

THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004

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WAHL BROTHERS/MOMBERGER'S/STUTZMAN'S STORE

For nearly eighty years, the people of Alden did much of their shopping at a store in the center of town. Wahl Brothers had opened their general store in 1884. Their building still stands at 13185 Broadway – the Alden Medical Supply. Wahl Brothers operated the store until 1924 when it was sold to Farnsworth and Momberger. After the death of Mr. Farnsworth, the store became “Momberger’s”. Sometime around 1960 the Stutzman family took over the store.

When I came to Alden about 1950, I was told, “If you need something, check Momberger’s before you head out of town”. It was good advice. The store was filled with most of our everyday needs. It carried everything from baby items, clothing and shoes, kitchen utensils, craft items, and gifts to a complete supply of school items. His policy was to replenish on a regular basis. It is interesting to note in the ledgers that one item which was ordered almost monthly was Pink Pearl Erasers. Why did the people of Alden use so many of them?



OLD PHOTO OF WAHL BROTHERS BLDG. IN CENTER LOOKING SE

At the time Paul Hunt took over the building for his bike and sports shop, he cleaned out the attic and presented the historical society with cartons of records from the earlier stores. It was apparent that Mr. Momberger never disposed of any records.

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 Powders, 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

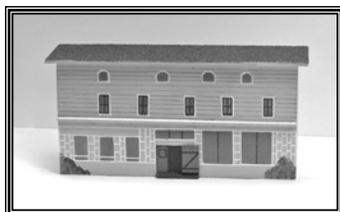
When we were faced with a mountain of receipts and vouchers, we selected sample copies to keep. In the files there is a folder with the annual inventories from 1949 to 1955. In the museum's storeroom we have ledgers from even earlier years.

The ledgers themselves are interesting. Not only do they list the items and prices, which were ordered for the store, they also contain the names of people who bought on credit and their debts and payments. These materials give us an idea of how a general store was once run.

The business ended and the building ceased to be used as a general store. It was sadly missed. We have had other general stores – Ames was a great example, and that too is sadly missed. The advantage of the smaller stores was the convenience of being able to easily find what was needed, even if there was not a large variety of each item. Even today's Dollar General is shopper friendly.

You may be interested in looking at some of the records which are at the Historical Museum. And be aware that one of the latest Landmark Collectables is a replica of Wahl Brothers' Store (Photo below).

Ruth Davis Archivist



WAHL BROTHERS REPLICA

Available from Marlene Roll at 937-4549 or stop in at the Historical Building on Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm. Price is \$25

***CENTURY HOUSE
1476 ELM STREET
ALDEN, NY***

Laura Airey owner/resident of our "Century House" offers the following historical account of her home.

The place I have called home for the past 54 years is at 1476 Elm Street. My husband Bob and I with our 15-month-old son, Ralph, took possession in September 1953. We had purchased it for \$8100 from William and Genevieve Schmidt after Bob returned from France during the Korean War.

A configuration of our house can be seen on the Town of Alden map dated 1909 on the stair wall in the Historical Building. According to the deed, recorded in July 1877, the land was given the designation of Lot No. 11, Township 11, Range 5, Holland Land Company. It was conveyed by George F. Vandervoort and Hannah, his wife, to Nellie M. Carver. Further noted in March 1920, the lands were conveyed by Julia Humphrey to John L. Kraus. Mrs. Kraus still resided in the home next door when we took possession. The first blessing that happened in our home was the birth of our daughter Catherine on December 31st. of that year.



The picture above was from a postcard used in the early 1900's. The men have been identified as William Callahan and Howard Wright along side Mr. Wright's Model A Ford.

I have been told that previous occupants included Stanley and Naomi Patrell and Carlton and Hattie Eastland, and that Lois Eastland Orchard had been born here. The Eastlands lived here between 1926 and 1932.

The first of many improvements was to raise the attic roof to create our master bedroom overlooking the back yard and garden, Over the years we have added an enclosed back porch, replaced most of the windows, sided the outside, insulated, paneled, wall papered and most recently, added a large addition off the kitchen for a sitting room, dining area, bathroom, laundry and closets.



My husband loved garages! He often said, "A house can never have enough garages". So- we added one to the original block garage, he built the little barn pictured above, for the kids' equipment and a large one out back for his truck and wagon-building hobby.



Bob's Wagon Train as seen in many parades in Alden

I am truly grateful for the comforts of this home. It has been blessed with many happy memories. To any future owners-please take care of "this old house", and enjoy!



Recent Photo of the Airey Residence

NOTE: Robert "Bob" Airey, longtime Society member, passed away January 28, 2007. Bob served the Society as Trustee, Assistant Treasurer and Deputy Historian. He was an inspiration to us all, greeted everyone with a friendly smile and is sadly missed.

ALDEN VENEERING COMPANY

(Basket Factory)

Carl and Emma Savage built a house on 4½ acres of land just south of the Erie R.R. on Savage Ave. Later Carl and his father, Hiram R. Savage, built a Basket Factory (called Alden Veneering Company) near the south side of the house. The total acreage was bounded on the north by the Erie railroad tracks, on the south by Tannery Creek and extended from what was Savage Ave. to Exchange St. Carl and his father built the basket factory around 1916. Hiram also owned and operated a basket and barrel stave factory on Rt. 20A and 78 in East Aurora before 1900.

