



# The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

716-937-3700

[www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org)

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### 2022 Officers

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Elli DeFilippo

**Treasurer**  
Sue DeWitt

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Gregory Kent  
Renée Nelson  
Jennifer Strong  
Lynda Tucker

**Archivist**  
**Town and Village Historian**  
Karen Muchow

**Curator**  
Kris Rogers

**Historical Society Historian**

## Gypsies In Alden?

The late Larry Kocher introduced me to the online site Newspapers.com. He had used it when working on the Kocher genealogy, and I have found it invaluable in my research into happenings and events in Alden over the years. It was during one of my Alden searches that I came across this rather sad article from the March 31, 1915, issue of the *Buffalo Evening News*:

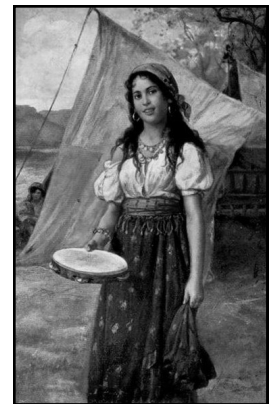
### Baby Gypsy Dies of Exposure; Women Are in Sad Plight

ALDEN, March 31—(Special).—Nicholas Steve, son of George Steve, one of a band of Brazilian gypsies, in camp a mile and a half from here, died from pneumonia and exposure. The child was four years old and was brought to Alden for burial by Undertaker A.E. Frantz. The interment was in the Alden cemetery.

The band was overtaken by a storm and the women are in a pitiful condition. Women of Alden contributed clothes and did what they could for their relief.

Little Nicholas's death certificate is in the file in the Town Clerk's office, but no place of burial is listed. My assumption is that it was most likely the Alden Town Cemetery on Sandridge Rd. and Nicholas lies in an unmarked grave.

What is remarkable (but maybe not for Alden) is the response of the women of Alden to the plight of the gypsy women. This was not the usual way gypsies were treated.



Gypsies are an ethnic group of people called Roma that originated in India and then spread throughout Europe around 1,500 years ago. In fact, the term Gypsy is considered derogatory. Think of the term "gyp" when applied to a person's handling of a transaction.

The Roma have been discriminated in Europe for centuries where they were portrayed as cunning outsiders who stole from local residents before moving on to the next town. Their itinerant lifestyle was looked upon with scorn. That discrimination continued when the Roma emigrated to the United States around 1860.

The newspapers of the late 1800s and early 1900s are filled with articles telling of communities driving the gypsies away. One article tells of a band of gypsies from New York on its way to Chicago who set up camp near North Tonawanda and was driven out of the camp by the police on Christmas Eve into Erie County. There they settled near Buffalo where their tents were demolished by blizzard winds, so the entire band of thirty-two-- 6 men, 5 women and 21 children-- plus 16 horses lived in one tent.

*continued*

Besides the unsanitary conditions of their camps that caused concern for communities were the instances of alleged thievery, including the kidnapping of children. The gypsies did make money by buying and selling and trading horses, and by “telling fortunes”. This enabled them to travel around the country, living outdoors during the warm months, and in cities during winter. In time, their brightly decorated wagons gave way to automobiles.

And now a personal note. My grandmother died following childbirth when my mother was only three. The baby, named Bertha after her mother, was adopted by Fred and Mary Zoeller of Millgrove. Mary was my mother’s aunt. Another aunt and her husband, Laura and Ernest Siehl, took my mother to raise, but my grandfather refused to let them adopt her. The older four siblings stayed with their father in Buffalo.

My mother was raised on the Siehl farm on Siehl Road in Crittenden. When she was six, she began school in the red brick schoolhouse on Crittenden Rd. in the hamlet. In the winter her uncle took her to school and back on the bobsled, but in the spring and early summer she walked home after school, about a mile and a half.



