



The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

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"They Said It Swayed in Gusty Winds"

Norman Taylor wrote the above in his article on the history of the Alden Masonic Lodge. "They," were the Masons. "It," was the three-story building on the corner of Main Street (Broadway) and Exchange Street. Elisha Saunders had built the three-story building to replace his dry goods store and post office, destroyed in the disastrous fire that consumed most of the establishments on the south side of Main Street on August 10, 1868. The post office equipment was removed before the building caught fire.

The Masons, who had been meeting in the Alger Hotel, which stood on the site of the present day Advertiser building, moved to the third floor of the Saunders building in 1870. Elisha, a Mason himself, charged the organization \$50 a year to lease the space.

The third floor hall was lit with kerosene lamps and heated with a wood stove. The heat did not reach all corners of the room so most of the activities were conducted near the stove. Evidently in 1879, the room had been rented to another group, or had been left unlocked, and some furniture and other items had been removed. It was decided then that no other group should be permitted to use the rooms.

The second floor of the building was rented to a dentist, who came once a month, and to a milliner. The first floor was Saunders store. The staircase to the upper floors was to the left of the store.

Lester P. and Jerome J. Stickney had the store in 1876, then Herschel Fullerton & Darius Pride in 1880, who called it The Corner Store.. The store was taken over by Charles Yeomans & John Bushell in 1901. After Bushell's death in 1902, Yeomans partnered with Arthur Thomas; however, in 1904 he sold his share to Thomas and moved back to Marilla. Vernon Pancoast owned the store, now called Alden Cash Grocery, in 1910. It was the company store for his employees of the New York Glass Works factory on Railroad Street. By 1914 it was again



Main Street, Alden N.Y.

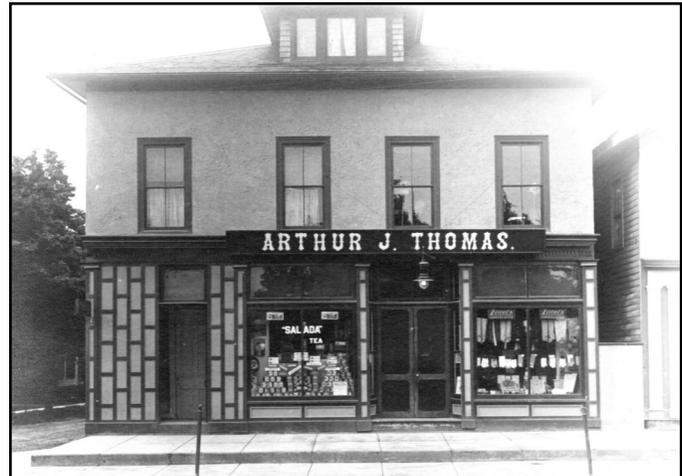
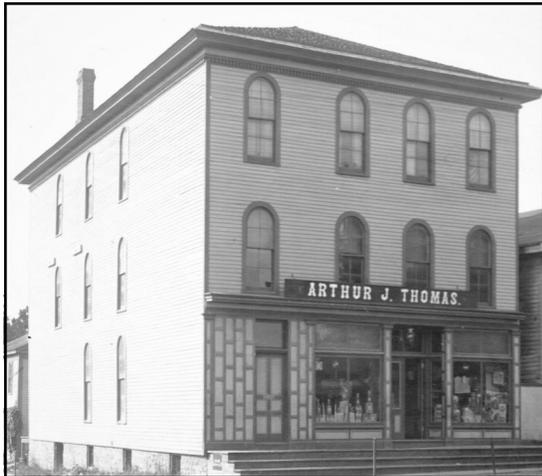
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owned by A. J. Thomas.

Meanwhile, the old school on Church Street (now ACTS) had been abandoned when a new frame school was built on the corner of Park Street and Crittenden in 1902. On June 5, 1902, the Masonic Lodge voted to “assume the bid for the school house and lot offered by Bro. Wahl for \$1200”, and by November they had the deed to the property. After remodeling the building, the new Lodge was dedicated in 1905. Now the third floor of the corner building on Main Street could be rented to other groups.

The Maccabees and the Foresters—both insurance benefits groups, but also social groups—rented the third floor meeting space. And after its founding in 1908, the Alden Grange met there. These groups also complained about the building swaying. In March of 1909, a committee from the Grange requested that owner Art Thomas put a fire escape on his building. He decided to build a wide plank stairway on the west side of the building leading from one of the windows of the hall. Whether that was done or not, there is no record.

