covering his mouth and nose with a handkerchief.
2. Avoid the person who spits where it will spread disease. He is dangerous as well as indecent.
3. Avoid crowds. They multiply your chances of catching influenza.
4. When you cannot avoid crowded places keep your mouth shut and breathe through your nose.
5. If you see a person with red, watery eyes who is sneezing or blowing his nose stay away from him.
6. If any of your friends have a cold or are sick with influenza, do not associate with them.
7. Stay out of doors as much as possible. As long as you avoid crowds it is far better to go for a walk in the evening than to call on a friend or go to the theater.
8. Keep all of your rooms well ventilated.
9. Avoid getting chilled when you are warm from work or other exercises.
10. Avoid dusty places. Dust irritates the nose and throat and makes it easy for you to catch influenza.
11. If smoking irritates your throat stop it for the same reason as above.
12. Drink plenty of water.
13. Eat enough, but not too much.
14. Keep your bowels open.
15. If you wish to use additional precautions ask your doctor.

IF YOU CATCH INFLUENZA.

1. If you feel feverish and have a headache, backache, or cold in your head, consult a doctor at once.
2. Stay in bed until you are absolutely well—at least three days.
3. If you have influenza or any cold, avoid giving it to your family, friends and others.
4. Never cough or sneeze without covering your nose and mouth with a handkerchief.
5. Do not spit on sidewalks, floors, street cars, or places where germs will spread.
6. Boil your handkerchiefs after they are washed.
7. Keep your rooms well ventilated.
8. Eat enough plain food, but not too much.
9. Drink plenty of water.
10. Keep your bowels open.

The 2020 Alden Chamber of Commerce Ornament

When asked to suggest a business or organization for the 2020 Chamber ornament it seemed imperative to highlight one that stood out during this pandemic year, but there were so many, and so many of those had already been honored with an ornament.

Being a former teacher, I have said numerous times during the year, "I'm so glad I'm retired. I don't think I could do what they are doing." "They" being the faculty, staff and students of the Alden Central School District, including St. John's. In their honor, I suggested the Henskee Road Schoolhouse for the ornament.

The schoolhouse once stood on the south side of Henskee Road, just over the eastern border of the Buffalo Creek Seneca Reservation, across from the Henskee-Foss farm. It served the families living on Exchange St., Henskee Rd., and Sullivan Rd.

It is representative of the schoolhouses that dotted the landscape of the town before centralization. It is also representative of the difficulties overcome by the teachers and students of those schoolhouses: all eight grades being taught in one-room by one teacher, insufficient heat, no electricity, no running water; yet the students learned and became productive citizens.

The teachers of 2020 learned to teach remotely, and the students learned. The food service staff continued to feed the children with the help of the transportation staff. The maintenance staff began deep-cleaning the facilities and making plans on how to do that when the students returned to the classrooms. The 2020 Chamber of Commerce ornament salutes you all.

Article submitted by Karen Muchow

To learn more about the history of the Henskee Road Schoolhouse check AldenHistoricalSociety.org.



Editor's Note: The Chamber of Commerce ornament is etched glass and can be purchased for \$6.00 at Alden Pharmacy, Henry's Candy & Gifts the Alden Advertiser. The Heritage Center will have some available for purchase when we re-open in March 2021.

Alden Landmark Collectible Display

We recently received a message from a John Wilson, a former Aldenite who now lives in California. John sent us this photo of several Historical Society Landmark Collectibles he uses for his Christmas Village. John said that "no matter how far away you are, Alden will always be dear to my life!" Thank you for sharing, John, and Merry Christmas!



Condolences



Gadd-William A. Jr., of Alden, NY December 16, 2020. Beloved husband of the late Joan (Clark) Gadd; dear father of Clark (Janice) Gadd; brother of Florence Roper, Shirley Morrison, Robert (Mary Jo), Thomas (late Jean), Patricia (late Edward) Mook, Noreen (late Joseph), Novak, Linda (David) Frost, George (Lynn) and Charles (Debbie) and the late Mary (William) Amedick and Dolores (late Richard) Heimann; also survived by many nieces and nephews.

Alden Heritage Center

The **Alden Historical Society's** many exhibits are located in the village at the Alden Heritage Center, 13213 Broadway, across from Alden State Bank. The mission of the historical society is to preserve, promote and present the history of Alden and its people.

HOURS:

The **Alden Heritage Center** 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 or 392-4295.

MEETINGS:

Program meetings are generally held at the Alden Community Center on the second Thursday of the month at 7 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, often featuring a guest speaker. You are very welcome to come and share your memories and experiences about the evening's program, followed by an informal social complete with homemade refreshments. In the event of inclement weather, we will postpone when Alden school activities are closed.

Trustee meetings are held at the **Alden Heritage Center** at 7 PM. Meetings are held the first Thursday of the month in February, April, June, August, October and December. Trustee meetings are open to the membership.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

New members are always welcome. Your support will assure that the Alden Historical Society will continue to grow and prosper for years to come.

Please note: The membership year is April 1 through March 31, with the annual renewal due by April 1.

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

ANNUAL DUES

Single \$12.00

Couple \$20.00

Family \$25.00

Business \$50.00

Please include your Business card

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Phone.....Email.....

Please make checks payable to Alden Historical Society

Mail to:

Lynda Tucker, Membership Secretary

Alden Historical Society

13213 Broadway

Alden, NY 14004

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

NOTE: Donations are not tax deductible

Membership—Lynda Tucker, Clarke Burke, Susanne Galbraith, Jennifer Strong

Collections—Jane Burke, Sandy Dussault, Kyle Kavanagh, Larry Kocher, Karen Muchow, Renée Nelson, Kris Rogers

Publicity/Newsletter—Lynda Tucker - Editor, Clarke Burke, Elli DeFilippo, Gilbert Dussault, Susanne Galbraith, Christopher Gust, Carl Matthies, Renée Nelson

Program/Refreshments—Conrad and Carol Borucki, Sandy Dussault, Elli DeFilippo

Building and Grounds—Larry Kocher, Conrad Borucki, Christopher Gust

Fundraising—Jane and Clarke Burke, Gilbert Dussault

Nominating—Jane Burke, Elouise DeFilippo, Sue Galbraith

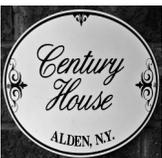
Audit—Lynda Tucker, Carl Matthies

Budget—Clarke Burke, Christopher Gust, Larry Kocher,

Historical Marker/Signs—Christopher Gust, Clarke Burke,

Gilbert Dussault, Larry Kocher, Karen Muchow, Jennifer Strong

Century Homes

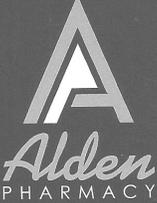


Although we accept information on any century house, we are now focusing on the 100+ yr old houses located in the town. If you are interested, please email us at: AldenHistSoc@gmail.com. We have Century House signs for sale for \$45.

Sue Galbraith



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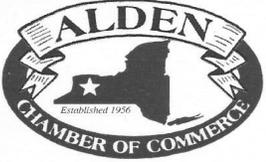
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President

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Established 1956

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New York 14004

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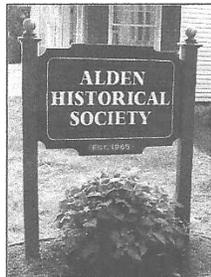
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MISSION STATEMENT

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.



Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004

*Find us on Facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety
and on the web at www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org*

*Chartered by the Board of Regents
New York State Education Department*

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We appreciate the support we receive from the Town of Alden.

Thank you.

www.alden.erie.gov