



The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

716-937-3700

www.alden.erie.gov

aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

Contents:

Twist on Town Line secession	cover
Curator's Corner	3
9th Annual Bake Sale	3
President's Message	4
Annual Meeting/Election of Officers	4
Dues are Payable	4
Village of Alden Sesquicentennial	5
Donations and Renewals	5
Thank You	5
Building Closure	5
Obituary	5
Will You Help?	5
Society items at Alden Pharmacy	5
Winter Programs	6
Fall Programs Reviewed	6
Meeting Information/Committees	7
Membership Form	7
Business members	back
Mission Statement	back

2019 Officers

President

Christopher Gust

Vice President

Elouise DeFilippo

Secretary

Jennifer Strong

Treasurer

Clarke Burke

2019 Trustees

Conrad Borucki

Doris Brade

Clarke Burke

Jane Burke

Elouise DeFilippo

Gilbert Dussault

Susanne Galbraith

Christopher Gust

Larry Kooser

Jennifer Strong

Lynda Tucker

Archivist

Town and Village Historian

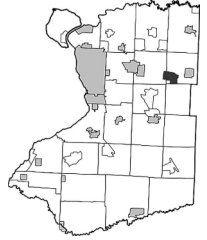
Karen Muchow

Curator

Kris Rogers

A Different Twist on Town Line's Secession

It is common to receive at least one request for information about Town Line's Secession each month. A request from two Geneseo students doing a history project came in early October, along with a request from a correspondent for History.com, the website for the History Channel. He had run across the Town Line story while researching the 1866 Fenian Raids, when a band of Civil War veterans tried to free Ireland by invading Canada and holding it hostage. The correspondent sent copies of the newspaper articles he had found.

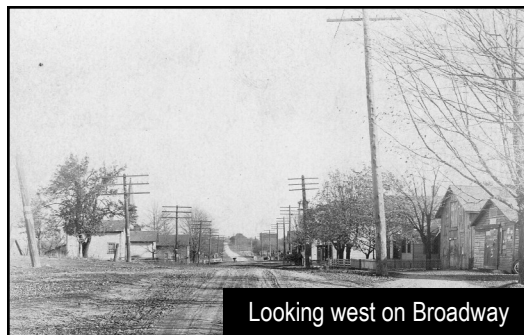


The first article, dated February 11, 1861, is from *The Buffalo Commercial*:

"TREASON IN OUR MIDST"-- We have received a circular calling a meeting of the inhabitants of the city of Town Line, on the 4th of March next, to which we seriously invite the attention of our District U.S. Judge, U.S. Marshal, Collector, Post Master and all others in authority. The circular in question sets forth that at a meeting of the Common Council of Town Line, a resolution was introduced by Mayor Neel, urging absolute secession and the formation of an Independent government by Town Line on the 4th of March. A ticket for President and Vice President is also put in nomination, and names suggested for the Cabinet and Foreign Ministers of the same.

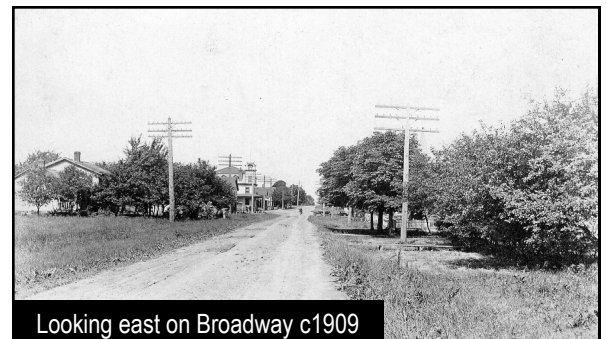
In order that there may be no mistake as to the enormous treason contemplated we publish the entire resolution naming the boundaries of the seceded territory:

