

THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

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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 CLARA J. ARMSTRONG



CLARA J. ARMSTRONG

Born on a farm in West Alden in 1847

Founded a normal school (for training teachers) in Argentina.

The school was named "Escuela Normal de Clara J. Armstrong" in her honor.

In 1962 the government of Argentina placed a plaque at her grave in the Alden Evergreen Cemetery.

Domingo Sarmiento was an Argentinean who grew up at the time of the revolution which freed Argentina from dictatorships. He spent some years as an exile in Chile. In 1843, the Chilean government provided funds for him to establish a normal school for the training of teachers. In 1845 he was granted funds to travel to Europe to study educational systems. The Chilean minister of education agreed with Sarmiento, that the only hope for success of the new republics would be through an educated citizenry.

In 1847, with very limited funds, he came to the United States to meet Horace Mann who had helped to establish the first American normal school. From that meeting, Sarmiento was inspired to start normal schools in his own country. In order to provide effective public schools, well-trained teachers would be needed. His plan was to bring teachers from the U.S. to establish normal schools like those in the United States in all of the provinces of Argentina. The story of those recruits is told in "65 Valiants" by Alice Houston Luiggi – a small book which is in our museum's library.

One of those 65 early recruits was Clara Armstrong. She was born in 1847 on a farm in West Alden, one of a family of eleven. She went to Argentina in 1877 and became the first woman to establish a normal school in Argentina.

Clara had started teaching when she was fifteen, and used her savings to put herself through the normal school at Oswego. She taught in Fredonia, Haddonfield, New Jersey; was principal of a high school in Buffalo, and then became head of the teacher training school in Indianapolis. When the call came from Sarmiento in 1877, she resigned her position and left for Argentina.

The trip, by steamship from Boston to Liverpool, England and then to Buenos Aires by packet boat took about a month. It was faster than by sailing ship which at that time took about seventy-five days. When she arrived in Argentina she set to learning Spanish. She was already fluent in French, German, Portuguese and Italian. Her first assignment was in Catamarca, a town a thousand miles west of Buenos Aires. It was a three week trip from Buenos Aires by stagecoach. By 1888 she had trained Argentines to take over the normal school which she had started. She was then able to help her sister Frances set up a school in San Nicolas. Later she headed a school in Buenos Aires.



On the fiftieth anniversary of the school she had founded in Catamaran it was named for her – “Escuela Normal de Clara J. Armstrong.” In 1962 a delegation from Argentina came to Alden to present a plaque honoring her. It is attached to her gravestone in the Alden Evergreen Cemetery. Her story may be little known, but it is a tale of courage, dedication, vision and determination.

The inscription on the plaque is written in Spanish. It says:

Miss CLARA J. ARMSTRONG

“The Rotary Club and the Normal School of Catamarca, Republic of Argentina, to Miss Clara Armstrong, noble teacher, who impelled by her vocation, left her country to fulfill her destiny on foreign shores. Her name is inscribed on the cornerstone of the school, which she founded and directed in 1873”.

ALDEN EVERGREEN CEMETERY

Ruth Davis, *Archivist*

From the Collections Committee:

We have a Wish List of items needed for displays. If you have any of these and wish to donate them to the Society, please leave a message for Karen at 937-3700; or you may wish to contribute towards the purchase of same:

folding music stand
flag stand

mannequins
toy loom

We would also like to occasionally display your collections. If you have a collection that you would be willing to loan for a display, please leave a message for Karen at 937-3700.

***CENTURY HOUSE
1578 EMERSON STREET
ALDEN, NY***

Ms. Josephine Michaud, owner/resident of our featured “Century House” offers the following historical account of her home:



Recent Photo, May 2009



Photo taken in mid 1950's

This old house and I have lived together so long that I feel we are holding each other up-by keeping it in respectable shape, and the house by making my life style possible. We have evolved together.

The land it started on really goes back. Records of the Holland Land Company show Lot 18, Township 11, Range 5, Subdivision Lot No. 6 of J. E. Ewell's first addition to the Village of Alden. Restrictions on building were set in 1895.

Vern W. Pancost bought the property on March 16, 1908. The supposition is that he built within the year or in 1909. Pancost came to Alden to manufacture glass because gas was cheap. In a short time the price of gas went up. He “folded his tents like the Arabs” and went back to Pennsylvania. You cannot fold up a house and eventually it came to me.

Edward C. Cluney bought the house in 1945, but moved to Canada soon after, having begun modernizing. Michael F. McCarthy bought it and moved in with a large family-seven sons and two daughters. The youngest, Eugene and Frank, I remember well. At the last, Eugene lived here alone. After we came he painted the house for us.

In 1909 they still drove horses and needed a barn. It was built back of the house, with a door in the second floor for hay. It was hit by lightning in the '50's. We rebuilt it as a one story barn. It was crushed by snow in 1999 and replaced with a garage.

Stanley and I bought this house in 1950. John Henry was our lawyer. We have made few changes, all in the kitchen. It has been painted three times since Eugene did it.

This old house has been useful in many ways. I only hope the next owner is wise, careful and happy here.

Josephine Michaud

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.

