



The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

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Curator

Kris Rogers

Archivist

Town and Village Historian

Karen Muchow



1967



2017

Thank You, Mr. Roberts—Celebrating 50 Years

The Alden Historical Society was founded fifty-two years ago in 1965. For its first two years, the Society had no "home." It held its meetings in various places—the school, the municipal building, the Masonic Lodge on Church Street. It had a file cabinet for records in the lower level of the Ewell Free Library and Ralph D. Stowell kept donated artifacts in his barn.

All that changed in November 1966 when Walden Roberts purchased the home of his Aunt Alice at 13213 Broadway and donated it to the Town of Alden to be used as a museum by the Alden Historical Society. The first meeting held in the building was in February 1967-- members were asked to bring their own chairs! The building was formally dedicated on June 25, 1967 in loving memory of Frances Young Roberts, wife of Walden. Frances Roberts, who died August 23, 1966, had been a charter member of the Society.



Aaron Bunce had purchased the property (230 acres) on which the house stands from the Holland Land Company in 1819. He then sold the property to Thomas Farnsworth. Farnsworth owned it from 1820 to 1841. It is assumed that some sort of dwelling was built on the property during that time. The beams in the small basement under the parlor are bark-covered logs.

Frederick Lord purchased the property in 1852 and his family owned it until 1878. Lucy Hart owned it until her death in 1897. Maria Bowman, mother of Dr. Carlos Bowman, lived in the house with her invalid son until her death in 1915. Dr. Bowman sold the house to Arthur Roberts and his wife Alice in 1916. Art Roberts operated the barber shop next door, now part of the Alden Pharmacy gift shop. After Art's death in 1958, Alice continued to live there until she planned to enter a nursing home, at which time she sold it to Walden.

Over the years, with the help and support of the Town, the Society has sided the building, installed new windows, finished off the attic for more display space, enclosed a portion of the front porch to house an antique Studebaker carriage, and installed camera surveillance and alarm systems.

In 1995, with funds donated by the Alden Town Sesquicentennial Committee and many private

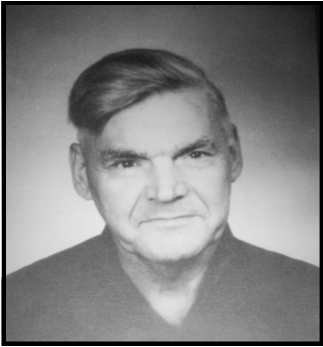
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donations, a large addition was built on the rear of the house for meeting and display space. The room was designated the Ruth Davis Room in 2005 in honor of her nearly twenty years as curator, and the driving force behind the addition.

Since 1967, the Society has cataloged over 5000 donated Alden-related artifacts and ephemera. The building is presently open on the first and third Sundays (Mar.-Dec.) or by special appointment (call 937-3700).

Walden C. Roberts

Walden C. Roberts, the generous donor of the home now housing the Alden Historical Society, was born in North Collins in 1905 and came to Alden with his parents, Eugene and Emma, and his brother Kenneth in 1918. After graduation, Walden worked as a carpenter, building several houses in Alden.



He married Frances Young, daughter of Frank and Grace Young in 1929. Frank was the owner of the Young Laundry on Exchange Street and Young's Feed Mill on Railroad Street. Walden started working for his father-in-law and took over the operation of the feed mill in 1944 when Mr. Young died.

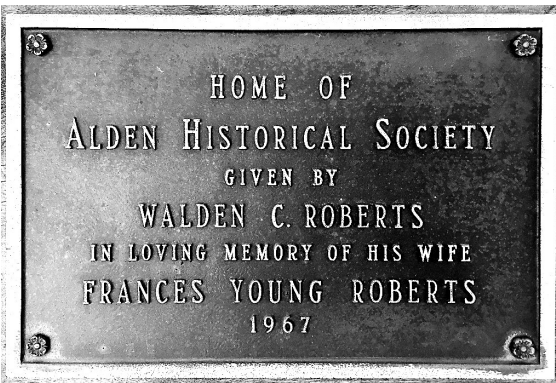
Walden was an avid fisherman, hunter and baseball player. He was a charter member of the Alden Rod and Gun club, the Kiwanis Club of Alden and the Alden Historical Society. He served as treasurer of the Society for many years. He also served as the Town Building Inspector for twenty years.

