



# The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

716-937-3700

[www.alden.erie.gov](http://www.alden.erie.gov)

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## Archivist

## Town and Village Historian

Karen Muchow

## Curator

Kris Rogers

## Going, Going, Going...Another Alden Landmark

With the impending demolition of the building at 13192 Broadway last known as Darrow's, another landmark will disappear. The building, like so many others, has an interesting history.

The exact date of construction is not known, but what is known is that a devastating fire on March 16, 1893 nearly destroyed all the businesses and homes on the north side of Main Street (Broadway) from what is now H & R Block to Emerson Street. The fire began in a small building used by John Vaux as a bakery and spread to a two-story building on the east owned by John Kirk. Both buildings were destroyed. Only a narrow driveway separated the Kirk building from the Kempston Hotel on the east. Though the hotel was on fire several times, the valiant effort of the men and boys of the village saved the building and kept the fire from destroying some of the finest houses in the village located just east of the hotel.

An article in the Buffalo Times the following year says that Kempston sold his hotel and the new owner was expected to tear it down. Kempston's hotel had been known as the Morehouse Hotel in 1866 and appears as the Alger House on an 1880 map. A three-story building stood on that site in later years, perhaps the original hotel, or its replacement. That location is now that of the Alden Advertiser.



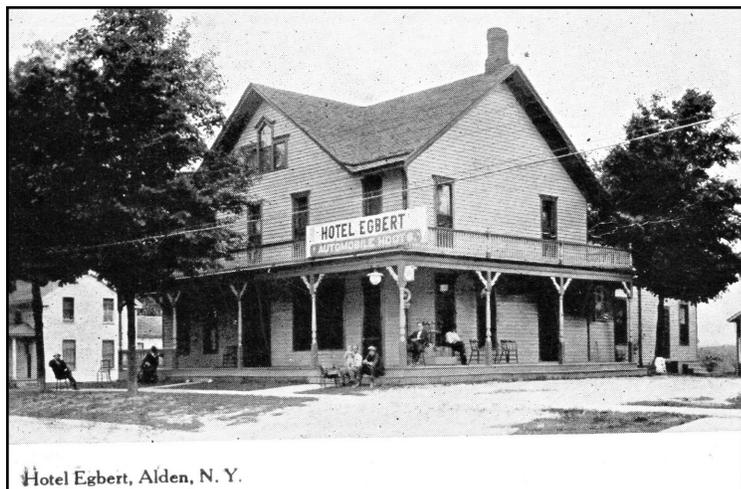
Kirk's Hotel appears on the 1909 map built on the lot where his building burned down in 1893—the lot where Darrow's was located. Presumably it was built shortly after the 1893 fire, continued

as Kirk is listed as a hotel keeper on the 1900 census.

John Kirk (1855-1935) was a wagon maker. In 1880 he was living in the Union Hotel in on the corner of Wende and Genesee in Millgrove. The hotel was run by John Wilhelm. John Kirk married Wilhelm's widowed daughter-in-law and by the 1892 census he is living in the Village with his wife, stepson, and twin daughters. His property included over 40 acres.

In 1915, Kirk is listed on the census as retired, having sold his hotel to Clarence Egbert (1869-1934). Egbert was born in Pennsylvania, was a proprietor of the St. James Hotel in Bradford, and married Anna Montrose Fox, whose father also owned a hotel in Bradford. Montrose died in 1923, leaving Clarence with a young son. He married Et Linda Wende Staub in 1927, she having served as the housekeeper of Hotel Egbert after his first wife's death. In 1930 they were living in Alliance, Ohio, where Clarence is the proprietor of another hotel.

Egbert sold the hotel to two New York City doctors in 1925. The doctors planned to build a 53 tub black water bathhouse behind the hotel. The plan was never realized..



The *Buffalo Times* newspaper carried two interesting tidbits in 1926: “May 3—Joe Weinand takes possession of the Egbert Hotel in Alden today and Gene Yager is manager. That leaves Ed Stutte as pilot of the veranda. October 28—Louie Bauer and Paddy Cotter are all set for their pig roast at the Egbert Hotel in Alden tonight. If you are going, take along a dagger and an automatic.” Hmm... there must be a story there. Paddy Cotter and Thomas McKeown were the proprietors in 1928. Cotter, from reports in the *Buffalo Times*, appears to have been involved with the boxing world in Buffalo.



