

THE GRANNYTOWN GAZETTE

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society, Alden NY 14004
aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

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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.

“Our” Emily—Chapter Two

In the winter issue of the Gazette we proudly reported that we had discovered the first name of the first white child born in what is now Alden in 1812, “a daughter of Arunah Hibbard.” Emily Hibbard was one of the twelve children of Arunah and his wife Esther.

We discovered that she married Dr. Ira Packard in Yorkshire, New York and had five children. Questions remained as to how she met someone from Yorkshire in Cattaraugus County in the early 1800s.

A little more internet research revealed some answers. From *The History of Cattaraugus County, 1879* we learned that Colonel Arunah Hibbard had moved to the Yorkshire area in 1818 and was a prominent, active businessman. He had been actively engaged in the War of 1812 and was wounded through the arm at the battle of Lundy’s Lane. He established mills and a distillery at Yorkshire Corners in 1824. His sons were merchants.

Enter Ira Packard. Ira was born June 7, 1808 in Royalton, Vermont; the youngest son of Benjamin Packard. Ira’s father died when Ira was 15 and thus was thrown upon his own resources to complete his education and obtain a living. In the spring of 1824, young Ira moved to Boston and took a position in the wholesale and retail store of Kittridge & Wyman, dealers in groceries and West India goods. He remained there for the summer and fall, returning to Royalton for the winter term of school.

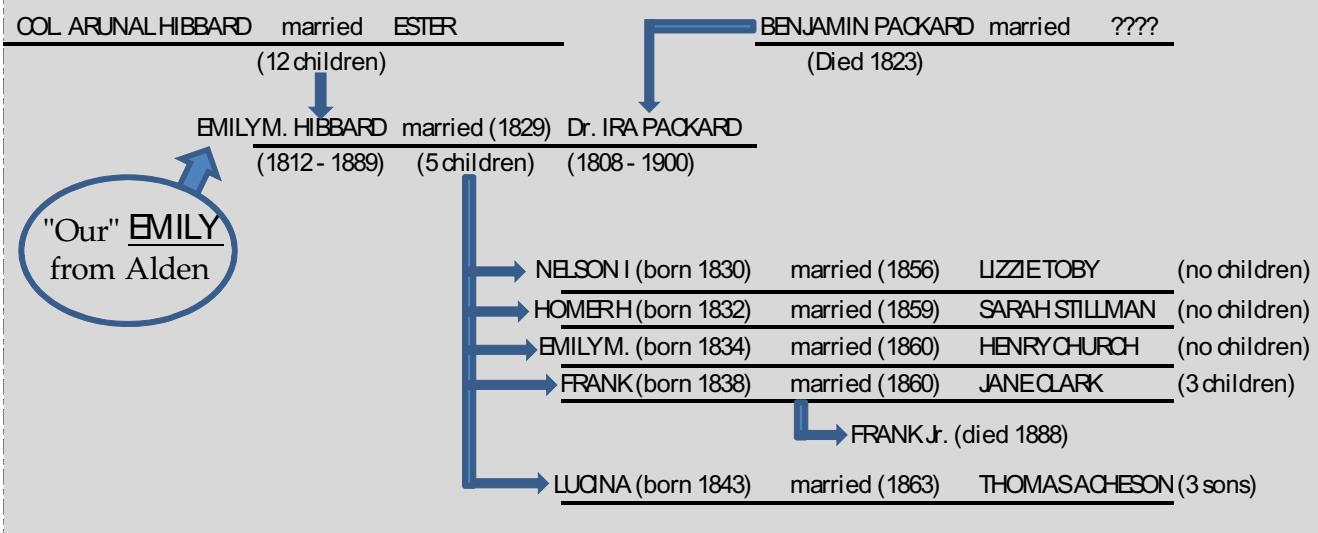
In the spring of 1825, Ira entered the service of the whaling ship *Alexander*, and during the long voyage learned much about seafaring life and the world in general. The ship returned to New Bedford, MA in July 1826 with a cargo of whale oil and bone. Ira subsequently made other short voyages on the *Alexander*. The fall of 1828 found him in Philadelphia, PA working in the Pottsville mines. In February 1829, Ira moved to Allegany County, NY, settling in the town of Pike, which was the home of a brother. He then moved to Yorkshire in Cattaraugus County and established himself in the mercantile business. On April 27, 1829, he married Emily M. Hibbard, daughter of Col. Arunah Hibbard.

