



The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

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Mad Dog Summer

It was a different virus that was the scourge of the summer of 1899. This virus was the one that causes hydrophobia, more commonly called rabies. Rabid dogs were reported in Alden, Amherst, Clarence, Derby, East Aurora, Hamburg, Lancaster, Marilla, South Buffalo, South Wales, Tonawanda and Wheatfield. Horses and cows were bitten, some died. Dr. John Wende, a veterinary surgeon, his brother Dr. Ernest Wende, Health Commissioner (both born and raised in Millgrove), and Dr. William Kelly of the State Board of Veterinary Medical Experts were called in to investigate the apparent epidemic of rabies among dogs at Alden and East Aurora.



Three Alden men were attacked by a rabid dog, described as a black Newfoundland on July 15th and 16th. The first, John Getz, a section-hand on the Lehigh Valley Railroad, was attacked while walking from Wende Station to his home in Millgrove on Saturday evening July 15th. The dog grabbed and bit him near the shoulder as Getz tried to protect his face with his arm. He shoved the dog away and when the dog came back at him, Getz kicked him, but the dog again bit his arm. It was only the appearance of some smaller dogs attracted by the snarling and

growing that saved Getz from more injuries. He went to see Dr. Tyler in the morning after a painful night, and saw Dr. Bowman Sunday evening who dressed the wounds again. He went to see Dr. Ernest Wende in Buffalo on Wednesday when the arm was not getting any better.

Dr. Wende sent Getz to the hospital and made arrangements for him to be sent to the Pasteur Institute in New York City for treatment. He was accompanied to New York by Mr. Prince of the Superintendent of the Poor's office in Buffalo, as it was feared Getz might become violent on the train due to the rabies infection.

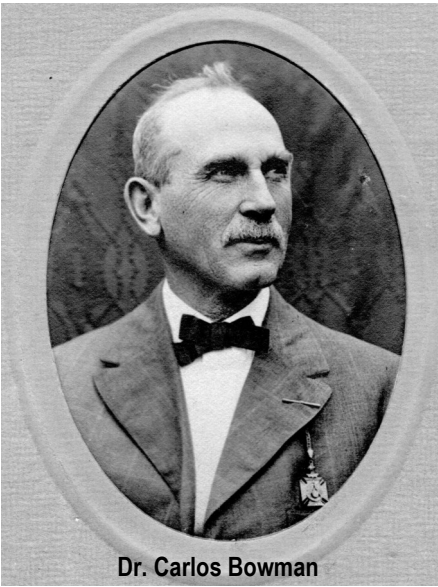


Dr. Ernest Wende

The second victim was Otto Siehl, a day laborer for the New York Central Railroad at Looneyville, who was on his way to work Sunday morning when the dog lunged at him. Siehl managed to throw the dog away from him, but in doing so, the dog managed to graze his arm with his teeth, leaving a deep scratch. Dr. Bowman took Mr. Siehl to Buffalo and arrangements were made to send him to New York.

continued

The dog continued on to Looneyville where it bit a young man, Samuel Walters, severely mangling his shoulder and arm. The injured man was not strong enough to throw the dog off, and before help could arrive was dragged to the ground by the dog. The dog then went after Railroad Station Agent Gould who was standing outside the station. Gould managed to run inside and slam the door shut. The dog, reeling from the impact with the door, took off down the street, bit Henry Erb's horse on the nose, and scattered men and boys, until someone got a shotgun and killed the animal.



Dr. Carlos Bowman

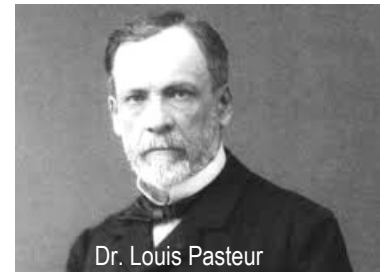
Samuel Walters was taken to Buffalo and sent to New York with Otto Siehl for treatment. Dr. Bowman accompanied them.

The dog belonged to George Cook of the village and had disappeared on Saturday afternoon. When it attacked Mr. Getz it was four miles from home. It is believed the dog bit at least 15 cows, 17 dogs and several horses on its travels to Wende Station south of Millgrove and then to Looneyville on Town Line Road. The horse bitten at Looneyville and a horse and cow belonging to Fred Vine of Wende Road were closely watched for signs of rabies. Vine's horse and cow died of rabies in August. Although nothing was reported, it can be assumed that Mr. Erb's horse also died. One of the dogs that attacked the mad dog and saved Mr. Getz's life, later showed symptoms of rabies and was killed by its owner.

