



The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

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The Name Alden

As we begin the year-long celebration of our two hundred years as a town, it is, perhaps, a time to ponder upon our name. Alden, a name we share with at least twelve other communities in the United States:

- Alden, Colorado, a populated place in Weld Co..
- Alden, Illinois, in McHenry Co., population 1,402; named by early settlers for their hometown, Alden, NY.
- Alden, Iowa in Hardin Co.; population 763, named for founder Henry Alden; located on US Route 20.
- Alden, Kansas, city in Rice Co.; population 142; named for Alden Speare, an official of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad.
- Alden, Michigan, an unincorporated community in Helena Township, Antrim Co; named for William Alden Smith, an official with the Pere Marquette Railroad, later Senator from Michigan; home of Alden State Bank.
- Alden, Minnesota, a city in Freeborn Co.; population 661.
- Alden, New Jersey; a populated place within the Borough of Roselle Park in Union Co.
- Alden, North Dakota, a defunct township in Hettinger Co.; population 18 in 2000.
- Alden, Oklahoma, unincorporated community in Caddo Co; named for Alden Carpenter, son of the first store owners.
- Alden, Pennsylvania, an unincorporated community in Newport Township in Luzerne Co.
- Alden, Virginia, an unincorporated community in King George, Co.
- Alden, Wisconsin, a town in Polk Co.; population 2,786

Our Alden was the name suggested by Seth Estabrook, sometime prior to 1823 when Alden and Erie (Newstead) were separated from the Town of Clarence by an act of the New York Legislature. The name Alden is used in the legislation. Seth's mother-in-law was Hannah Alden Hebard, a lineal descendent of John Alden and Priscilla Mullins Alden. Seth suggested the name Alden in honor of his mother-in-law. (It was also his wife's middle name.)



continued

John Alden (c.1598-1687) was a crew member on the historic 1620 voyage of the *Mayflower* which brought the English settlers, known as Pilgrims, to the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. He was hired in Southampton, England, as the ship's cooper, responsible for maintaining the ship's barrels and kegs. One historian has said that due to Alden's skills as a barrel-maker and carpenter, the Pilgrims encouraged him to remain in America after the *Mayflower* returned to England, which he did. The Alden name was now in America.



A romanticized, early-20th-century depiction of John and Priscilla Alden's courtship

John married *Mayflower* passenger, Priscilla Mullins, whose entire family died during the first winter in Plymouth Colony. The marriage of the young couple became prominent in Victorian popular culture after the 1858 publication of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's fictitious narrative poem, *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

Alden was active in Plymouth Colony, was elected to the Governor's Council, was the last surviving signer of the Mayflower Compact and helped found the town of Duxbury.

John and Priscilla had 10 children, the first, Elizabeth, was born in Plymouth in 1623. Their third child, Joseph, was born about 1628 and married Mary Simmons. They had seven children. Joseph and Mary's son Joseph (1667-1747) married Hannah Durham and had ten children. Joseph and Hannah's son Daniel (1691-1767) married Abigail Shaw and had ten children. Their second oldest son, Daniel (1720-1790) married Jane Turner and their daughter, Hannah (1749-1830) married Moses Hebard (1745-1823), a widower with five children, December 7, 1786. This Hannah is *our* Hannah for whom the town was named.

When questioned about the name, Seth Estabrook said that the town was little and sweet, just like his mother-in-law.

The name Alden is of English origin, a version of Aldwyn, a very common name in the Middle Ages. It means "old, wise friend" or "friend of the past".

A side note for Little House on the Prairie fans: Rev. Alden was based on a real character. Although called Robert Alden on the TV show, his actual name was Edwin Hyde Alden. He was a Congregational minister and missionary. He was the son of Elam Alden of Vermont. Elam was the son of Daniel Alden, our Hannah's brother. That makes Hannah Alden Hebard Rev. Alden's great-aunt.

Karen Muchow



New Hours for the Heritage Center

We are pleased to announce new opening hours for the Alden Heritage Center. Starting April 2, 2022, the Heritage Center will be open to welcome visitors from 11 am to 1 pm on the first and third Saturday of each month. We hope that the change of hours from Sundays to Saturdays will allow more people the opportunity to stop by and view our collection while other activities, such as the Alden Farmers Market, are happening in the Village.

Message from the President

Hope springs eternal and with most pandemic-related restrictions ended, we look forward to April and new beginnings. We are excited by the change in opening hours for the Heritage Center from 1 to 3 pm Sundays to 11 am to 1 pm Saturdays. Especially during the football season, the Alden Village is pretty quiet on Sunday afternoons. The Village is much more alive on Saturdays with stores open, a busy Farmers Market, and activities at Town Park. We feel the change will give more opportunities for people to stop by and see our collection while in the Village.



We are also excited by the resumption of programs for the public at the Alden Community Center, even if the overhead projector is not working. We dipped our toes in the water in January by showing the 50-minute video that was produced in 1994 by the Society for the Village's 125th anniversary. The video covered the history of not only the Village but also the Town and gave us a nice tie-in to the Town's Bicentennial celebration that kicks off in a couple of months. Not knowing whether the program would attract 5 or 50, we were thrilled to have a full room. That gave us the green light to seek to establish a full program schedule that will carry us into the summer. Our new program director, Reneé Nelson, has lined up a nice variety of speakers, detailed elsewhere in this issue. We hope you take advantage of the opportunity to come out to learn and have a little fun.