The business venture of Mr. Packard not proving a bonanza, he closed out, and going to Erie County, PA, engaging in the grocery and provision trade. Here he was again doomed to disappointment. Cholera broke out and all business was suspended for a time. Not having the resources to remain idle, he closed his business and returned to Yorkshire and was engaged as a clerk with A & W Hibbard.

In the spring of 1836 he began the study of medicine and surgery under the instruction of Dr. Bela Colegrave of Sardinia, NY. He continued his studies for three years and also attended medical lectures. Upon completing his studies, he moved with his family to Sturgis, Michigan.

In Sturgis he maintained a medical practice until the spring of 1850, when he took a trip to California and then spent the following summer in the gold fields, very successfully. Dr. Packard returned to Sturgis in the spring of 1851 and retired from his practice, although he occasionally treated old friends who were unwilling to go to a new doctor.

FAMILY TREE for "Our" EMILY - the first white child born in what is now Alden, NY



Emily Hibbard Packard died April 2, 1889 in Sturgis; Ira died August 2, 1900 in Sturgis. Their son, Nelson I, was born in Yorkshire on April 8, 1830. He married Lizzie Toby October 15, 1856 and was president of the National Bank of Sturgis. They had no children. Son Homer H. was born August 10, 1832 in Pennsylvania and married Sarah Stillman, December 9, 1859. Homer was a druggist in Cheboygan, MI. They did not have children. Daughter Emily M. was born November 6, 1834 in Yorkshire. She married Henry Church, a grocer, on October 25, 1860. They, too, had no children. Son Frank was born February 10, 1838 in Yorkshire and was married to Jane Clark on September 25, 1860. They had three children. Their son, Frank, Jr., studied medicine at Ann Arbor Medical College, and died in Cheboygan in 1888. Emily and Ira's daughter Lucina was born January 26, 1843 in Sturgis and married Thomas Acheson, October 1, 1863. They had three sons and lived in Emporia, Kansas.

Karen Muchow, Curator

From the Secretary's Desk:



The Annual Meeting this year will be held on Thursday November 12, 2009, at the Community Center. We'll have a potluck dinner before the meeting, starting at 6 p.m. Please bring a tasty dish to pass (casserole, salad or dessert) and your own table setting. Rolls and butter, and beverages (coffee, tea, and cold drinks) will be provided.

The annual meeting is very important for the Historical Society. Four Trustees will be elected, and annual reports will be given from officers and committees. You'll have an opportunity to tell us how things are going, from the members' point of view, and to give suggestions as to what else the Trustees can do for you.

Don't forget to continue to exercise your rights and privileges by voting, and taking an active part in our Historical Society. Know what is going on, and what you can do to help keep our organization strong and vibrant.

Laura Loehr, Secretary

MILLGROVE

When Jonas VanWey came to western New York in 1806, he settled where roads or paths from north and south met the Buffalo-Batavia Road. There he had found good water, fertile soil, flowing creeks and fine timber for fuel and home building. He is credited with being the first resident in the Town of Alden. By 1844 the Buffalo Road had become a toll road and was paved with planks which were later covered with gravel, so travel became easier. More settlers came, and as the population grew, a grist mill was built on the creek west of the intersection and a saw mill north of it. Soon log cabins were replaced with frame homes.