A 1913 newspaper item states that Julius Forster was awarded the contract to remove the third story of the building. That was done and a brick veneer was added to the exterior. A real estate ad in the February 5, 1915 *Buffalo Enquirer* listed the property for sale “dirt cheap at \$8,500; can add \$2,000 merchandise if desired.” The ad also said: “Alden village, Main Street, best corner, large 2-story stucco covered building, ideal location for picture show, which is greatly needed in this growing Scandinavian (?) town; basement suited for bowling alleys; second floor leased for lodge rooms, dental and milliner’s parlors.” The ad was still running in April of that year.



The next owner was Charles Steinfeld who then sold it to Titus Yager, who had moved into the village after running a store in West Alden. Clinton Stowell, brother of Ralph, took over, running it as a Red & White store, as had Mr. Yager.

By 1934 the building had been divided into two businesses on the first floor with separate entrances, the Alden Sugar Bowl on the east side, the Red & White store on the west side, which discontinued business in 1935. The Alden Grill opened in that space in 1936, and the Sugar Bowl stopped selling beer.



In the early 1950s, Bob Wagner took over the Sugar Bowl business, naming it Bob’s Snack Bar. This became The Snack Bar owned by Sophie Tavlaris. The restaurant business ceased in 1962, and a new business moved in— Diana’s Dress Shop. Diana Langworthy had operated out of her home, but now had a shop on “the best corner.” When the Advertiser moved into the old bank building at 13200 Broadway in 1966, Diana’s moved into the Advertiser Building at 13193 Broadway.

continued

Moving into Diana's spot in the corner building was Lori's Flower Shop, owned by Loretta Pierce of Marilla.

The present owner, Dr. Paul Zappia, moved into the eastern side in 1976. The western part has housed a variety of medical offices—Primary Vision Care, Edward Zdrojewski Optometry, and Advanced Care Chiropractic. Again there is a dentist in the building, but alas, no milliner, and without the third floor, as far as I know, the building does not sway in the wind.

Photos and article submitted by Karen Muchow

Message from the President

After our mild Winter, the coming of Spring coincides with the re-opening of our Historical Society building at 13213 Broadway in the Village after our Winter hiatus. During the past two months, Curator Kris Rogers, Archivist Karen Muchow, our Collections Committee and Trustee volunteers spent several days taking inventory and cleaning. The inventory work concentrated on our collection of baby and children's clothing. Many of the beautiful clothing items are now available for public viewing in the Davis Room. New displays have also been established featuring animals of all kinds within our collection, items belonging to past doctors of Alden and a maple syrup display upstairs in the agricultural area. I sincerely thank everyone for their efforts over the past two months and for the help to prepare our building for re-opening on March 1st. I'm excited by the new displays and I hope you will stop by to have a look!



We are still trying to increase community involvement by inviting interested members of our community to assist our Trustees by volunteering as additional docents when the building is open on Sundays and special events. If you have an interest in Alden's history and would like to help, contact one of our trustees, call us at 937-3700, or email us at AldenHistSoc@gmail.com. Also, Erie County will be celebrating its bicentennial next year and the Alden Historical Society is involved with a county committee established to develop activities, cultural awareness and educational opportunities about our county's rich history and Alden's role within that history. Stay tuned for more news in the upcoming months.

We sincerely thank you for your membership and interest as we strive to continue our mission to protect, present and promote the history of Alden and its people. Best regards and Happy Spring!

Photo and article submitted by Christopher Gust

COVID-19 STATEMENT

The Alden Historical Society is monitoring the status of government advisories and mandates to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus (Coronavirus). The health and safety of our trustees, archivist, curator, volunteers and visitors are extremely important. With the closure of all Town of Alden buildings, including the historical building, it appears unlikely as of press time that our building will be open to the public as scheduled on April 5, as well as the April 9 program at the Community Center. Please like and follow our Facebook page for the latest updates. Stay safe and healthy.

President Christopher Gust

Curator's Corner



As curator of the Alden Historical Society, I would like to highlight some of the individual items in our collection. In this issue, we are calling attention to the schoolmaster's desk from the Town Line Secession.

The desk was used in the 1861 vote to supposedly secede from the Union—most likely a protest to protect the farmer's sons from conscription for the Civil War and Union Army. In 1946, a celebration was held to "rejoin" the Union and the vote was taken on this



same desk which had been stored in the blacksmith shop.