Elm trees (timber) were purchased from farmers or landowners. The trees were cut down and hauled out of the woods originally by teams of horses or teams of oxen, and after 1917, by a chain driven Mack truck. This was usually done in the winter by pulling a sleigh or simply skidding the logs. The logs were piled on the land near the factory and cut to six-foot lengths for the veneering machine.



THE ORIGINAL SAVAGE HOUSE AT 1271 SAVAGE AVE LOOKING NE. NOTE THE SIX FOOT ELM LOGS & THE RECEIPORCATING SAW BLADE ON THE LEFT.

The factory consisted of large buildings that housed many machines for pressing out baskets and for stapling the veneer strips together (pieces of paper thin wood). The factory had a huge boiler that would heat water in vats to a full boil. The logs were placed in the boiling water. This made it possible to strip the bark off the log for turning it against the six-foot knife on the veneering machine. The bark along with scrap veneer was used as fuel for the boiler to heat the plant as well as the water in the vats. The water for the vats was piped from Tannery Creek. The factory building no longer exists.

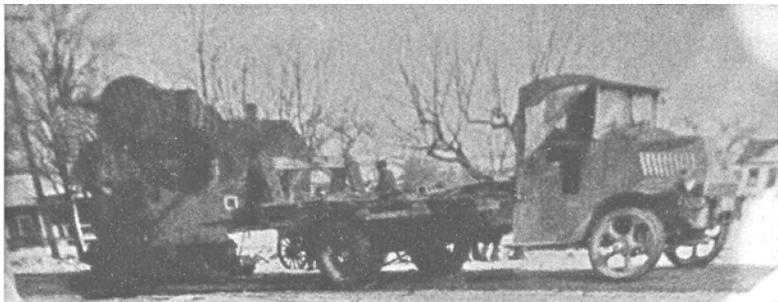
The machines in the factory were driven by belts and pulleys connected to a long rotating shaft. The shaft was driven by either a gas or steam engine.

There was a large building that was called a dry kiln that was partly open for air-drying the baskets before shipping.

The basket factory employed around 25 men and women to make bushel baskets and covers, ½ bushel baskets and 8 quart (market baskets).

During the time that the factory was in operations the steam whistle was used to sound a fire alarm for the community.

About 1926 – 1927, the factory closed and the machinery was sold to a Mr. Nuwer and a partner. They set up a factory in the old tannery buildings to make baskets. A short time later the plant burned, destroying the building and machinery.



1917 chain drive Mack truck pulling one of the machines from the original basket factory to the tannery in 1926 or 1927



View of Savage residence looking west. Front porch was enclosed in 1936.

SIDE NOTE:

My dad, Carl, was the only child of Hiram and Louise Savage. He and Emma raised eleven children, five boys and six girls. Dad often said I have “five and a half dozen kids”. All of us were born at home except the first one was born in Wales Center. My parents added four rooms onto the original house to make room for #8, #9, #10 and #11 child.

Written by Ron Savage, #9

Curator's Corner

I have just finished one of my most enjoyable (but often frustrating) tasks—changing the clothes on our mannequins. It's like being a little girl again and dressing my dolls; although these “dolls” are much larger and more unwieldy.



I try to change the clothing to reflect the seasons. The little girl was in yellow but now she is in red for the holidays. The babies in the carriages have on coats and the lady is dressed to go shopping in the winter's cold.

Unseen by most visitors is the Historical Society's vast clothing collection. We have over 400 articles of women's clothing from chemises to hats, 115 items of men's clothing, not counting the military uniforms; 35 items of children's clothing and 129 items of baby clothing from belly bands to christening gowns. The hat collection fills one whole closet while the dresses, skirts and suits fill another on five rods. We have boxes of shawls and boxes of white goods—blouses, underwear, and nightwear. I have many choices when it comes to dressing my “dolls.”

Landscaping Dreams

Three Society members stood on the back porch one fine autumn day and began dreaming aloud. “Can't you just picture an arbor right there leading into the back yard?” “See how the wall of the Pharmacy's addition encloses us? We could have a courtyard garden.”



“Have you ever gone on the Buffalo Garden Walk and seen what people have done with their narrow side yards? We could do something like that.”

It is the hope that those dreams can come to fruition in the spring. Conrad Borucki has agreed to head up the Garden Group and is asking for ideas, plants and labor. If you have some perennials you could share with us or are willing to help with the work, please contact Conrad. And keep dreaming. The best gardens are planned during the dreary winter months.

School Break History Days

School Break History Days are planned for third, fourth and fifth graders on days when school is not in session. The activities take place at the Alden Historical Museum and center on the collections in the museum. Because of space limitations pre-registration is necessary.

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.