#1



#2

To satisfy the needs of the community, more businesses were introduced. Moses Case started a store which in, 1850, he sold to Emile Yund (#1), an immigrant from Alsace-Lorraine, who ran the store for many years. By 1849, Moses Case had opened a post office and named the settlement Mill Grove. Hugh Case began making red-ware pottery and that business was taken over by Gottlieb Suess. There were two blacksmith shops, Gaterman's west of the hamlet and Hoffman's (#2) at the crossroads where the two large hotels –Wende House (#3) and the American (#4) offered rooms, meals and drinks and entertainment in the dance halls of the second floors.



#3



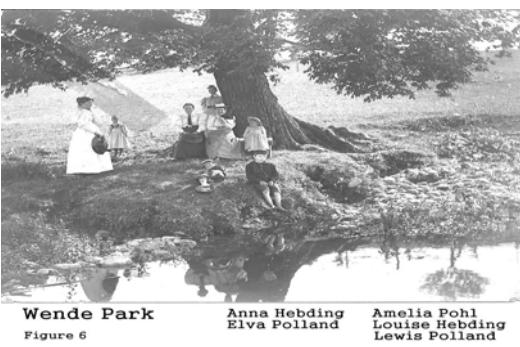
#3A



#4



#4A



A large, one-room, brick schoolhouse stood on a small knoll west of the hamlet, close to the German Lutheran Church (#5). By the 1850's, Millgrove was a largely German-speaking community. Two Wende families had come from Germany and bought farmland – perhaps as much as 800 acres and apparently encouraged friends back in Germany to join them. In 1901, a group of young adults organized a "Twentieth Century Club" which met in one of the hotels. Among the list of twenty-eight members were names such as Seihl, Johnson, Schmitt, Meinkie, Kiefer, Layer and Zoeller. The population had grown and there was a very active social life.

One of the popular recreation spots was the Wende Grove (#6 & #7), located along Ellicott Creek where it crossed Ellicott (now Walden) Road. This was a well-known park, even to city folks who were able to get out in the country by train. About 1914, close to the park, the County of Erie bought Wende property for a penitentiary farm. This enabled trusted prisoners to have productive work outside the prison walls. About 1923, the penitentiary was enlarged, requiring more guards and workers so a row of two-family houses was built along Wende Road and a new school was built to accommodate their families. This five-room school (#8) with an auditorium stood on Genesee Road, close to the old Wende Hotel.

The school is still there (boarded up, #8). Wende Correctional Facility and the county prison have replaced the "Pen". The out-of-business hotels (#3A and 4A) remain but it is almost impossible to locate Wende Grove, so today, much of the life of Millgrove centers around a small restaurant, the Millgrove Church, the Fire Company and the Town Hall which is located in the 1964 Wende Road School.

At the museum you may see additional photos, records and memoirs written by folks who lived in Millgrove. It is worth a visit.

Ruth Davis, *Archivist*

Editor's Note:

Farming in Buffalo? Yes, back in 1925 a very young child, now residing in Alden, lived on a 90 acre farm located at 125 Rees St., Buffalo. You may think you do not know the Layer family that resided there, but chances are you know one of the children. Our very own archivist Ruth (Layer) Davis is one of those children. Her father Mr. John Layer was superintendent of the farm located on what was then the Buffalo State Hospital complex (now Buffalo State College). You may read all about the farm and the hospital in the summer 2009 edition of the Western New York HERITAGE magazine. Ruth Davis authored the article titled "Rural Richardson-The Farm at the Buffalo State Hospital". It is loaded with photos as well as a very detailed and colorfully illustrated site plan of the farm and hospital grounds. Excellent reading.

Ruth Davis also wrote "Alden's Black Water Baths 1904-1964" for the Western New York HERITAGE, spring 2002, a very informative article.

**CENTURY HOUSE
1444 ELM STREET
ALDEN, NY**

**Joan Marsden offers the following historical account
of the “Century House” she and her husband own and occupy:**

My grandmother Bertha Marsden liked to tell stories. She would tell me family history, and what it was like when she was young. When I was about 12, she gave me an old black walnut dresser that is almost 8 feet tall. My dad had to carefully remove the carved medallion on the top to make it fit in the house where I grew up. Since that time I have loved old furniture and old houses. I use that dresser, with the medallion back in place –I have a house with high ceilings!