Mr. Roberts was a talented woodworker. Some of the items he made are on display at the Alden Historical Society. In the early years of the Society, Walden donated an item he had made as a raffle prize at each monthly meeting to raise funds for the Society.

Walden C. Roberts died in March 18, 1989. He is buried in the Alden Evergreen Cemetery, along with his wife, parents, grandparents and older sister, Edna, who died at the age of fourteen.

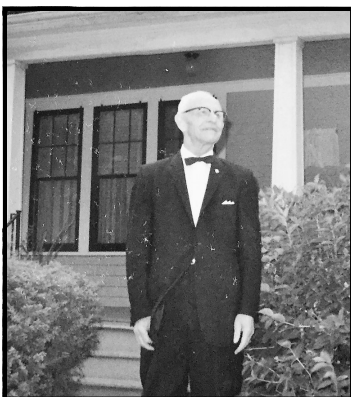
Archivist Karen Muchow

Celebrating Our Building's Dedication Ceremony 50 Years Ago...



The Alden Historical Society was organized on April 21, 1965. Walden Roberts donated the building to the Town of Alden in November 1966 in memory of his wife, to be used by the Historical Society as its museum. The museum was dedicated on June 25, 1967.

Plaque photo and captions by Christopher Gust



Ralph Stowell, Town Historian prior to unveiling of dedication plaque.



Beverly Nebrich, Curator



Alden Town Supervisor, Don Donnelly, presenting keys to the building to Society President Nathan Sweet.

President's Message

The summer season is upon us and with that, your Alden Historical Society has recently concluded our 2016-17 monthly program season at the Community Center and, after taking July and August off, we will resume in September. We thank everyone who attended one (or all) of our programs. We covered a wide range of material, including Century Homes in the Village, Alden State Bank's 100 Year Anniversary, Mennonite History in Alden, Forest Lawn Cemetery, Amelia Earhart, the Electrification of Rural WNY, the Broadway Viaduct, the US Flag and more. We hope that you found them interesting and educational. We thank Conrad and Carol Borucki for their efforts in producing our program schedule, and to Sandy Dussault for coordinating refreshments during the programs.



While our programs are on break for the summer, the Society remains very busy. We have a committee hard at work creating our display for the 178th Erie County Fair, to be held August 9th through 20th. Please stop by the Historical Building to see our creative 2017 entry. We are also planning an event in late summer to honor the Revolutionary War veterans whose final resting place is within our community. For the latest information on these and other coming activities, find and "like" our Facebook page or check out the Alden Advertiser.

In addition, we recently welcomed 5th grade classes from Alden Central School, for which lessons were conducted by Historical Society volunteers at the Henskee Road Schoolhouse and at the Society building. It's always rewarding for our Historical Society to be able to provide educational opportunities for the youth in our community, and we hope the students and teachers found the experience worthwhile and fun. We thank Society Vice President Elli DeFilippo for coordinating the schedule and Elli, Conrad Borucki, Sandy Dussault, Kris Rogers and Marcia Spittler for conducting the lessons. Our Archivist and Town Historian, Karen Muchow, developed the curriculum.

We also appreciate everyone who has joined the Alden Historical Society with a new paid membership and we welcome several new members. If you are reading this issue of the Gazette and are not a current member, please consider joining the Society. We also always appreciate current lifetime members who make donations in lieu of dues. Thank you! Have a safe and enjoyable summer. As always, we thank you for your interest and support.