Dr. Bowman, under direction of the Alden Health Board, took a tour of the "mad dog district" and killed six dogs: one at Alden Center, one at Wende Station, two at Looneyville and two in the village. The Village Board of Trustees, under advisement from the Board of Health, passed an ordinance requiring all dogs in the village to be kept chained or muzzled. This was later extended to all dogs in the town under order of the State Department of Agriculture.

The trio of Drs. John and Ernest Wende and Dr. William H. Kelly, toured the area on July 24th. Dr. Kelly said that he believed the rabies scare was confined to Erie County. He went on to say that if there was any evidence of rabies, and the animal had not already been killed, he would see that it was shot. He declared that, "We shall take steps to stamp out the rabies wherever we find it."

A letter sent from the New York Pasteur Institute on July 29th said that the Getz, Siehl and Walters would be ready to leave New York on August 5th and 6th. All three were enjoying good health, although John Getz's serious wounds would require him to remain in New York the extra day.



Dr. Louis Pasteur

Another virus, another scare—121 years ago.

Note: *Louis Pasteur developed the earliest effective vaccine against rabies that was first used to treat a human bite victim in 1885.*

Photos and article submitted by Karen Muchow

Century Homes



The Town of Alden will be celebrating its 200 year Anniversary in 2023. In preparation for the celebration, the Society is working on updating our Town Century House book. If you are the proud owner of a 100 year old (or more) home, please contact Sue Galbraith at mustangcov@aol.com for information and an application. There is no charge to be included in the book, and Century House signs are available for \$45.

Photo and article submitted by Sue Galbraith

Message from the President

When I sit down to write the President’s Message for the Grannytown Gazette, I usually look back to what I wrote for this column one year ago. It gives perspective on where we were as an organization then and where we are now.

What a difference a year makes!

Who would have guessed that we would be in the midst of a world-wide pandemic, disrupting all elements of society as we know it, including the closure of our building and the cancellation of our programs and planned events. On behalf of our Trustees, I sincerely hope that all our members have stayed safe and healthy over the past few months. As our region slowly reopens, we anxiously anticipate the day when we can open our building and share our collection again with you, our valued members, and with the public.



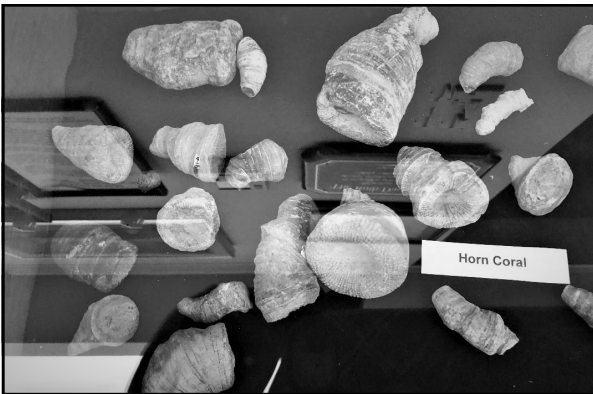
In the meantime, we invite you to stay engaged with us through our Facebook page, where we have posted photos of items from our collection, video tours of the first and second floors of our building and vintage yearbook photos. Be sure to also check out Historian Karen Muchow’s excellent series of weekly articles in the Alden Advertiser.

Last, we sincerely thank you for your support over the past few months. Despite the pandemic and economic uncertainty, our membership dues and donations have met or exceeded where we were one year ago. We promise to continue our mission to protect, present and promote the history of Alden and its people. Best regards, stay safe and we look forward to seeing you again soon!

President Christopher Gust

Curator’s Corner

In the northeastern part of the Village of Alden lies Spring Creek which flows into Ellicott Creek along the Joe Panza Trail. The “Slate Banks” are part of the creek that cuts through a large bank of shale. Fossils that are world famous are found in this bank which is



roughly behind The Dollar General Store. Among these fossils are gastropods, pelecypods and cephalopods with trilobites being of special interest. A shallow sea covered the area about 350 million years ago. As these small animals died, they fell to the muddy bottom of the sea and were fossilized.

Many of the fossils are preserved in pyrite (fool’s gold). The most important aspect of the Spring Creek fossils is that about 95% of the pyrite encased trilobites are enrolled, meaning that they were rolled up in response to danger, similar to today’s “pill bugs” when threatened. This is unparalleled elsewhere in the world.

