

THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

Published Quarterly April 2009

www.alden.erie.gov

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.

A TRIBUTE TO NATHAN AND NORMA SWEET



Norma and Nathan Sweet

(Photo taken in 1993)

The Alden Historical Society owes much of its success to Nathan and Norma Diemer Sweet, Charter members of the society. From the beginning in 1965, the Sweets were active supporters in many ways. Both of them were members of long-time Alden families and they had many stories to share about earlier days. Nate died in 2005, and Norma died in February this year.

Norma had attended the Henskee Road Schoolhouse (the little frame building which is in the town park) and could provide first-hand information about the students and education in that one-room school.

When the Sweets were newly-weds, they ran a farm on the old Tobie property on West Main Street. Patrons of the Black Water Baths often walked to their farm to buy live chickens which were killed and plucked right there on the farm. They told about losing their entire herd of cows because of anthrax pollution in Tannery Creek. Anthrax had reached Alden through infected hides which had been shipped to the tannery from South America.

They next bought the Milliman Farm on Exchange Street where they lived the rest of their lives. They generously shared that property and its large pond with campers, hunters and fishermen.

Continue on page 2

In 1997 the Roberts' home on Broadway was donated to the Town of Alden for a historical museum. That provided a location for the artifacts which the historical society had been accumulating. Nate and Norma, along with Bill and Shirley Scott and Walden Roberts worked many hours to prepare display space. They supplied the labor to install the paneling and floor tiles to make the attic area usable. They also were able to obtain some display cabinets and to build some themselves.

The same group worked for many years to prepare displays for the historical building at the Erie County Fair. That included displays of the Black Water Baths, an early grocery store, a tool shop and the Town Line Secession as well at others.



1989 PHOTO

BRUCE SITZMAN PRESENTED A CHECK, ON BEHALF OF THE ALDEN SEQUECENTENNIAL COMMITTEE, TO PRESIDENT NATHAN SWEET THE MONEY WAS USED AS PART OF THE BUILDING FUND FOR THE NEW ADDITION



1996 PHOTO

JOHN BONTRAGER VERY GENEROUSLY DONATED AND PRESENTED A CHECK TO TREASURER NORMA SWEET

Nate served for many years as president of the society. Following the death of Walden Roberts, Norma became treasurer. She also became Town Historian, following the death of Ralph Stowell, the first Town Historian.

In later years, when they became less active in the society, they still provided advice and encouragement for younger members who took on more of the responsibilities and they continued to share information about Alden as it had once been. With gratitude we remember their enthusiasm, their support and their knowledge. They gave much to the Town of Alden where they had lived their entire lives.

Ruth Davis, Archivist

Where Would You Like The Program Meetings To Be Held?

For the past few months our monthly program meetings were held at the Community Center. We would like to know your feelings about this change. Please fill out the following questionnaire and return it at the next meeting or mail it to the Historical Society, address noted below. Your input is important to us.

I prefer the:
 Alden Community Center
 Alden Historical Society Building

Roberta Vincent, President
 Alden Historical Society
 13213 Broadway
 Alden, NY 14004

If you have any comments please express them here:

If you have ideas for a program please list them here or notify Laura Loehr program chairperson:

***CENTURY HOUSE
1386 EXCHANGE STREET
ALDEN, NY***

Ms. Loretta Lis, owner/resident of our featured “Century House” offers the following historical account of their home:



1386 Exchange Street
Photo taken mid 1950's



1386 Exchange Street
Recent Photo

The town and village of Alden have many “Century Homes”. As you travel down Exchange St. from Broadway you will find mine on the right side of the street shortly before the railroad crossing. After looking through the records it is estimated that the house was built about 1885.

My late husband, Leonard, and I purchased the house in 1960. Then it was a one family home and very much in need of repairs. There was plenty of living space with 10 rooms in the house, including four bedrooms up and one down and the only bathroom was upstairs. A beautiful winding staircase led to the upstairs.



Photo taken in Dec. 1974
Granddaughters: Tammy, Wendy and Michele

The gas-operated fireplaces, one up and one downstairs, are original. Note the original hand crafted oak trim surrounding the fireplace as seen in the photo at left. Both fireplaces retain this trim today. Also the house had an old converted furnace (coal to gas) and a septic system in disrepair that was eventually replaced by the village sewer system.

My husband, being a carpenter, knew this house had great possibilities. He remodeled the upstairs and converted it into a two-bedroom apartment.

The winding staircase had been removed and a separate stairway was built to access the upstairs apartment. Then when my daughter, son-in-law and their three girls occupied the apartment they converted the large attic into a lovely family room. They would have their Christmas tree up there in front of the brick chimney that extended from the fireplaces below. The downstairs was completely remodeled as well. The dining room, the pantry and the front reception hall were all removed and the kitchen was relocated. All this was done to make room for two additional bedrooms and a bathroom. Currently the smallest bedroom is used for a laundry room. Houses at that time had both a living room and a parlor for special occasions. We kept both of these intact.