Karen Muchow Curator

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

JANUARY 10, 2008..... Genealogy



Genealogy, also known as Family History or the study of family trees, is an exciting hobby enjoyed by millions of people worldwide. For some people, that means answering specific family questions, such as what country a great-grandparent came from or which civil war battles an ancestor fought in. For most people, however, it means trying to “trace” their ancestors as far back in time as possible.

Joan Marsden will be on hand to discuss this very intriguing topic. Her interest in genealogy began when she was a child listening to her grandmother tell stories about Marsden family ancestors. As a teenager she wrote all her information on 3x5 cards. After high school she began verifying and documenting the stories and concluded that some are less than accurate, and has several large, gaping holes. Every question leads to more questions, so she accepts the idea that a genealogist's work will never be finished!

Joan teaches art at St John's School, runs the Senior ceramics and clay programs as well as the summer recreation art programs for the Town of Alden.

FEBRUARY 14, 2008 Assassination of President Lincoln



Gregory Kinal has been teaching social studies at Pembroke Central School for the past 38 years. He teaches seventh and eighth grade United States history and College Social Studies. He has lectured on numerous topics related to Americana throughout Western New York.

This program begins with a discussion of Lincoln's personal and political life, and then proceeds to the background causes of the Civil War and for the majority of the program dwells on the plot and eventual assassination of our 16th President on April 14th, 1865. The program includes many very interesting slides.

MARCH 13, 2008..... Artistry of Chocolate Molded Design



Trustee Sal Sardella comes from a family with a long history of chocolate molded candy making. It began with his father who worked for Merchens in the early '30's. After returning home from service Sal began making chocolate molded candy for several organizations for their fundraisers. Over the years Sal has collected many chocolate molds. Not only will he have some of these molds on hand for us to examine but he will also give us some background on mold making, the different types, where they were made, the materials used and some appreciation for the art of mold making.

Your Culinary Skills Requested

At each meeting the membership is treated to delicious refreshments by volunteers. December's meeting has traditionally been an occasion for everyone to bring in holiday goodies. But the other meeting months need to be provided for. Now is the time to sign up to impress us with your culinary skills! The Secretary has a volunteer list that needs to be filled in for the meetings in 2008. Please speak with Laura Loehr to sign up.

Laura Loehr, Secretary

WEB PAGE FOR ALDEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM AND SOCIETY

alden.erie.gov

click on the following link:

Alden Historical Museum and Society

All **GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE** newsletters are posted on this web page

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

NEW LIFE MEMBERS:

*Debra A. Crist
Randal E. Crist
Craig M. Kubik
Dave Dussault
Judy O'Neill*

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS:

*Carolyn Burger
Margaret Gornewicz
Marge Matuszewski
Antoinette Shriver
Matthew Shriver*

RENEWED MEMBERS:

*Laura Loehr
Stephen Malovich
MaryAnn Sardella*

LANDMARK COLLECTIBLES

At press time this prototype was in the shop for minor alterations (store sign) and should be available in January 2008. This building is currently occupied by Henry's Candy. Originally it was occupied by Simmes's Meat Market, then by Randall and Parsons Meat Market, then by Garas Meat Market and eventually by Foley's Auto Parts.



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

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

HOUSE BUILT BEFORE 1908?

If your house was built before 1908 it will qualify to be one of Alden's Century Homes. Your home has earned the right to proudly wear a century home plaque. Alden's 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 by calling Marlene Roll or stopping in at the Historical Museum on Saturday. Plaques cost \$35.00 each.

MUSEUM:

The museum is located in the ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY 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 Dec. Special School Break History Days are planned for school holidays. Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 937-6400 or 937-9256.

MEETINGS:

Meetings are normally held the second Thursday of each month from September thru June. The 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 homemade refreshments and informal socializing.

OFFICERS

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

TRUSTEES

Ralph Davis	Marlene Roll
Judy Hotchkin	Sal Sardella
Joe Kipfer	Ralph Stoos
Laura Loehr	Roberta Vincent
Carl Matthies	Paul Werner

The Society wants to thank Fred Blowers for his many years as Trustee. Fred has asked to take a "sabbatical." He has worked tirelessly on the Building and Grounds Committee and was the one to call when something needed to be repaired or built. Thanks, Fred.

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 as noted below.

DUES

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

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

A Check Payable To: ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Can Be Mailed To:

Judy Hotchkin, Membership Secretary
Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 1400

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE ALWAYS GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED.

DATES TO REMEMBER for WINTER 2008

NOTE: "SBHD" denotes: School Break History Days...see page 4

- Jan. 03...Trustee Meeting
- Jan. 10...General Meeting.....Topic: "Genealogy"
- Jan. 21...SBHDTopic: "Main Street Alden--1908"
- Jan. 28...SBHDTopic: "Putting the Pieces Together"
A look at quilts
- Feb. 14..General Meeting.....Topic: "Assassination of President Lincoln"
- Feb. 20..SBHDTopic: "By Bus and Train They Came"
Alden's Black Water Baths
- Mar. 06..Trustee Meeting
- Mar. 07..SBHDTopic: "Everything's Coming Up Green"
A scavenger hunt in the museum for green objects
- Mar. 13..General Meeting.....Topic: "Artistry of Chocolate Molded Design"

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