President Christopher Gust

Meet the New Curator



Kris Rogers grew up in Alden and lived here until 1983, when she moved to New Jersey and Maryland for her former husband's job. In 2006, she moved back to Alden and lives on Mechanic Street in the Village.

Kris is a graduate of Alden Central, has a BS in Elementary Education from Fredonia and a MS in Education from Buffalo State. She taught in Orchard Park and also taught in Maryland when her children were older. Upon her return to Alden, she became the manager of the Alden Ewell Free Library from 2006 to 2016. She is now retired and enjoys gardening, reading, hand sewing, genealogy and flea markets. Kris has three adult children and two grandchildren.

A Life member of the AHS since 2006, Kris has previously served as trustee and secretary. She also was instrumental in the creation of our fund-raising cookbook. She looks forward to the challenges and rewards of the curator position.

September 14 — The Pan-American Exposition – A Unique Perspective - There have been many programs highlighting Buffalo, NY's World Fair. Western NY Historian Susan Eck will view the Pan-American Expo from a different perspective. Ms Eck will take us on a tour of the fair citing the actual words of the people in attendance. Focusing on the recorded memories of the fair-goers brings the already spectacular Pan-American experience another dimension, this time a more personal one.

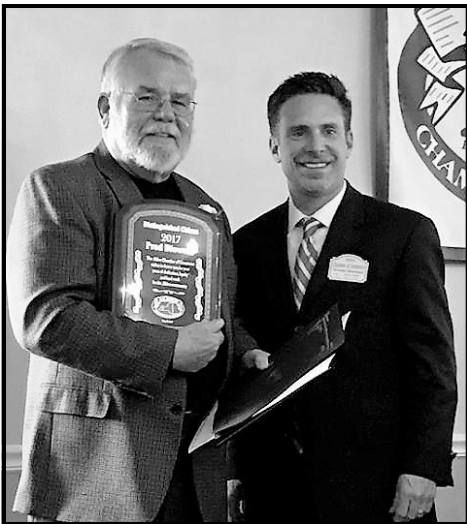
PLEASE NOTE: PROGRAMS WILL BE ON SUMMER BREAK DURING JULY AND AUGUST

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The Alden Historical Society expresses their sincere appreciation to the **Alden Advertiser**, your hometown newspaper since 1914, for their willingness to print our monthly program announcements and summaries, as well as for their ongoing cooperation in assisting us with mailing our quarterly newsletter, **The Grannytown Gazette**.

Fred Blowers—Distinguished Citizen 2017



This year's Alden Chamber of Commerce's Distinguished Citizen, Fred Blowers, is a life-long Alden resident who has honorably served his country during the Korean Conflict as a staff sergeant. He then was a plow and salt truck driver for the NYSDOT for more than 36 years

Fred has served his community as an Alden Volunteer Firemen for over 52 years, answering countless calls, serving as Fire Police and assisting with various functions. He has been the custodian caretaker of Ewell Free Library since 2012.

His service to community continues as he was a trustee for the Alden Historical Society and co-chair of the Society's Buildings and Grounds Committee. Fred has given much time and talent both to the Historical Society and the Henskee Road Schoolhouse.

One nomination stated "There is never a time that he doesn't have a smile on his face and a wave of friendship." Fred Blowers is an unsung hero, never wanting recognition for his many contributions, and he is a role-model to everyone, just giving his all in

everything—service to country, state, community, friends and family. Submitted by Sue Galbraith Photo courtesy Christopher Gust

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Revolutionary War Markers

Society Secretary and DAR member Jennifer Strong has researched the various types of markers the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution offer to mark the resting places of those who fought in the Revolutionary War. She has submitted applications, and been approved for, four DAR markers to be placed on Oliver Standart (Town Cemetery); and James Cheeseborough, Ebba Peck and Joshua Hendee (Evergreen Cemetery). The nameplate for each marker is being given by the local DAR chapter. These brass markers were purchased by the Historical Society and there are plans to submit two more applications for markers and for two headstones the VA will furnish to set upon footers we provide. This project is a well deserved tribute to the ones who fought for America's freedom from England. A dedication ceremony will be held later this summer.