The story of the secession has been passed down as a legend. There are no written records to support leaving the Union in our files, the Lancaster Historical Society or the History of Erie County books. Recently, newspaper articles surfaced that refer to the vote as an attempt to declare Town Line as its own country. We probably will never know the whole truth, but we do have the schoolmaster's desk to reflect on that history.

Photos and article submitted by Kris Rogers

Fundraising Report

For many years we have sponsored a 50/50 drawing at our Thursday evening program meetings, which helped to offset any costs we might incur with the program. Our attendee participation has been very good and we are grateful for the support.



Henry's
Candy
& Gifts

Seeking to try something different, we decided to solicit gift certificates from various Alden businesses so that we might have a raffle instead. This, of course, would allow us to keep all the proceeds ..yet award a meaningful prize to the winner of the evening.

I am pleased to report that our first endeavor was a huge success. We raffled off a \$20.00 gift certificate, generously donated by Bob Henry of Henry's Candy. Our audience response was great as they knew that anything from Henry's Candy was the best.

Our first winner was Society member Judy Bowman, and we appreciate the generosity of Bob Henry for helping us succeed. In the future we hope to acquire more certificates to use at other program meetings.

Article submitted by Gil Dussault

Century Homes

The Town of Alden will be celebrating its 200 year Anniversary in 2023. In preparation for the celebration, the Society is working on updating our Town Century House book. If you are the proud owner of a 100 year old (or more) home, please contact Sue Galbraith at mustangcov@aol.com for information and an application. There is no charge to be included in the book, and Century House signs are available for \$45.



Photo and article submitted by Sue Galbraith

Donation Thank You



The Society recently received a monetary donation from Maria Peek, in lieu of payment for a German dance outfit that was sewn by Eileen Weisbeck and her daughter, Society member Judy Weisbeck Hotchkin. Maria's daughter, Kristen Peek, is pictured here wearing the outfit. The red skirt and the black vest are the components that were made by Judy and her mother. A white apron and blouse, along with a plumed hat, completes the outfit. This outfit is referred to as the "tanz tracht" and is worn at less formal events. This is one of three outfits that the women in the Verein wear to different German events.

Photo supplied

Gone



The landmark building at 13192 Broadway, most recently known as Darrow's and featured in our last issue of the Gazette, met its demise on February 28. There are no immediate plans for the site where the approximate 125 year old former hotel, restaurant and bar once stood.

Photos and article submitted by Christopher Gust



**YOUR
MEMBERSHIP
MATTERS**

New Members

Ruth Campbell
Judy, Clint & Morgan Oun
Nancy Rickard
Paul & Joanne Rickard

Individual Renewal

Donna Schall
Eleanor White

Couple Renewals

Judith & Francis Downhower
Dick & Betty Kegler
Kerry & Vincent O'Hara
Erin & Scott Redmond
Antoinette & Matthew Shriver



Family Renewal

Sue & Mike DeWitt

Donations in Lieu of Dues

Clarke & Jane Burke
Elli DeFilippo
Betty Eastwood
Joan & Bill Gadd
Ron Kegler

Donations

Anonymous
Maria Peet

Bake Sale Donations

Helen Creighton
Elli DeFilippo
Christian & Wendy Koebel

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April 9, 2020

The World of Commercials

Chris Whittingham

They are all around us—ads, slogans, and jingles. They are incorporated into the fabric of our daily lives and are often a representation of our pop culture. Helping us navigate through the 'commercial and advertisement phenomenon' will be WBBZ-TV and media specialist Chris Whittingham, who has himself done dozens of radio and television commercials.

May 14, 2020

A Grave Discussion

Judy Tucker

Death is as inevitable as taxes! Explore Buffalo's Judy Tucker examines the Rural Cemetery Movement and focus on Buffalo's very first burial grounds and other abandoned cemeteries.

June 11, 2020

If Walls Could Talk 2

Karen Muchow

A sequel to the January program as we take a look at the histories of some more buildings in Alden. This time it will be "Two Small Buildings and Three Business 'Blocks'". Any idea to the identity of these buildings? Come and see if you are correct.

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.