Grandma and my grandpa George moved to Alden in 1942 – this was a few months before Albert and Margaret Drosendahl bought the house at 1444 Elm Street that I currently own. Grandma and Margaret Drosendahl became friends. Grandma told me that Drosendahls rented out rooms to guests visiting the Black Water Baths. An entrepreneurial couple, if all the rooms were rented and another guest came to the door, Albert and Margaret rented their own bedroom and went to spend the night with my grandparents – for free! I have heard rumors that Drosendahls kept a separate kosher kitchen – I don’t know if that is true, but when my husband and I bought the house in 1987, the house had 2 apartments with one kitchen downstairs and one kitchen upstairs.



Recent Photo



Photo probably taken in the 1950's

If you look carefully at the front of the house, there are two front doors. One opens directly in front of a staircase, the other opens into our dining room. One explanation we have been given for the two doors is that wakes were held at home and there needed to be a door to carry the coffin through. It would be difficult to take a coffin out the door in front of the stairs. My husband Jim Nicolazzo and I raised our three children here. Our son has a Halloween birthday so we always had a party with trick or treating in the neighborhood. Our children decided this “extra” door gets to be Freddy Krueger’s door from “Nightmare on Elm Street.”

The property was originally part of Lot #11, township #11, range 5 of the Holland Land Company and was sold to Joseph Freeman in 1837. In 1862, Freeman sold 75 acres of land to George Vandevort who later divided the land. Laura Gilbert purchased 53/100's acre from Vandevort in December 1875 and owned the land until her heirs sold it 23 years later in 1898.

(continued on page 6)

We assume the Gilbert family erected the house. The 1880 map at the Alden Historical Building shows the original outline of the house with Mrs. Gilbert listed as the owner. Since that time, there has been an addition to the front and a mudroom on the back. The house has 9' ceilings on the first floor, hardwood floors and beautiful window and door trim. The large rooms and tall windows create a wonderful, light filled space. Shortly after we bought the house in 1987, my father was in the house and told us that he and my grandfather had done some of the remodeling in the late 1940s. So in many ways, my grandmother's stories live on!

Joan Marsden and Jim Nicolazzo

ALDEN TAKES TWO RIBBONS AT THE ERIE COUNTY FAIR.

Summer moves along very fast. Before we knew it, fair time was upon us. It had been many years since Alden had a display, and this was the year we were back.

The theme, A Summer A Fair, 1969. Our historical collection has many things from 1869, but next to nothing for 1969. Imaginations in gear, closets, attics and basements searched. A framed poster and photo from Woodstock where

trustee Ellen Schenkler's husband, Bernie had attended; (Bernie looks the same only different hair color!). A wiz at poster making, Ellen came up with a number of excellent display posters, prices of the time, the birth of Sesame Street, popular movies, and the Apollo moon landing.

With permission of my brother, Bill Weisbeck, we were allowed to use his vintage GI Joe's, knowing my 60's attired Barbie's needed the escort. Now the collection was complete, sesame street dolls, (to go with the poster.) My husband's vintage record player, (amazingly heavy.) Albums of the era, vintage clothing, chairs, tables and martini glasses for a 60's patio scene. All this backed by a tie dye sheet made by Curator Karen Muchow.

Sunday, August 9, fair set up day, Paul and Mary Ellen Werner, Ellen Schenkler and me. This was the day the south towns flooded. After winding our way around the flooded zones, we made it to the historical building; thankfully this was built on a mound, so it was not underwater. We waited about 30 minutes for the rains to let up so our treasures wouldn't be ruined during unloading. Set up went well and we were all pleased.

I returned to the fair on its first day. There it was, the fruits of our labor, two ribbons! One honorable mention and one theme participation. I snapped photos, and was pleased with the outcome, not everyone had ribbons. Somehow, for some reason, at some point our glorious, hard earned, white ribbon vanished. My photos are the only proof we ever had it.