On a visit to The Natural History Museum in NYC, I saw examples of trilobites found in Alden in their fossil display. I was both surprised and proud to see this.

Our collection includes many of these fossils to view both with a magnifying glass and by sight. When we do reopen the building, please check out our display.

Photos and article submitted by Kris Rogers

COVID-19 STATEMENT

The Alden Historical Society is monitoring the status of government advisories and mandates to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus (Coronavirus). The health and safety of our trustees, archivist, curator, volunteers and visitors are extremely important. With the closure of all Town of Alden buildings, including the historical building, it is unknown at press time when our building will be open to the public. Please like and follow our Facebook page for the latest updates. Stay safe and healthy.

Society Featured on "Small Talk with Jill"



We thank former Aldenite, Jill Morgan-Meek, for featuring the Alden Historical Society on the latest episode of her "Small Talk with Jill" YouTube channel. Jill recently interviewed Society Archivist and Alden Historian, Karen Muchow, for an interesting look at some of Alden's history and the role of the Historical Society. Be sure to check it out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxfSL9EIUuk>

Submitted by Christopher Gust

Yearbook Photos Posted to Facebook Page

While the Historical Society building has been closed, we have been using our Facebook page to post vintage Alden High School yearbook pictures and outtakes. The photos were gifted to the Society by Joe Anzalone, former Yearbook Advisor and Society docent until his passing in 2015. His intention was to give the photos away to those pictured. With the closure of our building, Society Trustee Sue Galbraith has been sorting through the collection of photos and selecting images for posting on our Facebook page. The posts have proven very popular and are often shared on the "Memories of Alden NY" page, leading to many comments and recollections of high school days gone by.



Submitted by Christopher Gust

Take a Virtual Tour

Curator Kris Rogers has recorded two videos of the Historical Building interior and they are viewable from our Facebook page. The first video features all the rooms downstairs and narrates the displays in the Davis room and parlor, along with many of the historical



items in our collection. Secondly, Kris visits the upstairs, where toys, farm equipment, general store merchandise, clothing, and many other items are displayed. There are mannequins in period dress and even a gas street lamp! Don't miss this new opportunity to 'visit' our building while we are unable to be open to the public.



Find the videos on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety/videos/533778933963152> and <https://www.facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety/videos/614734099136845>



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.

Individual Renewals

Carol Battista
 Marlyn Casell
 Helen Creighton
 Angelo Daluisio
 Kristen Dussault
 Michelle Dussault
 Amy Froebel
 Helen Giczkowski
 Wilbert Green
 Kyle Kavanagh
 Shirley Kocher
 Monica Kubiak
 Laura Loehr
 Sheila Metzger
 Beverly Nebrich
 Gloria Reich Nelson
 Edward Reich
 Audrey Senecal
 Marion Schmidt
 Florence Staples
 Lynda Tucker
 Anna Walters
 Rhonda Wieder
 Jean Weisbeck

Couple Renewals

Conrad & Carol Borucki
 Ron & Judy Bowman
 Richard & Connie DeVita
 Brian & June Dussault
 Gregory & Allegra Grenier
 Keith & Michelle Hoffman
 Mike & Diane Kingswell
 Marlene & Steve Kotlowski
 Ann & Carl Matthies
 Bob & Barb Rice
 Rick & Karen Savage

Family Renewals

Shannon & Herbert Schmidt
 Adam & Kristen Stoltman

Business Renewals

Alden Chamber of Commerce
 Alden Pharmacy
 Alden State Bank
 Cooke & Steffan, Attorneys
 Elwood-Jordans Agency
 Law Office of Mike Cole
 Neill & Strong, Attorneys

Donations in Lieu of Dues

Catherine Cyruk
 Josephine & Joseph Kipfer

Donations

Marlyn Casell
 Marlyn Casell in memory of Robert A Casell
 Marlyn Casell in honor of Mark & Diane Casell
 Betty Eastwood Trust
 Jean Weisbeck
 Margaret Young Williams

Bake Sale Donations

Marion Schmidt

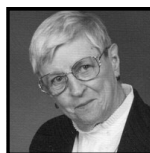


Tentative September Program—September 10, 2020



If meeting restrictions have been removed, we will hear Susan Eck speak about Women's Suffrage and the Women's Rights Movement. Notices will be printed in the Alden Advertiser and on our Alden Historical Society Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety/>) announcing the presentation. Stay tuned for more details!