"Resolved, That in accordance with the usages heretofore established by other nations, it becomes necessary for us to establish a seat of government and define its limits, and as our city charter defines the following, we deem it sufficient for a Capitol of our *Confederacy*: "Commencing at the Town Line Corner House, and running east on Main Street to a Cider Mill, where a stake defines the eastern boundary; thence north from the Town Line Corner House to Rowley's Avenue; thence westerly along Rowley's Avenue to *Exchange*; thence south on a line 36 30 crossing Main street to a stake at the



Looking west on Broadway

corner of First street; thence easterly along First street to Wood Pecker Avenue to the *rendezvous* of our President, (Col. Leroy L. Tiffany); thence at a sharp turn at right angles to a stake at the corner of lot owned by our Vice President, (Hon. Bradford P. Kidder); thence north on Wood Pecker Avenue to the Town Line Corner House, owned and commanded in person by Major Wilhelm." And resolved also, that we unanimously concur adopting the foregoing as the boundaries of our *future Republic*."



Looking east on Broadway c1909

The circular has the names of the mayor and Common Council of the city of Town Line, and is in every particular an authentic document—the copy of which was found in the pocket of an estray Town Liner who had evidently taken too much lager on Saturday night, and had sought lodgings in the City Hotel, at the corner of Mohawk and Pearl streets. A telegram has been sent to President BUCHANAN.

Looking north down Townline Road (Woodpecker Ave.?) from the front of Kidder Homestead



The second, dated a day later, February 12, 1861, is from the *Buffalo Courier*:

POLITICS AT TOWN LINE—Town Line, a place about twenty miles out on the railroad, and comprising of one dwelling house and two woodsheds, has perpetuated a very large *goak*, considering its (Town Line's) size. We have received a paper, in which is published to the world, Town Line's ordinance of secession. Not only has Town Line "seseshed," and "disuned," she has organized a home government and appointed ministers to foreign countries, Joseph Meyer, of Buffalo, being named as Minister to China. It may be necessary to add that "this is a goak."

What is a *goak*? A joke.



It is important to note the dates of the articles. South Carolina had seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860. Six other states had seceded by February 1, 1861—Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas. The seceded states met February 4, 1861 in Montgomery, Alabama to begin the task of putting together a new government. The "Common Council" of Town Line had met around this same time. The proposed meeting in Town Line to vote on the proposal to form their own Republic was March 4th—the date of Abraham Lincoln's first inauguration.

And the men mentioned in the first article? Mayor Neel was Robert Neal, a merchant on the Lancaster side of Town Line. Leroy Tiffany was a lawyer. Bradford Kidder was a wealthy farmer, and John N. Wilhelm was the proprietor

of the Town Line Corner House that stood on the southeast corner of Townline Road and what is now Broadway. Were they the "Common Council"?

It would seem by the information given in these two articles, that the vote to secede was not to join the Confederate States of America, but to form their own Republic with the crossroads hamlet as its capital. The boundaries of the new Republic would be: on the east, not known where the cider mill was; north to Rowley's Avenue which would be Erie Street, as Abner Rowley was the station agent for the Town Line station at Erie St. and Ransom Road. The present Ransom Road may be the line 36 30, First Street may be William Kidder Road and Wood Pecker Avenue would be Townline Road (alas, the roads are not named on the 1866 Atlas map).



Originally the Willis house, home of Mary Willis Webster & John Webster

This prompted a new look at the newspaper articles of the 1946 Return to the Union in our collection. One headline reads "1861 Secession Vote of Town Line Laid to Draft Dodgers". Grace Bissell, who had in her possession many of the early records of Lancaster, is quoted as saying, "And you can't find any mention of Town Line being affiliated with the Confederacy in any of them. It's true that some of the men did get together and vote to secede, but it wasn't out of sympathy with the South. They just didn't want to be drafted into the Union Army." She went on to assert that the whole celebration, based on the premise that Town Line was "the last stronghold of the Confederacy," was a farce. When Miss Bissell had contacted one of the committeemen earlier to explain that Town Line had never been affiliated with the Confederacy, he had asked her to "keep still" until after the re-unification ceremony.