The following incident happened sometime between 1915 and the Siehl’s move to the Milliman house in the village in August 1919. My mother was on her way home from school one day when two cars of gypsies pulled alongside on the road. She was near the Crittenden Creamery (on the present Stone property) so ran inside, and the owner, Mr. Smith, hid her in his office. Several of the gypsies came in and looked all around, and when they couldn’t find her, they left and drove away. She was scared to death, but Mr. Smith talked to her and telephoned the farm. Her uncle came to pick her up. Writing about this incident at age 68, she said, “I have never forgotten that experience.”

Were the gypsies really going to kidnap her? She and Mr. Smith thought so, and acted accordingly. Were gypsies given a bad rap like so many other immigrant groups, or were the allegations against them true? Many unanswered questions.

At least in Alden, little Nicholas Steve was given a proper burial and the women of his camp were treated kindly by the women of Alden.

*Karen Muchow*

## *Curator’s Corner*

Once a year the Alden Historical Society displays a rare and unusual item from our collection. The 19<sup>th</sup> century German carousel was donated to the Society by the Marjorie Rohl family in 1989. Marjorie was a home economics teacher at Alden Central High School. Her mother-in-law Mabel Rohl, was given the carousel as a child by her uncle. It is believed that the toy was purchased at S.O. Barnum and Sons in Buffalo. There



are five dolls included in the carousel that are dressed as soldiers with metal epaulettes and swords.

Each soldier rides in a carriage made of wood. The sides are cut into a general horse shape and covered with decoupage carousel horses. The base contains a music box. Playing the music box allows the entire carousel to turn quite rapidly.

The Rohl family brought the toy out only at Christmastime. It is quite large when set up and would have taken up a lot of space in a small living room. Because it was only used once a year, the toy has remained in fairly good condition. In 2002-2003 the toy was cleaned and repaired by the Art Conservation Department of the State University College at Buffalo. The department packed the carousel in archival boxes to protect them.



It is my hope that you were able to see the carousel at the Heritage Center on December 19<sup>th</sup>. This treasure is now packed away until next year. Happy New Year to you all.

*Kris Rogers*

Information from Town and Village Historian, Karen Muchow

## *Message from the President*

I hope all our members and supporters had a pleasant Holiday Season and I wish everyone all the best for the New Year. As we wrap up 2021, it's certainly disappointing that the continuing pandemic and the emergence of the Delta Variant prevented life from returning to pre-pandemic normalcy. Your Alden Historical Society did its best to fulfill our mission to preserve, present and promote the history of the Town of Alden and its people through another challenging year. We were happy to have the Heritage Center open from May through the end of the year and welcomed many new visitors, some discovering us for the first time through our participation in the Erie County Heritage Passport. We had the Henskee Schoolhouse open for visitors for the first time in two years, hosted a historical walk through the Alden Evergreen Cemetery and celebrated the Holiday Season with a Christmas Open House.



Since our last edition of the Grannytown Gazette, our longtime trustee and friend, Clarke Burke, lost his battle with cancer at the end of October. Clarke as Society Treasurer kept meticulous financial records for us over the past several years. His passing left a large void for the Society to fill. I will miss our conversations about baseball.... Additionally, Conrad Borucki left our Board of Trustees to concentrate on family and other pursuits. Conrad spearheaded our Programs and lent his artistic talents to our successful Erie County Fair displays over the years. The Society thanks Conrad and wife Carol for their service to the Society and wish them well.

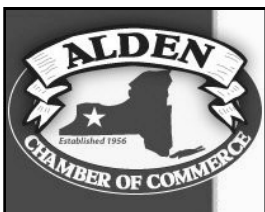
As we say goodbye, we say hello to our new trustees, Sue DeWitt and Greg Kent. With our election of officers in November, Sue agreed to assume the Treasurer duties and we look forward to Sue's and Greg's contributions over the next year.

Projects for the Society in 2022 include a comprehensive review of our constitution and bylaws, which began two months ago, with several amendments being considered for approval by our membership. New historical markers to be placed at locations in the Village and the Town are being worked on. We also look forward to participating in the Town Bicentennial celebration.

In the meantime, during these challenging times, we will continue to bring awareness of the Society's role as a cultural and educational institution within our great community. I thank every person, couple, family or business that is a member of our Society. Your unwavering and generous support allows us to continue to fulfill our mission. Be well and stay safe.