Condolences



July 02, 1927 - May 19, 2020

Eastwood-Betty H. of Alden, NY May 19, 2020. Beloved wife of the late Lester Eastwood; sister of the late Evelyn Albard and Dorothy Myslinski; sister-in-law of Jean (James) Schneider, Doris Brade and Alan Eastwood; also survived by several nieces and nephews.

Congratulations!

The graduating class of 2020 missed out on many time honored senior traditions and activities, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A new tradition was created this year, when the graduates were celebrated with a grand parade of decorated vehicles in their honor. They will also have a traditional graduation ceremony June 26. Good luck with future plans!



Did You Know?

Alden once had a zoo, right in the village. The large white house on the southeast corner of Broadway and Mechanic Street was once the home of the Westcott family. The father, Frank Westcott, was the owner of a natural gas company, and the owner of the first black water bathhouse in Alden. His son, Henry, was an animal lover and decided to start a small zoo.

The lot to the east of their house, where now stands an apartment building, was vacant so Henry had a fence built and used the large barn to the rear of the lot to house a white tail deer, a bob cat, a panther, and several small animals.



It is said that the deer got out once and they had quite a time catching it. Then someone started a story that the panther had also escaped, and for a while all the small children in the village were kept indoors. It was shortly thereafter that the zoo went out of business.



From a May 1972 Facts and Foolishness Column by Ralph D. Stowell

Business Member Spotlight



We are very grateful for our business members whose dues help us carry on the activities of the Historical Society. We would like to “shine the spotlight” on one in each issue. **Alden Pharmacy** is the honored business for this issue.

Its beginnings were in an addition to the Davidson and Yager General Store, located next to the former Methodist Church. The Pharmacist, Howard Wright, then purchased the empty lot at the corner of Exchange Street and Main Street (Broadway) and had Alden architect, Herbert Swain, design a modern drug store to be erected.

By 1915, Wright's Pharmacy was in business in the new store. Wright's intention had been to use what is now the gift department as the Alden Post Office, but a woman contacted the US Post Office Department, complaining that there was gambling going on in the Pharmacy, so a post office should not be in the building. The “gambling” was a cigar wheel, in which a gentleman would insert a nickel, spin the wheel and see how many cigars he would get. Wright then used that space for his Ford Agency until 1916, when the newly formed Alden State Bank moved in.

The Bank occupied the space until 1925, when they moved into their new building at 13200 Broadway (now the Alden Advertiser). In 1926, the cigar wheel was put in storage and the Post Office moved in, staying there until 1970 when a new building was constructed for them.

Ralph D. Stowell, who had worked for Howard Wright, bought the building in 1920, and formed a partnership with his son Richard in 1946. Ralph retired in 1960, and Richard operated the pharmacy until he retired in 1985. In 1971, there was a complete remodeling of the building. Gone were the moose heads from Ralph's moose hunting trips, the terrazzo floors and the soda fountain.

The pharmacy business was purchased by Ronald Smith. After his death in 2012, his daughter Kara took over the pharmacy and continues to operate it today.



Article by Karen Muchow
Archived Historical Society photo
Aldenpharmacy.com photo

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 392-4295.

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, Renée Nelson, Kris Rogers

Publicity/Newsletter—Lynda Tucker - Editor, Clarke Burke, Elli De-Filippo, Gilbert Dussault, Susanne Galbraith, Christopher Gust, Carl Matthies, Renée Nelson

Program/Refreshments— Conrad and Carol Borucki, Sandy Dussault

Building and Grounds—Larry Kocher, Conrad Borucki, Christopher Gust

Fundraising—Gilbert Dussault, Jane and Clarke Burke

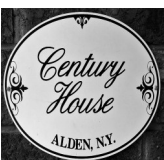
Nominating—Jane Burke, Elouise DeFilippo

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

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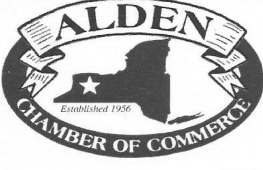


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President

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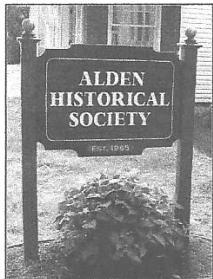
EAST TOWN DENTAL

Chad Froebel, DDS

12763 Broadway • Alden, NY 14004
(716) 902-6402
www.EastTownDentalAlden.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*

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

Thank you.