Miss Grace Kidder, born in 1870 and niece of the aforementioned Bradford Kidder, termed the celebration a "disgrace". "We were all ashamed of the secession and it shouldn't have been publicized like this," she declared. "I think the whole thing was prompted by Mr. Neal, a Scotch-Irish merchant with several sons."

Edward Leininger, who grew up in Town Line, recalled that "his father told us there were a lot of draft dodgers here in those days, so that's probably the true reason they seceded."

Continued

That newspaper article ended with this: "The legend of Town Line is all based on tales told by older residents." There is no mention of the secession in the records of the Buffalo Historical Society." (nor in H. Perry Smith's 1894 History of the City of Buffalo and Erie County or Truman C. White's 1898 A Descriptive Work on Erie County New York, even though both have long chapters on the Civil War; *author's note*). Neither Alden nor Lancaster had a newspaper at the time—Alden in 1876 and Lancaster In 1878.

Did the men of Town Line vote to secede in 1861? Probably, yes. Did they vote to secede to join the newly formed Confederacy in the South? Probably, no. It seems most likely, according to the newspaper articles, that they jumped on the secession bandwagon with hopes of protecting their sons from conscription. If they were their own republic or confederacy (a group of united people) they then would not be under the laws of the United States.

You may read Christopher Klein's article at <https://www.history.com/news/civil-war-secession-new-york-town>. The article is titled "This New York Village Seceded from the Union...for 85 Years", and is dated October 18, 2018.

File photos and article submitted by Archivist Karen Muchow

Curator's Corner

We acquired several new items recently. Those are as follows:

- Painting of Walden Roberts' Feed Mill, donated by a former owner.
- A leather softball and a leather baseball from Ruth Davis
- \$5 dime collector and cufflinks made from pennies, donated by Roberta Vincent
- A 1940's telephone and an early electric mixer-I purchased these at auction
- Decorative Christmas carving donated by the Staebell family. I had this professionally framed and it is stunning.

Over the winter, the Collections committee and I will be inventorying our clothing collection that is located in the closet behind the Military and Organization rooms. Please let that serve as a reminder to all, that a clothing donation must have an Alden connection and be pre-approved by the curator. We have very little storage space for additional clothing.



Submitted by Curator Kris Rogers

9th Annual Bake Sale/Fundraiser



Photo courtesy Christopher Gust

Our fundraising project this year on Saturday, December 1st was a huge success. With the sale of baked goods, monetary donations and even some pledged donations that we know are still coming--- we expect to once again surpass our budgetary expectations.

We are grateful to the community and our membership for supporting this important endeavor. We particularly appreciate the efforts of Bake Sale Chairperson, Sandy Dussault, the callers, building helpers, baked goods and monetary donors, and docents (tour guides) who made our success possible. The following are to be congratulated for the great effort.

Harriet Aldinger, Doug Becker, Rich Becker & Marie Shattuck, Carol & Conrad Borucki, Doris Brade, Sylvia & Florian Buczek, Carolyn Burger, Jane & Clarke Burke, Marlyn Casell, Debbie & Randy Crist, Catherine Cyrulik, Mary Czechowski, Darlene Dahl, Angelo Dalusio, Elli DeFilippo, Judy Downhower, Michelle Dussault, Sandy & Gil Dussault, Betty Eastwood, Ken Eicheldinger, Annette Fitscher, Joan Gadd, Sue Galbraith, Helen Giczowski, Dan Giras, Christopher Gust, Michelle & Keith Hoffman, Judy Hotchkin, Bonnie Hy, Kyle Kavanagh, Dick & Betty Kegler, Shirley & Larry Kocher, Wendy Koelbl, Marlene Kotlowski, Monica Kubiak, Laura Loehr, Ann & Carl Matthies, Helen Merle, Sheila Metzger, Ann Mosman, Laurie Moultrup, Judy O'Neill, Stephen Overton, Marge Pohl, Leita Reed, Barb Rice, Martha Roberts, Colleen Rogers, Kris Rogers, Margaret Rose, Karen & Rick Savage, Audrey Senecal, Antoinette Shriver, Beryl & Ed Small, Jennifer Strong, Lynda Tucker, Roberta Vincent. Anna Walters, Jean Weisbeck, Mary Ellen & Paul Werner, and Rhonda Wieder.