*Christopher Gust*

## *Spotlight on A Business Member...Alden Chamber of Commerce, Inc.*



The Alden Chamber of Commerce was organized to actively support business, industry, institutions, organizations and individuals in an effort to enhance the quality of life for the residents of the Village and Town of Alden.

Formed in 1956, the Alden Chamber of Commerce originally sought out doctors for the community and established medical services for the Town. The Industrial Park was purchased and started by the Chamber for new businesses to come to the community. They initiated and worked to get the Alden Medical Center and purchased the original Christmas decorations in the Village.

Over the past 65 years, the Chamber has supported numerous community events and developed programs to support and develop business in Alden, such as: the Taste of Alden, Wine tasting (with portion of proceeds to benefit a non-profit), Citizen/Business of the Year, awarding two scholarships (to two Alden graduates), produced last two Alden Phone Books, yearly Christmas ornaments and residential and business lighting contest, Christmas in the Park and the Farmers' Market.

The Chamber is also a member of the Alden Economic Development Committee, and is the only Chamber to offer a matching next level grant opportunity to members. It also offers newspaper inserts at a decreased cost, social media re-posts, You Tube videos, business spotlights, and Love our Local and Hello Alden Facebook campaigns.

*Sue Galbraith*

## *Christmas Open House*

After determining that it would be potentially unsafe to hold our annual Bake Sale out of concern for the health of our visitors and volunteers, the Society celebrated the Holiday Season by hosting a Christmas Open House on Sunday, December 19th at the Heritage Center. Our beautifully restored 19th century toy carousel was on display for guests to view. The Heritage Center was adorned with vintage Christmas decorations from our collection, including Christmas post cards, Santas, a Christmas tree with candles in our Victorian parlor, and Santa's workshop in miniature. Town & Village Historian, Karen Muchow, was in attendance also to answer questions. Goodie bags with a special holiday treat were available for all guests. While attendance was light, it was nice to have the Heritage Center decorated for the Holidays after being closed last year. We thank everyone who stopped by.



*Christopher Gust*

## *Election Results*

Ballots were tallied for the Alden Historical Society's annual election of trustees and the results are in. There were 66 ballots returned and Elli DeFilippo, Sue Galbraith, Christopher Gust and Lynda Tucker have all been re-elected for three year terms. Additionally, Sue DeWitt and Greg Kent were elected to fill the remaining terms of Larry Kocher and Gil Dussault. We thank everyone within our membership who participated & voted and congratulations to all of our incoming trustees.

*Christopher Gust*

## *Board Elects 2022 Officers and Resets Committees*



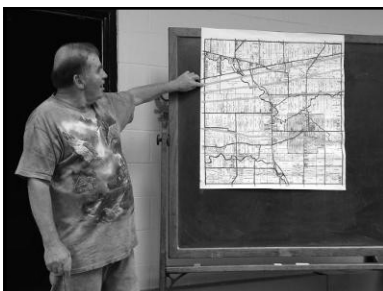
The Alden Historical Society held its annual reorganization meeting of the Board of Trustees on December 2nd and elected officers for 2022. Re-elected were Christopher Gust as President and Jane Burke, Vice President. Sue DeWitt was elected Treasurer and Elli DeFilippo, Secretary. In addition, Kris Rogers was re-appointed Curator and Karen Muchow was re-appointed Archivist. Committees and chairpersons were also reset. The Board looks forward to working together to fulfill the Society's mission to preserve, present and promote the history of the Town of Alden and its people.

*Christopher Gust*

## *Thank you, Conrad!*

In October, long-time Alden Historical Society trustee, Conrad Borucki, decided to step away from our Board. We thank Conrad for his many years of service to the Society, including chairing our Programs Committee for the last 10 years, and for lending his artistic talents on many occasions, particularly with our Erie County Fair displays and most recently, with the Alden Heritage Center sign that adorns our building. We thank Conrad and his wife, Carol, for their time and efforts dedicated to the Society. We hope to still see them around. 😊

*Christopher Gust*



*From The Alden Cook Book (c. 1905)*

**Fish Toast**



One cupful of any flaked cold fish. Heat in one cupful of cream, adding salt, butter and cayenne pepper. When hot pour over thin slices of buttered toast; garnish with eggs poached in milk instead of water. Nice for breakfast or luncheon.