There is a large basement with plenty of headroom, nearly seven feet. It had a coal bin, an indoor cistern and, as with most cellars of that time, a fruit closet which I still use today.

In closing, let's say it took a lot of hard work to make the many changes over the years but I am left with lots of fond memories living here.

LorettaLis

From the Secretary's Desk:

Refreshments needed for program meetings!

We enjoy great refreshments after each program meeting, and we have volunteers to do most months this year. But in June and July this year, we will have nothing to serve—unless people volunteer to bring them! Usually 2 people sign up for each meeting, so we're looking for 4 kind people to help us in June and July. Please contact the Secretary, Laura Loehr, by a phone message at the Historical Society (937-3700) or by email (AldenHistSoc@gmail.com). We will all appreciate it!

Membership Directory now available

The 2009 Historical Society membership directory is now ready for distribution to members who request them. Please contact the Society by phone (937-3700) or by email (AldenHistSoc@gmail.com), and we'll make arrangements to get one to you. They will also be available at program meetings.

Committee members needed

The Audit Committee (which will meet in the fall, before the November annual meeting) is in need of one member of the Historical Society who is not on the Board of Trustees.

The Historical Society cannot function with the work of just the Board of Trustees, the curator, the archivist and the Society historian. We are grateful that some Society members are volunteering their time and talents already, to help us function well: Keith Stone, Buddy Czechowski, Gil Dussault, Conrad Borucki, Mary Ellen Werner, Elli DeFilippo, Susan Muench, Sharon Schmitz, to name just a few. All committees could use more help from members: collections, program, building & grounds, fundraising, membership, and publicity. Please contact the Historical Society today, to help us fulfill our Mission Statement.

AASLH

We're pleased to announce that the Alden Historical Society is now a member of the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH). Membership in this national organization will bring us benefits of many resources to help us function well, and the ability to network nationwide with other Historical Societies and history organizations. In addition, it has allowed us to purchase some software for our new computer, which will help us maintain good records for our collections, and other aspects of keeping the Society running well.

Laura Loehr, Secretary

Curator's Corner

Oh, we have been so busy these winter months. We have completed an inventory of all our artifacts (except clothing), including those in the basement and storage areas. Artifacts have been sorted according to use or season, and some of these have been put in storage. Some items which were duplicates or not relevant to Alden have been sent to an auctioneer. The resource files have been inventoried to make them easier to use. We have begun the task of creating Family Folders which should help when we receive genealogical requests. Now that the new computer and software have arrived we can begin inputting this information.

We have been moving display areas to better tell the story of Alden. As I write this, the building is an organized mess, but once some walls are painted and big items moved, the newly arranged displays will go into place. You will have to come see once we reopen in April!

Karen Muchow, Curator

WELCOME NEW & RENEWED MEMBERS

RENEWED MEMBERS:

Doris Brade
Helen Creighton
Delores Drogi
Keith Hoffman
Michele Hoffman
Carolyn Burger
Ann Matthies
Carl Matthies
Ellen Schenkler

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS:

Elli DeFilippo

NEW FAMILY MEMBERS:

Tom, Mary, Justice, Jacob, TJ,
Draven, Paul, Robbie Beilein

BUSINESS MEMBERS:

Alden State Bank
Neill & Strong Attorney
The Elwood-Jordans Agency Inc.

RENEWED FAMILY MEMBERS:

The Borucki Family

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIPS:

The Alden Historical Society accepts business memberships, annual dues is \$45.00. We welcome aboard our newest business members: **Alden State Bank** and **Neill & Strong Attorney**.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

Please note that as of Jan. 1, 2009 membership dues have increased to the amounts noted below. New members are always welcome. Your support will ensure that the Alden Historical Society will continue to grow and prosper for years to come. Please make check payable as noted below.

DUES

Single\$8.00	Name
Family\$12.00	Address
Lifetime.....\$75.00
Business....\$45.00	Phone.....Email.....

A check payable to: *ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY* may be mailed to:

Judy Hotchkin, Membership Secretary
Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

ALDEN HISTORICAL BUILDING PHONE No. **716 937 3700**

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

APRIL 02, 2009..... Trustee Meeting
Open to the Membership
7 pm, Alden Historical Bldg.

APRIL 16, 2009..... Grand Reopening
7 pm at the Alden Historical Bldg



Alden Historical Building

Come to the grand reopening of the Alden Historical Society Building! We will see firsthand the several months of very hard work that the Curator, the Collections Committee, and other volunteers have accomplished, to inventory and rearrange virtually the entire building contents. Celebrate their work, and talk with all involved in this massive effort to redisplay Alden's history.