By 1933, the name of the hotel had been changed to the Central Hotel; J. Weichselbaum was the proprietor. It was a kosher hotel and restaurant catering to the many Jewish black water bath patients during the 30s. A large Victory party was held in the hotel at the end of World War II.

There was another name change in 1950, to Alden Hotel. The proprietors were Lucy Rubach and Virginia Raczkowski, who advertised “dancing on the original illuminated floor, modern cocktail bar, and rooms for tourists.” Alden Hotel may have been its name for the longest time. The building was still known as that in 1981. The Kotas family purchased the building in 1985.

A new name—Central Park Inn—or CPI as it was called by many-- was prominent in the 1990s. It was during this time that the Turgeon Brothers, Buffalo restaurateurs, got involved with the operation. That association did not last long. Charging an entrance fee may have been a factor.

An old Alden business name was resurrected in the 2000s. Bob Wagner had used the name Alden Bar and Grill when his business was located in what is now Marie's Diner, as had Marcia and Jim Uebelhoer. Then it was used by Brian Netzel for his business at 13192 Broadway.

The last business in the old building was Darrow's, again a bar and restaurant. Now the building rests on an unstable foundation, waiting for demolition. Think of the tales the building could tell, over 100 years worth.



Photos and article submitted by Karen Muchow

### *Message from the President*

At the Alden Historical Society's Board of Trustees meeting of December 5th, I was honored to be elected President for a fifth term. I appreciate the faith the Board has in me to continue to help lead our organization during the coming year. We will continue to work towards fulfilling the Mission of the Historical Society; to protect, present and promote the history of the Town of Alden and its people.

I would like to give special recognition to our 2019 officers for their dedication, hard work, and a job well done, including Elli DeFilippo as Vice President; Clarke Burke as Treasurer; and Jennifer Strong as Secretary. I look forward to working with our 2020 officers and welcome Jane Burke as our new Vice President.



Over the course of the past year, all our trustees, our curator, our archivist and our volunteers have worked very hard on behalf of the Historical Society and should be recognized and thanked for their numerous contributions.

A special thank you is extended for the support the Society receives from the Town of Alden. Supervisor Rick Savage and Parks Department head Andy Sojka have been very responsive to any issues we have encountered with our building over the past year. We wish all the best to outgoing Supervisor Savage, and look forward to continuing our strong relationship with the Town under the leadership of new Supervisor Dean Adamski.

I have been privileged to serve as the Society's president over the past four years. It has been a rewarding and educational experience. I hope that we can continue to strengthen the Society's role as an important cultural and educational institution within our great community. I thank every person, couple, family or business that is a member of our Society or made a contribution to our recent Bake Sale & Fund Appeal. Your support allows us to continue to fulfill our mission.

All the best to everyone for 2020.

Photo and article submitted by Christopher Gust



The Historical Society building will be closed for visits during January and February to continue the inventory of our collection, and do some housecleaning. We will re-open March 1, 2020 with new displays. Please come and visit!

## *Curator's Corner*

There is a display upstairs in the building showing winter clothing and other items from our collection that our ancestors used to keep warm in WNY winters. Galoshes with felt liners, a soapstone for keeping feet toasty in the carriage. Blankets made from local sheep wool. Long underwear and a fur muff are displayed. This made me reminisce about winters in my own childhood of the 50's and 60's.

I grew up in the village so I was a "walker" all through school. In elementary school, I went to the Crittenden Road school. We had one car that my dad drove to work, so I always walked. In winter, we traveled on top of the snowbanks along Crittenden, back and forth four times a day because we went home for lunch. It was fun to be up high off the sidewalk and we all did it. It was dangerous for sure but that did not stop us.

Our clothing was a little better than the things on display but not a big improvement. Girls wore "leggings" under their dresses because we were not allowed to wear slacks. Our boots were overshoes that were simply rubber with a zipper. Plastic bread bags over our shoes and socks made it easier to get the boots on. They did not have any insulation so our feet were always cold. Wool mittens were warm, but quickly became soggy when playing in the snow. I blame the present day arthritis in my hands and feet from playing outside until "frozen".

High school was the era of mini skirts. We still weren't allowed to wear pants and we wouldn't be caught dead in leggings anymore. The alternative was tights or panty hose. (not very warm.) We walked quickly in the morning! No one talked about wind chill then and I do remember walking when it was below zero. Somehow, we survived.

Today of course we have fleece items of clothing made from recycled plastic. Most jackets have thinsulate insulation which is light-weight, water resistant, and warm. Gloves are also less likely to soak up water. Boots are insulated and waterproof. Today's children will never know the delightful odor of wet wool drying on the heat register in their classroom!