Mrs. C.A. Tyler

**Macaroni and Cheese**

One-fourth pound of macaroni broken in small pieces. Pour over it three pints of boiling water. Let boil about 25 minutes or until soft. Drain in a colander, pour cold water over to cleanse and keep it from sticking together.



Cream Sauce—One and one-half cupfuls of hot milk, a tablespoon of butter and flour rubbed together and added to the milk, and one cupful of grated cheese. Pour into a pan alternating layers of macaroni and sauce, with crumbs over the top. Bake 25 minutes. Tomatoes can be used in place of cheese.

Mrs. S.M. Stowell

**Oil Dressing for Lobster or Shrimp Salad**



Beat the yolks of two eggs until very light, then add olive oil drop by drop, beating mixture until it is stiff. Add one and one-half teaspoons of salt, one-half teaspoon of mustard, a dash of red pepper and the juice of one lemon. After adding these beat oil into dressing until stiff. Be sure to have the oil ice cold. For either lobster or shrimp salad have as much celery as fish, and mix dressing with it just before salad is to be served.

Jennie Milliman Westcott

**Café Parfait**

Whip one pint of cream until stiff, add one cup of cold coffee, one cup of sugar, one-half pound of chopped nuts. Dissolve sugar in coffee before it is added in the cream, pack in a freezer and freeze as you do mousse. This will serve six persons, serve in sherbet or parfait glasses.



Jennie Milliman Westcott

*Karen Muchow*



*Alden  
Historical Society*  
**Established 1965**

### *Individual Renewal*

Suzanne Pilon

### *New Couple Members*

Ed and Beryl Small

### *New Business Member*

Terra et Spiritus

### *Donations*

Estate of Bill and Joan Gadd

Christian Koelbl III

Coleen Bontrager Miller

Suzanne Pilon

## *Memorial Donations*

The Dussault Family and Kyle Kavanagh In memory of Clarke Burke—a man of honor, integrity and dedication.

Christopher and Jennifer Strong Gust in memory of Clarke Burke and Larry Kocher

Carl and Ann Matthies in memory of Clarke Burke and Larry Kocher

Lynda Tucker in memory of Clarke Burke and Larry Kocher

## *Dear Century Home Owner*



We have sent out letters and applications to our Century House owners on: Broadway, Cary, Cayuga Creek, Crittenden, Four Rod, Exchange, Old Wende, Pohl and Zoeller Roads. This year we sent out letters to owners on: Genesee, Henskee, Kieffer, Lesswing, Main, North, North Millgrove, Peters Corners, Reinhardt, Rundal, South Newstead and Sullivan Roads. If you reside in a Century House in any of these locations and did not receive correspondence, please let us know.

Please contact Sue Galbraith at [mustangcov@aol.com](mailto:mustangcov@aol.com) for information and an application. There is no charge to be included in the book.

*Sue Galbraith*

## *"Movie Night" Program at the Community Center*



At press time, the Alden Historical Society plans on hosting a program for the public at the Alden Community Center on Thursday, January 13 at 7 pm. This will be our first program at the Community Center since March 2020. We will present "Movie Night", a screening of a 1994 video that detailed the history of the Village of Alden, produced for the Village's 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The video is well-done and contains footage and interviews with several prominent Aldenites, some who are no longer with us, and others who look quite a bit more youthful 28 years ago! After the viewing, we will open the floor for some shared memories and Q & A. Due to state and county mandates, masks will be required to be worn throughout the evening. See our Facebook page, web site and the Alden Advertiser for any updates.