Submitted by Gil Dussault

Message from the President

At the Alden Historical Society's Trustee meeting of December 6th, I was given the honor of re-election as President of the Board of Trustees for a fourth term. I appreciate the faith the Board has in me to continue to lead our organization during the coming year. With the help of our Board, we will work towards fulfilling the Mission of the Historical Society; to protect, present and promote the history of the Town of Alden and its people.



I would like to use this column to give special recognition to our officers for their dedication and hard work. Society Vice President, Elli DeFilippo, has been of great help by exchanging ideas or offering suggestions that tap her experience and professionalism. Clarke Burke has been invaluable in his continued role as Society Treasurer. His attention to detail has allowed the Society to manage its funds efficiently from preparing our annual budget to tracking our spending and income on a month-to-month basis. We also thank Jennifer Strong for performing the role of Secretary in a very efficient manner.

Over the course of the past year, all of our trustees, our curator, our archivist and our volunteers have worked very hard on behalf of the Historical Society and should be recognized and thanked. Their numerous contributions include our monthly programs, maintenance and docents at our building, classes at the Henskee Road schoolhouse, our Erie County Fair display, the annual Bake Sale & Fund Appeal and the Grannytown Gazette.

Lastly, a special thank you is extended for the support the Society receives from the Town of Alden. Supervisor Rick Savage and Parks Department head Andy Sojka have been very responsive to any issues we have encountered with our building. We have enjoyed a great relationship with the Town and the Parks Department and we are very grateful.

In closing, I have been privileged to serve at the Society's president over the past three years. I have learned and continue to learn much and have been impressed by the dedication of our trustees and volunteers. I hope that we can continue to strengthen the Society's role as a cultural and educational institution within our great community. We look forward to an extra-busy 2019 as the Society participates in a number of events scheduled throughout the year to celebrate the Village of Alden's Sesquicentennial. I thank each and every person, couple, family or business that is a member of our Society. Your support allows us to continue to fulfill our mission.

All to best to everyone for 2019.

President Christopher Gust

Society Holds Annual Meeting & Elects Officers



The Alden Historical Society held its annual reorganization meeting of the Board of Trustees on December 6th. After welcoming returning directors Elouise DeFilippo, Sue Galbraith, Christopher Gust and Lynda Tucker, the Board elected officers for 2019. Re-elected were Christopher Gust as President, Elouise DeFilippo as Vice President, Clarke Burke as Treasurer and Jennifer Strong as Secretary. In addition, Kris Rogers accepted re-appointment as Curator and Karen Muchow accepted re-appointment as Archivist. Committees and chairpersons were also reset. The Board looks forward to working together throughout a busy 2019.

Photo and article submitted by Christopher Gust

Annual dues are payable by April 1

We value your membership in our Historical Society and we would like to thank you for your continued support. Your dues help to continue our mission of preserving Alden's rich history. Please remit your dues promptly.

If you have a new address or phone number, please notify us so we may keep our membership roster current. Thank you.





The Village of Alden will be celebrating its Sesquicentennial (150 yr anniversary) with a yearlong celebration. Here are just some of the activities planned for the first half of the year. There will also be commemorative items for sale. Keep up to date by following the posting of events on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/aldenvillagesesquicentennial/>

February 1 & 2 – Winterfest, February 14 – We Love Our Village Historical Society program, March 19-Vintage Bingo, March 23 – Movie Night, April 20 – Easter breakfast, egg hunt and parade, May 9 – time capsule burial, cake and ice cream celebration, dedication of Moses Fenner historical marker, June 13 – Historical program – Historic Route 20, June 15 – Black Water Day bus tours and so much more. Watch the next Gazette for the second half of activities. Hope to see you there.