If Walls Could Talk —Part 1

Alden is comprised of many buildings that have served a variety of owners and residents in various capacities through the years. Alden Town and Village Historian and Historical Society Archivist, Karen Muchow, shared her research on four such buildings in her January 9 presentation. She pointed out that the existing buildings in this stretch are not the originals, due to their total loss during a fire in 1868, on the south side of Broadway stretching from “Depot” (Exchange) Street westward to just beyond Old Home Place, a hotel located at or near the current site of Pajak’s Law Offices at 13179 Broadway. The building located at 13193 Broadway, currently operating as Marie’s Diner, was at various times in its history a furniture store and undertaker supply store; a hardware, plumbing, heating, and tinning store, Diana’s dress shop, the **Alden Advertiser**, and as various diners and taverns. One of the oldest buildings in the village, built in 1852 and not harmed by the 1868 fire, is 13143 Broadway, now housing American Legion Post 1377. Located on the north side of Broadway at 13104, Alden Seminary originally began as a private high school for both boys and girls. The building continues as a medical office, operated by Dr. William Panek. The fourth building also began its life as a school at 1470 Church Street, the structure we know today as Parkside Cupcakes, and the Alden Christian Theatre Society (ACTS).



Presidential Indiscretions

Popular presenter, educator, and historian Greg Kinal shared his research on presidential indiscretions on Thursday, February 13. The indiscretions Kinal addressed were chiefly those of the extramarital relationship variety. The list of presidents he mentioned numbered at least one dozen and extended back to the days of our founders. Evidence of at least one of the early relationships could not be confirmed, while other relationships are verified through letters exchanged between the individuals involved. In at least one case, modern DNA analysis of descendants confirms an ongoing relationship between a president and the mother of several of his offspring. While some presidents are believed to have had only one such relationship, a few of the presidential office holders serving in the decades since the mid-twentieth century are alleged to have had multiple indiscretions, during and/or prior to their years in office. In some instances, the Secret Service may have assisted in concealing the arrangements.



Alden Centre

Alden Historical Society Trustee Larry Kocher shared his extensive research into the history of Alden Centre on March 12. The area known as Alden Centre is located around the intersection of Sandridge and Westwood Roads, and is the geographical center of the town of Alden. The Town of Alden became incorporated in 1823, as part of Erie County, established in 1821. Prior to Alden’s incorporation, Alden was part of Ontario County; by 1802, it was part of Genesee County; and in 1808, it became a part of the Town of Clarence, which at that time was in Niagara County. The area was largely populated by people of English descent, but in the 1840’s, a major migration of German immigrants arrived from Alsace-Lorraine. In 1814, John C. Rogers, Sr., constructed a dam on what was then 11 Mile (Ellicott) Creek, where Sandridge and North Roads meet. Around the same time, Rogers added a saw mill and soon after a grist mill. The year 1847 brought the beginnings of St. John’s Roman Catholic Church. Two railroads traversed the town of Alden during these years: the New York Central and the Erie Railroads. A post office opened in 1857. By 1880 there were two more hotels and a school was constructed. During these same years, two additional railroads, the DL&W and the Lehigh Valley added rails through Alden.



WE'RE BACK
THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE.

Our building is now open to the public once again, from 1 to 3 pm on the first and third Sundays of the month. We have been hard at work sorting through our collection, cleaning, and updating the displays. Be sure to plan a visit to check out our refreshed look! Watch for updates on our visiting hours as they become available.

Don't Forget

We have many items to purchase, including throws with photos of Alden buildings; books, including *Reflections of Alden* and *150 Objects and Photos of the Village of Alden*; Neelands milk bottles; Alden Central School Yearbooks; 50th anniversary mugs and other items.

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 State 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 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 Historical Society Building 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

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

Fundraising—Gilbert Dussault, Jane and Clarke Burke

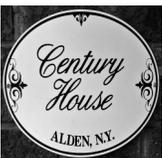
Nominating—Jane Burke, Elouise DeFilippo

Audit—Lynda Tucker, Clarke Burke

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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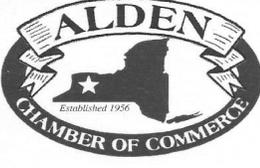
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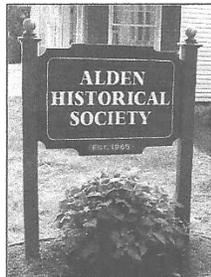

EAST TOWN DENTAL

Chad Froebel, DDS

12763 Broadway • Alden, NY 14004
(716) 902-6402
www.EastTownDentalAlden.com

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

*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.