## *Our Sympathy*



**Burke-Clarke** died Sunday, October 24, 2021 at his home in Alden, NY. Born in San Francisco and raised in Troy, NY, he was a graduate of Albany Academy and Hartwick College. Clarke worked for 40 years in claims for the NFTA retiring as manger in 2008. He was the husband of Jane (Heist) Burke; father of Erin (Scott) Redmond and Kerry (Vincent) O'Hara; grandfather of Ava and Vivienne O'Hara and Mikayla Redmond. Clarke was the brother of Jeanne (Norman) Fivel, Christine (Richard) Keller and the late Peter Burke; brother-in-law of Ann and Gregg Haisler. He was also survived by several nieces and nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Clarke loved baseball and collecting baseball cards. He was an avid reader, especially of American History. He loved his dogs and walking them in the woods. Clarke greatly enjoyed being treasurer of the Alden Historical Society and attending Society programs. But above all else was his love of family and friends.



**James B. Uebelhoer July 27, 1951 - November 16, 2021**

Uebelhoer-James B. of Pembroke, NY formerly of Alden, NY November 16, 2021. Beloved husband of Cherie (Bansmer) Uebelhoer; dear father of Katherine (Nathan) Fix, Cherie Ryan and Hollie Space; loving grandfather of Kali, Emilie, Allie, Hannah, Nathan, Jr., Paige and Waylon; brother of Joanne (Roger) Mueller, Mary (Walter) Czechowski, Melissa (Aaron) Machelski, Brenda (Nicholas) Langdon, Barbara Pieper and the late Charlene (Paul) Peterson, Robert A., Margaret (Jack) Ryan and Bernard (Gail) Uebelhoer; son-in-law of Tosca Selbert and the late Ronald Bishop; also survived by many nieces, nephews and his "fur baby" Reba.



## Alden Heritage Center

The **Alden Historical Society's** many exhibits are located in the village at the Alden Heritage Center, 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 Heritage Center** 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 Heritage Center** 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

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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, Susanne Galbraith, Jennifer Strong

**Collections**—Jane Burke, Sandy Dussault, Kyle Kavanagh, Karen Muchow, Renée Nelson, Kris Rogers

**Publicity/Newsletter**—Lynda Tucker - Editor, Elli DeFilippo, Susanne Galbraith, Christopher Gust, Carl Matthies, Renée Nelson

**Program/Refreshments**—Renée Nelson, Sandy Dussault, Elli DeFilippo, Greg Kent

**Audit**—Elli DeFilippo, Jennifer Strong, Christopher Gust, Carl Matthies

**Building and Grounds**—Christopher Gust, Conrad Borucki, Greg Kent, Jennifer Strong

**Fundraising**—Sue DeWitt, Jane Burke, Elli DeFilippo, Sandy Dussault

**Nominating**—Jane Burke, Elli DeFilippo, Sue Galbraith

**Budget**—Sue DeWitt, Christopher Gust

**Historical Marker/Signs**—Christopher Gust, Sue Galbraith, Karen Muchow, Jennifer Strong

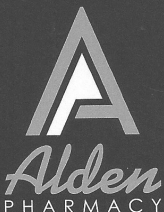
Members are welcome to serve on any of the committees. Contact us at 937-3700 or at [aldenhistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:aldenhistsoc@gmail.com).

## 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](mailto:AldenHistSoc@gmail.com). We have Century House signs for sale for \$47. Sue Galbraith






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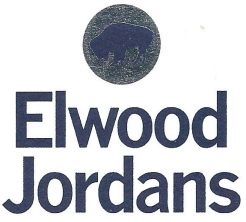
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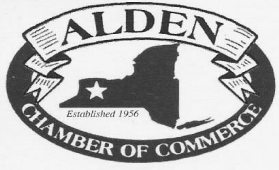
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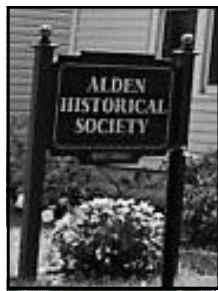
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### MISSION STATEMENT

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.



*Alden Historical Society*  
13213 Broadway  
Alden, NY 14004

*Find us on Facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety*

*and on the web at www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org*

*and by email at aldenhistoc@gmail.com*

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

*Thank you.*

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