***Laura Loehr**, Secretary*

Curator's Corner

The Historical Society building reopened in April after weeks of inventorying, painting, cleaning, creating storage space and changing displays. We sport a new look with more open space and fewer artifacts on display. Several of the exhibits will be changing as the seasons change. "Spring Cleaning 1909" will become "Summertime Pastimes." The lady of the house will now have to iron those clothes she just washed—even if it is 85 degrees out. Our farmer will get out his summer tools, and our mannequins will be changed into lighter clothes. If you haven't stopped in on a Saturday recently, plan to do so soon.

A special thank you to *SITZMAN'S MAYTAG* for dry cleaning our military uniforms at no cost to the Alden Historical Society.

Some Interesting Facts of the Early 1900's

In 1900, about 60% of Americans still lived in rural areas, mainly on farms.
20.4% of the work force was women.

Between 1900 and 1910 nine million men, women and children arrived in the US in search of a better life.

The average life span was 46 years for men and 48 years for women.

In 1910, the average worker earned less than \$15 for working 54 to 60 hours a week.

There were only 13,824 registered automobiles in the United States in 1900. There were no paved highways and no roadside garages.

In 1903, the first coast to coast auto trip, from San Francisco to New York City took 52 days.

WELCOME NEW & RENEWED MEMBERS

RENEWED MEMBERS:

Florence Kegl
Margaret Matuszewski
Wayne Weinsheimer

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS:

Beverly Nebrich

NEW FAMILY MEMBERS:

Bernard and Ellen Schenkler

BUSINESS MEMBERS:

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

RENEWED FAMILY MEMBERS:

With Deepest Sympathy

The Alden Historical Society extends heartfelt sympathy to the families, friends and relatives of members

who have recently passed on: Jack Walters (Charter member), Paul Van Ornum (Life member), Gladys Airey and June Reich-Webster.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

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. Thank you for your support.

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**

A special thank you to the **ALDEN ADVERTISER** for donating membership cards to the Alden Historical Society.

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

JULY 16, 2009 Share Summer Vacation Memories

7 pm, Alden Historical Society Building

*Note that the July meeting is one week later than usual and will be held in the **Historical Society Building** to avoid conflicting with the Alden Firemen events.*



Remember when school let out for the summer and the lazy/hazy days were just ahead. Come and share summer vacation memories and experiences. Where did you go? What did you do? With whom did you go? What happened in Alden during summer in past years? Let's take a trip down memory lane and enjoy an evening of fond memories, complete with refreshments.

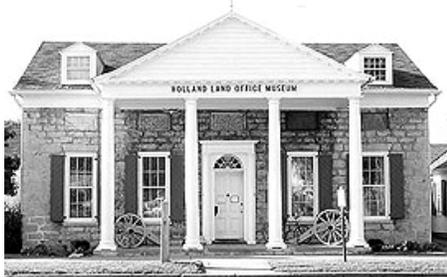
AUGUST 6, 2009 Trustee Meeting

7 pm, Alden Historical Society Building

Open to the Membership

AUGUST 13, 2009 Field Trip to Holland Land Co. Museum

The Holland Land Company, formed in 1796, purchased a large tract of land from Robert Morris in what is now the western portion of New York State. In 1801 a sales office was opened in Batavia where land was sold until the company dissolved in 1846. In 1802, the entire Holland Purchase was split off from Ontario County and constituted Genesee County. Over the next 40 years Genesee County was repeatedly split to form all or parts of the counties in Western New York, including Erie County in 1821.



Holland Land Co. Museum
Batavia, NY

Be sure to schedule this field trip on your calendar.

You may sign up at the July 16th meeting, or leave a message on the phone at the HISTORICAL SOCIETY BLDG. (716-937-3700), or by email (AldenHistSoc@gmail.com). The time has not been determined as of press time. Watch in the Alden Advertiser.

If you need a ride, let us know, and we can arrange carpools.

After the tour, plan for ice cream at Oliver's Candies in Batavia.



The first Scots came to the New World in the early 1600's. In the late 1800's there was a large wave of Scottish immigration and most of them settled in the northeastern U.S. Among them were such notables as Andrew Carnegie and Alexander Graham Bell.

Come hear the reading of a mid-19th century journal of immigrants from Scotland. If you are of Scottish descent, and know any stories of your ancestors' journeys to America, please come and share the stories.

We hope to have bagpipes skirling in the background!

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

The Alden Historical Building is open to the public every Saturday from 10 to 2 pm. 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.....Sal Sardella
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 Marlene Roll
Ralph Davis Sal Sardella
Judy Hotchkin Ellen Schenkler
Laura Loehr Keith Stone
Carl Matthies Roberta Vincent
Paul Werner

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 SUMMER 2009

PROGRAM MEETINGS 7 pm	TRUSTEE MEETINGS 7 pm
July 16 Summer Vacation Memories Alden Historical Society Bldg.	August 6 Alden Historical Society Bldg. Members Invited
August 13 Holland Land Co. Museum Field Trip with Car Pooling	
September 10 Scottish Immigration to U.S. Alden Community Center	

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
13213 BROADWAY
ALDEN, NY 14004

www.alden.eric.gov



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