Article submitted by Kris Rogers

## *Century Homes*



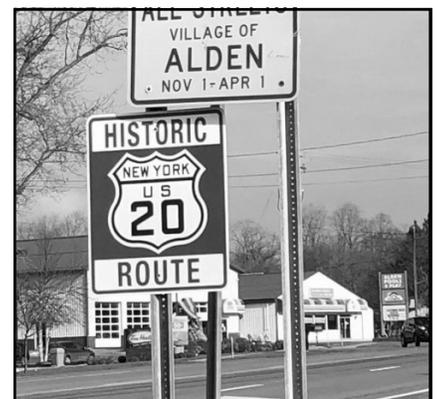
The Town of Alden will be celebrating its 200 year Anniversary in 2023. In preparation for the celebration, the Society is working on updating our Town Century House book. If you are the proud owner of a 100 year old (or more) home, please contact Sue Galbraith at [mustangcov@aol.com](mailto:mustangcov@aol.com) for information and an application.

There is no charge to be included in the book, and Century House signs are available for \$45.

Article submitted by Sue Galbraith

## *Historic Route 20 Signs*

As a postscript to our June program in which guest presenter Brian Farr discussed the history & interesting facts of [Historic Route 20](#), there are now Historic US Route 20 signs placed on Broadway at the east and west entrances to the Village.



Photos and article submitted by Christopher Gust

### *Donation Received from Alden Seniors*

At the September 9 Alden Senior Citizens member meeting, charitable donations were awarded to several Alden non-profits, including the Alden Historical Society. Society President Christopher Gust was present to receive the donation from Senior Citizen Club President, Ron Mayer. Also pictured are Renée Nelson, representing the Alden Ewell Free Library, and Alden-Marilla Food Pantry Director, Mark Casell. The Society expresses our thanks and appreciation to the Seniors for the donation.



Photo and article submitted Christopher Gust

### *Annual Meeting and Pot Luck Dinner*

On November 14, the Society met for a delicious pot luck meal, followed by the annual meeting. President Gust gave an overview of the past year's activities and events, and committee year end reports were distributed. Outgoing trustee Doris Brade was thanked for her service. Nominations for the three year trustee positions were read and returning trustees Gil Dussault and Jane Burke were elected for another term. Renée Nelson was elected for her first term. The evening concluded with a game created by Program Directors Conrad and Carol Borucki, which asked little known facts about our country's patriotic symbols and past presidents.

### *Welcome New Trustee Renée Nelson*



I am really excited to be a trustee. Some background on me: I grew up in NJ, NYC area. I got my BA at SUNY Cortland where I graduated summa cum laude with a dual major in Cultural Anthropology and International Studies with a minor in French, in 1992. I graduated with the highest GPS in Cultural Anthropology. I was a member of Phi Eta Sigma. The National Honor Society. I made the Dean's list every semester all four years. I studied abroad in Switzerland at l' Universite de Neuchatel. I was a student senator and president of the campus Women's organization. I was also a paid tutor by the college for Mandarin Chinese and a teacher assistant for the intensive French classes. I did my internship at the Cortland Historical Society where I mostly worked in cataloging items and preserving them in an acid-free environment.

After college, I got married in 1992 and moved to the Buffalo area. I worked at Fisher Price Corporate headquarters in East Aurora as their bilingual representative for Canada. In 2002, I left the workforce to home school my growing family. I have seven children now. I am fluent in French and teach two French classes for our home school co-op in Akron. I also know some Mandarin Chinese from learning it for two years in college and being a tutor, but pretty rusty now. I am currently learning Italian. I am active in the Alden Ecumenical Choir. I am chairwoman of the Alden Women's Prayer Breakfast. I am on the board of trustees at our library.

I love history and architecture. I love our village! I am blessed to live here. I feel honored to be asked to serve as a trustee.

### *Board Elects 2020 Officers*

The Society recently held its annual reorganization meeting of the Board of Trustees on December 5th. After welcoming new director Rene Nelson and returning directors Gil Dussault & Jane Burke, the Board elected officers for 2020. Re-elected were Christopher Gust as President, Clarke Burke as Treasurer and Jennifer Strong as Secretary. Jane Burke was elected Vice President. In addition, Kris Rogers was re-appointed as Curator and Karen Muchow was re-appointed as Archivist. Committees and chairpersons were also reset. The Board looks forward to working together throughout the New Year.