Submitted by Jennifer Strong



Remembering Our Heroes



Electrification of Rural WNY

Alden resident Marlin Gillette, presented a program on the electrification of western New York on April 13.

In 1897, the Depew and Lancaster Light, Power and Conduit Company was founded. They covered 365 miles of streets and 8,000 lamps, providing electrical energy to several communities. Some natural gas that powered the steam driven generators came from gas wells in the town of Alden, where the Alden Natural Gas Co. was organized in 1892. The Town of Alden signed a 99 year lease with Depew and Lancaster Light, Power and Conduit Co. in 1912. Not long after, Alden Natural Gas Co. merged with Batavia Natural Gas, becoming Republic Light, Heat & Power. Republic subsequently became Iroquois Gas Co. which then became National Fuel Co. Depew and Lancaster Light, Power and Conduit Company is the forerunner of New York State Electric and Gas.

Electrification came to the village of Alden in 1919 when Ralph Stowell, pharmacist and proprietor of Stowell's Rexall Pharmacy, electrified his business and some nearby buildings with a gas powered generator. By 1922, town of Alden residents applied for several lighting districts. Electrification of Alden continued into the 1930's.



Photo courtesy Alden Advertiser

Alden's Viaduct and Other Features

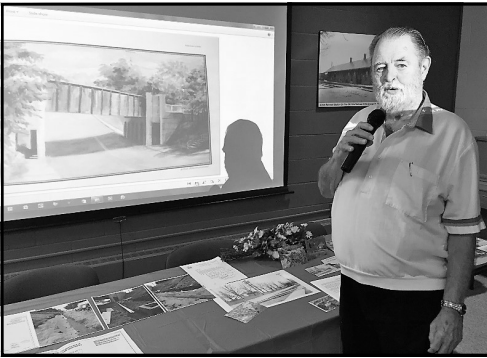


Photo courtesy Christopher Gust

Local businessman and Alden Historical Society member Paul Henry shared his extensive knowledge of Alden and some of its distinguishing landmarks at the program on May 10. Paul shared photos of the 1939-40 excavations that enabled the construction of the Erie Railroad viaduct crossing Route 20 and more recent photos showing the 2016 excavation and resurfacing of the roadway beneath the viaduct. Aldenite Peter Satola, a DOT inspector who inspected the work on the recent project, pointed out that springs in the southern embankment contributed to the water issues that raised the elevation of the roadway beneath the viaduct prior to the recent renovation.

Paul also mentioned the "tubes". These concrete drainage pipes were deposited in years past in preparation for the development of a subdivision between Exchange Street and Maple Ridge connecting with Slade Drive, adjacent to Tops Plaza. The plan for connecting to Slade Drive was to enable southbound traffic to bypass the Exchange Street railroad crossing. Paul also mentioned a hill in the area of the tubes which may have been used for sledding in the past. It is believed to have been created by the excavation of the area in preparation for the subdivision. The hill is there, but it is overgrown with trees and vegetation.

"The American Flag: the History, the Facts, and the Myths"

Former Aldenite and social studies teacher George McGaughey spoke on June 8 about the history of the American flag, celebrated on flag Day, June 14. To assist in his presentation, George brought along a wide selection of flags demonstrating the variety of configurations of stars and stripes that have adorned the flag through the years. Some of the flags he shared held special meaning as they were personally significant to George's ancestry. George cited historical evidence to dispel some commonly held myths regarding the history of the flag. He also identified six American states that were independent countries prior to joining the United States.