MAY 14, 2009..... One or (Two Room) School House Reunion
7 pm, Alden Community Center



Henskee Road Schoolhouse
Built Circa 1834

Did you ever attend a one-room schoolhouse? Whether in Alden or anywhere else, come share your memories of that experience with the rest of us, at the Community Center. This will be followed by a good old-fashioned ice cream social. A program not to miss!

JUNE 04, 2009..... Trustee Meeting
Open to the Membership
7 pm, Alden Historical Bldg.

JUNE 11, 2009..... Blacksmithing in Early Western New York
7 pm, Alden Community Center



Steve Mankowski working the forge
at Colonial Williamsburg

Steve Mankowski, born and raised in Alden, is a journeyman blacksmith at Colonial Williamsburg. Steve was featured in our October 2008 Gazette and now plans to visit us. He will talk about blacksmiths, the importance of the trade in the settlement of Alden and many other communities in Erie and Genesee Counties, from the 1820's through to the 1890's. He plans to bring many pictures plus antique blacksmith made tools and hardware from the area.

ALDEN HISTORICAL BUILDING:

The ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY’S many exhibits are located in the Alden Historical Building at 13213 Broadway in the village, across from the bank. The mission of the historical society is to preserve, promote and present the history of Alden and its people.

HOURS

Regular Saturday hours, 10 am to 2 pm, will resume on April 4.

Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 937-3700, 937-6400 or email aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

MEETINGS:

Program meetings are held at the Alden Community Center on the second Thursday of the each month at 7:00 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. Many times a guest speaker is present. You are very welcome to come and share your memories and experiences about the evening's program. Afterwards enjoy an informal social complete with homemade refreshments.

Trustee meetings are held at the Alden Historical Building at 7:00 pm. Meetings will be held on the first Thursday of the month in February, April, June, August, October and December (even-numbered months).

The trustee meetings are open to the membership.

OFFICERS

*President.....*Roberta Vincent

*Vice President.....*Ralph Stoos

*Secretary.....*Laura Loehr

*Treasurer.....*Ralph Davis

Curator..... ...Karen Muchow

*Archivist.....*Ruth Davis

*Society Historian.....*Ellen Schenkler

Alden Town Historian
Leonard Weisbeck
Alden Town Board Liaison

Arlene Cooke

*Editor.....*Carl Matthies

*Publicity.....*Judy Hotchkin

TRUSTEES

Fred Blowers Sal Sardella

Ralph Davis Ellen Schenkler

Judy Hotchkin Ralph Stoos

Laura Loehr Roberta Vincent

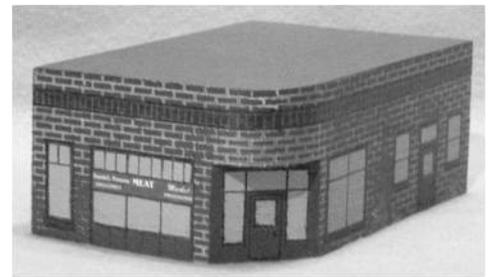
Carl Matthies Paul Werner

Marlene Roll

LANDMARK COLLECTIBLES

Simme’s Meat Market

Built circa 1905 and located at 13237 Broadway at the corner of Kellogg St., it was the site of the Simme’s Meat Market. In later years the Randall & Parson Meat Market and then Garas Meat Market would also call it home. In the late 60’s a change in service came with Foley’s Auto Parts. It shifted again in November 1976 with the opening of Henry’s Candy & Gifts, which continues today. The building has gone through some small changes to include the removal of the two-story smokehouse located on the south or back side of the brick building and the addition of a block building at the same location.



The price for this replica is \$25.00. You may call Marlene Roll at 937-4549 or stop in at the Historical Building on Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm to place your order for this collectible or for any of the former collectibles.

HOUSE BUILT BEFORE 1909?

If your house was built before 1909 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 Building on Saturday. Plaques cost \$35.00 each.

Marlene Roll, *Century House*

**ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
DATES TO REMEMBER
SPRING 2009**

PROGRAM MEETINGS

7 pm

April 16 Grand Reopening
Historical Bldg.
May 14.....School House Reunion
Community Center
June 11Blacksmithing
Community Center

TRUSTEE MEETINGS

7 pm

April 2.....Members Invited
Historical Bldg.
June 4.....Members Invited
Historical Bldg.

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
13213 BROADWAY
ALDEN, NY 14004

www.alden.erie.gov



ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Chartered by the Board of Regents
New York State Education Department
aldenhistsoc@gmail.com
716 937 3700

Prst Stad A
Postage Paid
Alden, NY 14004
Permit No. 6