Article submitted by Christopher Gust



## *New Members*

Renée Nelson  
Suzanne Pilon



## *Donations in Lieu of Dues*

Florian and Sylvia Buczek  
Stephen and Sandra Overton

## *New Business Member*

East Town Dental

## *Donations*

Alden Senior Citizens  
Suzanne Pilon

**P** **January 9, 2020** **If Walls Could Talk** **Karen Muchow**

**R** Alden Historian Karen Muchow examines several well known Alden Buildings and businesses, such as the Legion Hall, Marie's Diner Building, and Dr. Panek's building, to note a few, while she reveals their rich and interesting past lives.

**O**  
**G** **February 13, 2020** **Presidential Indiscretions** **Greg Kinal**

**R** Local educator, WNY Historian and presenter Greg Kinal will examine what promises to be a most interesting subject..need we say more?

**A**  
**M** **March 12, 2020** **Alden Center** **Larry Kocher**

**S** This hamlet marks the exact center of the town of Alden. Join Trustee Larry Kocher as he discusses the history of the region, including its families, businesses and St. John the Baptist Church.

## *Trans Am Bike Race*

On Thursday, Oct. 10, Jay Blanchard, of Darien, shared the story of his participation in the Trans Am bicycle race. The Trans Am race, which follows the same route as the Transamerica Bicycle Trail developed for the 1976 Bicentennial event, covers 4,200 miles and runs between Astoria, Oregon, and Yorktown, Virginia. The Trans Am is the longest unsupported race in the world. Unsupported racers may not receive assistance other than stopping for food, lodging, and bicycle repairs. Participants typically travel alone as they are forbidden from following in one another's draft. Jay developed an acronym **CAAP**, meaning **C**ause, **A**dventure, **A**dversity, and **P**eople, to describe his race participation, and elected to dedicate any monies he raised to the American Widow Project. Jay named his presentation "America, They are Beautiful" as a tribute to the kindness and encouragement of the American people he encountered throughout his endeavor.



Photo courtesy Christopher Gust  
Article by Elli DeFilippo

## *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.

## *Addendum to the December Program*

When the speaker was unable to come for the December 12<sup>th</sup> Historical Society program, I expanded the “quiz” I had planned on doing at the end of the program about drinking establishments in Alden over the years.

The first tavern was Amos Bliss’s, established in 1815 in his house about a half mile east of the village. This lasted only three or four years. The village then would have been clustered around the intersection of what is now Broadway and Exchange Street.

Another early tavern was that of Thomas Farnsworth, who owned much of the land in the village and built the first frame house in the village. He did sometimes entertain travelers, but it was in 1825 that he obtained a tavern license and opened his house to the crowds attending the hanging of the three Thayer brothers in Buffalo. They had been charged with the murder of their neighbor, John Love, in Boston, NY.

Other names of taverns and bars were mentioned—McCathy’s Pub, Time Out Tavern, Emmet’s Irish Inn, Doodlebug Inn, Schenk’s Hotel, Central Park Inn, Golden Dollar, White Dove Bar, Swyer’s Hotel, Trackside Grill, Alden Bar and Grill, Alden Hotel, Mueller’s Inn, and Kingston Hotel to name a few, as the audience tried to pinpoint their locations.



Probably the most striking fact was how many different names one location had over the years, as owners changed. Take for example: Justinger’s Grill, Cius Grill, Four Corners Inn, Golden Dollar, Cricket Club, McGavin’s Restaurant & Pub—former names of the present Black Water Tavern & Tap at 12443 Broadway.

Another example: Killinger’s Tavern, Pitek’s Tavern, Connie’s Tavern, Chet’s Inn, Jo-Es Country Inn, Kolniak’s Country Inn, Schafer’s Country Inn, Hey-Stack, Latt’s, Countryside Inn—former names of GDI Country-side Inn at 2049 Sandridge Road.



The same can be said of many other business locations in the Town—as owners changed, the business names changed. The examples given are in structures that are shown on the 1866 map of the Town. Quite a history in just two buildings.

Article submitted by Karen Muchow, Town & Village Historian

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The Alden Historical Society expresses our sincere appreciation to the **Alden Advertiser**, Alden’s hometown newspaper since 1914, for their willingness to print our monthly program announcements and summaries, their ongoing cooperation in assisting us with mailing our quarterly newsletter, **The Grannytown Gazette**, and allowing access to photos and articles in ongoing research.