Photo courtesy Christopher Gust

★ *Donations Gratefully Received From:*

★ Clarke Burke, Mark and Diane Casell, Catherine Cyrulik, Pat Mooney on behalf of the 5th grade classes, Karen
★ Muchow, and Charleen Satkowski in memory of Ron Savage.
★

★ *Donations in Lieu of Dues:*

★ Roberta Vincent

★ *Membership Renewals:*

★ Alden Chamber of Commerce, Alden Kiwanis, Alden Pharmacy, Alden State Bank, Conrad and Carol Borucki, Doris Brade, Caro-
★ lyn Burger, Marlyn Casell, Cooke & Steffan Attorneys, Helen Creighton, Catherine Cyrulik, Angelo Daluisio, Jeanette and Tho-
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★ Karen Savage, Violet Savage, Donna Schall, Audrey Senecal, Antoinette and Matthew Shriver, Adam and Kristen Stoltman, Anna
★ Walters, Wayne Weinsheimer, Jean Weisbeck, and Rhonda Wieder
★

Fifth Graders Learn About Alden's History

Alden Intermediate fifth graders were guests of the Alden Historical Society on May 30, June 1, and June 5 when students were invited to travel back in time to learn about the history of Alden and to visit a one room schoolhouse that was actually used in Alden from 1834-1929. At the Historical Society Building, students learned about Alden's early settlers, its Mayflower connection, hamlets, businesses, geographical features, etc. At the one room Henske Road Schoolhouse, located at Alden Town Park, students experienced a portion of a typical early 1900's school day.

The Historical Society appreciates the cooperation and supervision of Alden teachers and support staff who assisted in coordinating the program: Paula Au, Lisa Barthelme, Morgan Blahowicz, Pam Devine, Katie Ferrentino, Tiffany Hetey, Karen Hirtzell, Brenda Huston, Sue Kopack, Michelle Mattheus, Patti Mooney, Bill Neidel, Reed Schall, and Gwen Tyburski. Additionally, the Historical Society thanks retired teachers Conrad Borucki, Elli DeFilippo, Sandy Dussault, Kris Rogers, and Marcia Spitler for volunteering to teach the classes. A special thank you is extended to Alden Town and Village Historian and Historical Society Archivist Karen Muchow who developed the curriculum for the program.



Photos and article
submitted by Elli DeFilippo

Membership—*Lynda Tucker, Clarke Burke, Susanne Galbraith, Jennifer Strong*

Collections—*Jane Burke, Sandy Dussault, Larry Kocher, Karen Muchow, Kris Rogers*

Publicity/Newsletter—*Lynda Tucker, Clarke Burke, Elouise DeFilippo, Gilbert Dussault, Susanne Galbraith, Christopher Gust, Carl Matthies,*

Program/Refreshments—*Conrad and Carol Borucki, Sandy Dussault*

Building and Grounds—*Larry Kocher, Conrad Borucki, Doris Brade, 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*

Erie County Fair—*Gilbert Dussault, Elouise DeFilippo, Sandy Dussault, Susanne Galbraith, Kyle Kavanagh, Larry Kocher*

Historical Society members are invited to join the standing committees

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 937-6400.

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

Name.....

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Please make checks payable to Alden Historical Society

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Lynda Tucker, Membership Secretary

Alden Historical Society

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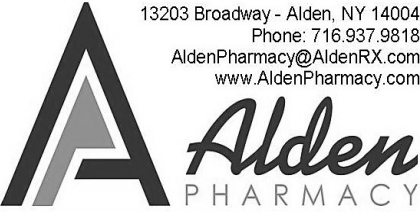
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Born, raised, lives and practices in our community, Attorney **JENNIFER STRONG** is your neighbor and is here to help.

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Thomas A. Steffan
Attorney at Law

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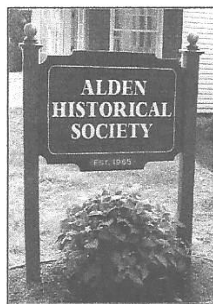
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ALDEN, NY

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.



*Alden Historical Society
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