Submitted by Sue Galbraith

Donations in Lieu of Dues

Sylvia and Florian Buczek

Couple Renewal

Marlene and Steve Kotlowski

Individual Renewal

Jean Weisbeck

Donations

Jean Weisbeck



Kudos to Larry Kocher and his building and maintenance crew for the building repairs, outside clean up and the beautifully lighted front of our building. The interior was also treated to seasonal decorations. Several other projects are in the works while our building is closed for its winter hiatus.



The Historical Society building will be closed for visits during January and February to protect our collection from the harsh winter weather. We will re-open March 3, 2019 with new displays. Please come and visit!

Condolences to the family of:

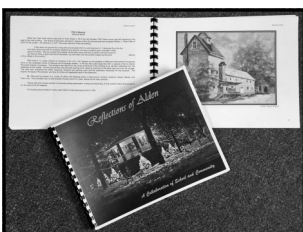
EDENHOFER - Ardith M. (nee Berger)

Passed peacefully November 2, 2018. Predeceased by her sisters, Oney Witt and Edyie Kiener. Survived by son, Tod (Kate); grandchildren, KC and Sara; nieces, Charris, Kyle, and Alissa; and nephews, Brandon and Hans. Cared for at the end by beloved friends, Matt, Virginia, and Mark .

Will You Help?

The Historical Society is looking for members who may be interested in assisting as volunteer docents when our building is open on the 1st & 3rd Sundays of the month and during special events. If you can help, please contact one of our Trustees, or call 937-3700, or email aldenhistsoc@gmail.com. Thank you!

Available at the Alden Pharmacy



The Alden Historical Society would like to thank the Alden Pharmacy for assisting us in the sale of Historical Society merchandise. With the Society building open on a limited basis, the Alden Pharmacy has graciously agreed to market local hometown-featured items for sale at their location. The Alden Pharmacy, and its predecessors, have been our local, neighborhood pharmacy at 13203 Broadway for over 100 years.



January 10, 2019 The History of Buffalo Aviation



Did you know that Buffalo was once the center of United States aviation? Join Explore Buffalo presenter Larry Mruck as he relates stories and factual information about Buffalo built planes, including over 10,000 WWII fighters at Bell Aircraft, and the people that influenced Buffalo aviation.

February 14, 2019 The Village Celebrates



Town and Village Historian, Karen Muchow, reviews the Village of Alden's history as it celebrates its Sesqui-centennial (150th) anniversary with year long events.

March 14, 2019 Crystal Beach



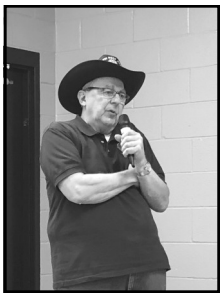
Granted there is Darien Lake, but for some of us there will never be an amusement park to rival Canada's Crystal Beach. Mr. Mark Janik will host this evening's nostalgic trip as we once more board the Canadiana and arrive at a land filled with magic and memories.

NOTE: Programs are cancelled when Alden Central School has closed for weather conditions.

Fall Programs



Western New York educator and historian, Greg Kinal, led members and guests through an extensive review of the pivotal Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, at the Oct. 11 Historical Society program. The Japanese planned the attack in three waves, but carried out only the first two waves, canceling the third, which left the US in a better position to rebuild following the attack. In all, America suffered 2,403 dead and 1,143 injured. Kinal shared that following the attack, Marshall Admiral Yamamoto is said to have declared, "I fear all we have done is to awaken a sleeping giant and fill him with a terrible resolve." On Dec. 8, 1941, the day after the attack, President Franklin Roosevelt asked Congress to declare war against the Empire of Japan.



Following the November 8 Alden Historical Society pot luck supper and annual meeting, presenter Charles Zoerb, an Alden resident and US Army veteran who served from 1965-67 during the Vietnam War, described his experiences printing counterfeit North Vietnamese currency during his years of service. Charles shared that he and his "fellow counterfeiters" printed millions of phony bills which were subsequently dropped by planes and helicopters onto North Vietnam with the dual goals of destroying the North Vietnamese economy and better enabling the capture and subsequent interrogation of infiltrating North Vietnamese carrying the fake currency.