Judy Hotchkin, Publicity

WELCOME NEW & RENEWED MEMBERS

NEW ANNUAL MEMBERS:

Anita Mankowski
Rena Paulter

BUSINESS MEMBERS:

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

RENEWED MEMBERS:

Sue Gailbrath
Audrey Senecal
Anna Walters
Antoinette Wiltberger

With Deepest Sympathy

The Alden Historical Society extends heartfelt sympathy to the family, friends and relatives of **Edith M. Bensley** who passed away on August 9, 2009. Mrs. Bensley, a very active life member, contributed many hours over the years planning and arranging displays for the Erie County Fair as well as assisting with displays in the Alden Historical Society Building. Mrs. Bensley was also very active with the Alden Art Club. As an artist she painted many seascapes, one of which was recently donated to the Alden Historical Society, where it will be proudly displayed.

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

Phone 937 3700

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

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING:

The ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S many exhibits are located in the Alden Historical Society 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 Society 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 generally held at the Alden Community Center on the second Thursday of 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

*Society Historian....Ellen Schenkler
Alden Town Historian*

Fred Blowers

Marlene Roll

Vice President.....Sal Sardella

*Leonard Weisbeck
Alden Town Board Liaison*

Ralph Davis

Sal Sardella

Secretary.....Laura Loehr

Arlene Cooke

Judy Hotchkin

Ellen Schenkler

Treasurer.....Ralph Davis

Editor.....Carl Matthies

Laura Loehr

Keith Stone

Curator.....Karen Muchow

Publicity.....Judy Hotchkin

Carl Matthies

Roberta Vincent

Archivist.....Ruth Davis

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*

MONTHLY PROGRAMS

OCTOBER 1, 2009 Trustee Meeting

7 pm, Historical Society Building
Open to the Membership

OCTOBER 8, 2009 Make Us Guess!

7 pm, Historical Society Building



What is it? Members and guests are welcome to bring in an item that may not be readily identifiable. It will be interesting to see how many folks know what it is and how it is used. We will have some old handy gadgets from the collection at the Historical Society Building to show and challenge the audience. Some items we may not even know ourselves and will be looking for answers.

CORN CRACKER - USED TO BREAK UP DRY KERNELS OF CORN

NOVEMBER 12, 2009 Annual Meeting

7 pm, Community Center



We will begin the evening with a potluck dinner. Please bring a dish to pass in the form of a hot casserole, salad, or dessert. Also please bring your own table setting. Drinks will be available.

Immediately following dinner we will have our annual meeting. At this time all members will have an opportunity to vote for four trustees. Other business may be discussed.

Refer to "From the Secretary's Desk on page 2 for more details.

DECEMBER 3, 2009 Trustee Meeting

7 pm, Historical Society Building
Open to the Membership

DECEMBER 10, 2009 Antique Ornaments

7 pm, Historical Society Building



The decorated tree as a focal point of Christmas celebrations has a rich history of diverse ornamentation. From edibles and handcrafted decorations to

commercially produced ornaments, these antiques have become highly desired treasures. Artisans have created collectible treasures including Dresdens, wax angels, cotton fabrications, glass figural ornaments, metal and wood decorations.

Maybe you have some antique Christmas ornaments that have been in your family for many years and are highly treasured by you. If so, this is a great opportunity to share them with members and guests of the Alden Historical Society.

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DATES TO REMEMBER

FALL 2009

PROGRAM MEETINGS 7 pm	TRUSTEE MEETINGS 7 pm
October 8 Make Us Guess! Historical Society Bldg.	October 1 Historical Society Bldg. Members Invited
November 12 Pot Luck Dinner Followed by the Annual Meeting Community Center	
December 10 Antique Ornaments. Historical Society Bldg.	December 3 Historical Society Bldg. Members Invited

ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
13213 BROADWAY
ALDEN, NY 14004

www.alden.erie.gov



ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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