## *Don't Forget*

150 Objects and Photos  
 That Tell the History  
 of the  
 Village of Alden, NY

2019

Copies of 150 Objects and Photos that tell the Story of the Village of Alden, NY are available at the Alden Historical Society, the Alden Pharmacy and the Village of Alden Clerk’s Office during regular business hours. This informative and visual look at the beginnings of the Village of Alden was published to commemorate the Sesquicentennial Anniversary (150 years) being celebrated during 2019. At the low cover price of \$10.00, you will have a keepsake and an understanding of the Alden Village’s rich history.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Bake Sale—Fund Appeal 2019

We are very grateful for the huge support from our patrons, members and the community to make this years sale/appeal the biggest ever. We achieved upwards of 120% of our budgetary goal and that is stupendous !

This event involved a lot of people, a ton of preparation, time, marketing and hard work. Bake sale chairman, Sandy Dussault and all her Special Helpers who had a hand in our success are to be thanked and congratulated. We especially want to thank the Alden Advertiser and Alden Chamber of Commerce for their help. It is also necessary to acknowledge the over and above effort of Shirley Kocher in helping us meet a special baking request. She is the best !!

One woman mentioned to us that she looked forward to coming to our bake sale because the goodies are always fresh and unique, prices are fair, the atmosphere is festive with music and decorations and our people are always warm and friendly. Guess we must be doing the right thing !!!

We wish to thank those who had a hand in our success. They are:

**Our Callers and Building Helpers:** Sandy Dussault, Judy Downhower, Annette Fitscher, Barbara Rice, Jane Burke, Harriet Aldinger, Chris Gust, Shirley & Larry Kocher, Debbie Crist, Kyle Kavanagh, Michelle Dussault, Lynda Tucker, Conrad Borucki, Carl Matthies, Jennifer Strong, Karen Muchow and Gil Dussault.

**Our Baked Goods and Monetary Donors:** Laura & Ralph Airey, Carol Battista, Conrad & Carol Borucki, Judy Bowman, Sylvia & Florian Buczek, Jane & Clarke Burke, Catherine Cyrulik, Antoinette Wiltberger, Angelo Daluisio, Elli DiFilippo, Sue DeWitt, Jeanette Dickinson, Betty Eastwood, Amy Froebel, Joan Gadd, Sue Galbraith, Helen Giczkowski, Paul Henry & June Beyers, Michelle Hoffman, Charles Holcomb, Bonnie Hy, Dick & Betty Kegler, Marlyn Casell, Diane & Michael Kingswell, Josephine Kipfer, Wendy Koelbl, Marlene Kotlowski, Monica Kubiak, Laura Loehr, Sheila Metzger, Laura Moulthrop, Karen Muchow, Martha Roberts, Kris Rogers, Marlene Roll, Margaret Rose, Gerald Sanok, Rick Savage, Shannon Schmidt, Audrey Senecal, Antoinette Shriver, Ed & Beryl Small, Karen Smith, Mary Stone, James Uebelhoer, Roberta Vincent, Anna Walters, Jean Weisbeck, Paul & Mary Ellen Werner, Rhonda Weider, Renée Nelson, Sandy Dussault, Judy Downhower, Annette Fitscher, Barbara Rice, Harriet Aldinger, Jennifer Strong, Shirley Kocher, Debbie Crist, Michelle Dussault, Lynda Tucker, Ann Matthies, Judy Quinty, Kyle Kavanagh, Jim Creighton, Daniel Nowicki, Kathy Sullivan and Anonymous. *See You Next Year !!!*

Article submitted by Gil Dussault



Photo courtesy Christopher Gust

## All Aboard!



The Society building's living room was festive with a tree decorated with candles and ornaments, surrounded by a vintage train on loan from Larry Kocher. Many other Christmas decorations and toys were on display during our December Open Houses and the Bake Sale/ Fund Appeal.



Photos courtesy Christopher Gust

## 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

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Please make checks payable to Alden Historical Society

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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 De-Filippo, 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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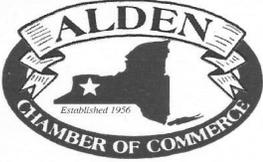
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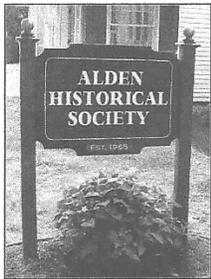

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**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Alden Historical Society, founded in 1965, is a volunteer supported organization whose mission is to preserve,



*Alden Historical Society*  
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Alden, NY 14004

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

*Thank you.*