Debra Hall Stonish, of Explore Buffalo, shared her research and recollections of shopping at Buffalo's former great retailers, at the December 13 Historical Society program. Debra's presentation informed the audience about the founding, the locations, the renovations, the special features, and the purchase and sale of the many stores she cited. She cited special events, such as AM&A's Christmas windows, discount basements, and Sattler's Santa parade. Following Debra's presentation, Alden Town and Village Historian and Historical Society Archivist Karen Muchow shared her research into former retail establishments in Alden. Karen began her presentation by referring to a display board she created to which she affixed ads from stores that previously served Alden residents.

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.....

Address.....

.....

Phone.....Email.....

Please make checks payable to Alden Historical Society

Mail to:

Lynda Tucker, Membership Secretary

Alden Historical Society

13213 Broadway

Alden, NY 14004

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

NOTE: Donations are not tax deductible

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

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

Publicity/Newsletter—Lynda Tucker - Editor, Clarke Burke, Elli 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

Century Homes



Although we accept information on any century house, we are now focusing on the 100+ yr old houses located in the town. If you are interested, please email us at: AldenHistSoc@gmail.com. We have Century House signs for sale for \$45. Sue Galbraith



BUSINESS MEMBERS OF THE ALDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

RESERVE GAS COMPANY, INC.
 Serving the Community Since 1937


13441 Railroad Street, PO Box 207
 Alden, NY 14004-0207
 Phone: 716-937-9484
 Fax: 716-937-9488

www.reservegascompany.com

Alden STATE BANK Member FDIC
 Serving the Community for over 100 Years



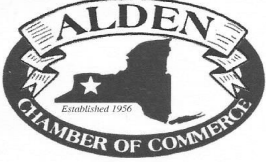
www.aldenstate.com



Elwood Jordans
 A G E N C Y

Brooks D. Bowman
 President

13361 Broadway
 Alden, NY 14004
 ph (716) 937-9196
 fax (716) 937-9552
 bbowman@elwoodjordans.com
 www.elwoodjordans.com



13500 Broadway
 Alden
 New York 14004

716-937-6177

www.aldenny.org
 email: secretary@aldenny.org
www.facebook.com/aldenchamber


LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL W. COLE, PLLC

Michael W. Cole
 Attorney and Counselor at Law

13349 Broadway Street
 Alden, New York 14004
 (716) 937-9150
 Fax (716) 937-9580
mcole@michaelcolelaw.com

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

Neill & Strong, Attorneys at Law
 13166 Main Street
 Village of Alden
 (716) 937-3353
www.neillstrong.com

13203 Broadway - Alden, NY 14004
 Phone: 716.937.9818
 AldenPharmacy@AldenRX.com
 www.AldenPharmacy.com

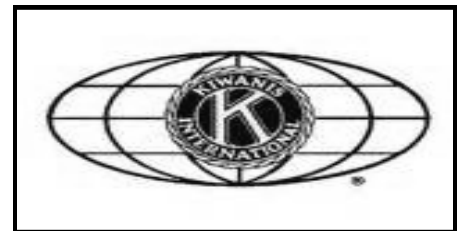
Alden PHARMACY



Thomas A. Steffan
 Attorney at Law

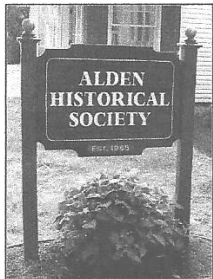
Cooke & Steffan, Attorneys

13132 Main Street
 Alden, NY 14004
 Ph: (716) 937-9111
 Fax: (716) 937-4508
 Email: tsteffan@cookeandsteffan.com

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
 13213 Broadway
 Alden, NY 14004

Find us on Facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety

*Chartered by the Board of Regents
 New York State Education Department*

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

We appreciate the support we receive from the Town of Alden.

Thank you.