With the Heritage Center open again, it brings to the forefront the need for more volunteers to help us welcome visitors and give tours. The number of Historical Society Trustees available to serve as docents is less than previous years so if you have interest in Alden history and would like to learn and share that knowledge with visitors, please contact us. We will train you and have our experienced docents mentor you. We look forward to sharing our valued role as a cultural and educational institution with more interested people. Thank you and be well.

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 already renewed, THANK YOU!

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

Bylaws Vote to be Held April 14

A committee of the Society's Board of Trustees has been working diligently over the past several months to revise our Constitution and Bylaws with clarifying language to better reflect the duties, definitions, guidelines and meetings of our Society. Copies of the proposed changes and additions were mailed to all members of the Society in early March. A vote of the general membership for the adoption of the new bylaws will be held at the Society's program at the Alden Community Center on Thursday, April 14. We need 10% of the membership to attend in order to hold the vote. We hope to see you there. Thank you!

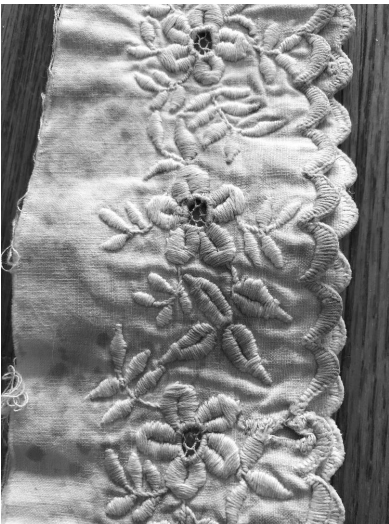


**YOUR
MEMBERSHIP
MATTERS**

THANK YOU!
We are grateful.

Curator's Corner

One of our early members was Arlotta Bass Koch. A small box of very old textiles was donated to the Society by her and her family. They are the subject of my article for this issue. Arlotta was a direct descendant of John Bass and Ruth Alden-daughter of John



Alden, of Pilgrim fame. The Bass Linens, as we have labeled them in the collection, contain the following: an apron, three cutwork sleeves, a man's coat lapel for a special occasion, a man's wedding handkerchief, an authentic Pilgrim cap, ten samples of hand sewing and a gauze undergarment from India that was brought back by a Bass sailor.

The hand sewing from the Jonathan Bass family shows examples of intricate embroidered decoration of clothing before any modern machine sewing was available. All these items were sewn by candlelight as the women's time allowed when daily chores were done. It seems to be an impossible art form from our earliest colonial days.



The man's coat lapel would be added to his best coat for a special occasion such as a wedding. I took a close-up of the detail so you can appreciate the amount of work involved to produce this kind of art. This dates from around 1776.

The authentic Pilgrim ladies cap was worn indoors or for going to the meeting house. (church) It was worn under the larger outer heavy type of bonnet. Ladies kept their heads covered in church or a prayer time at home. Note the intricate amount of embroidery.

The Society is lucky to own such historical items. Any member who would like to see this collection in person, may contact me for an appointment. *Kris Rogers*



Looking to learn more about local history?

What better way to learn more about the history of your community than by helping others learn about it? Such is the goal of the Historical Society trustees and officials who volunteer their time as docents at the Heritage Center during open house hours. By escorting visitors through the building and answering questions, docents become better acquainted with the history of Alden and its hamlets. Training for docents will be provided and self-guided tour instructions are also available to assist visitors.

The Historical Society is hoping to find volunteers willing to serve along with trustees at the open house hours the Society hosts at the Heritage Center, 13213 Broadway, on the **first and third Saturdays of the month from 11 am – 1 pm**. Alden Town and Village Historian Karen Muchow also plans to volunteer her time at the open hours on the first Saturday of each month.

If you are interested, please leave a phone message at (716) 937-3700 or send an email to www.aldenhistsoc@gmail.com



Elli DeFilippo

Legislator Todaro Visits the Heritage Center



On Thursday, January 27, we welcomed Erie County Legislator Frank Todaro and Assistant Nicole Meisenburg to the Alden Heritage Center for a tour; given by Town & Village Historian, Karen Muchow and Historical Society President, Christopher Gust. Legislator Todaro was particularly interested to hear about the Black Water Baths, Native American arrowheads from the Town Line area and other aspects of Alden's unique heritage and history. He presented to the Society a Proclamation by the County Legislature recognizing and honoring the Society for being a valuable historical resource for the community and for future generations.

Christopher Gust

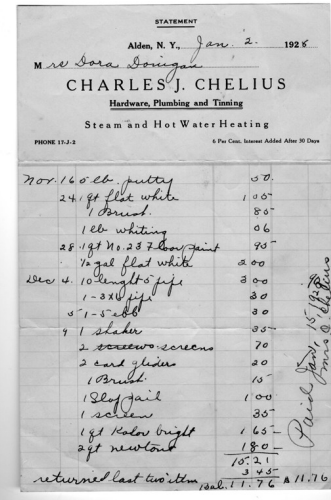
Photos supplied by Nicole Meisenburg



From the Past

Chelius Hardware Bill

The Donnigans of Mechanic Street must have been doing some remodeling or redecorating in November and December of 1924. This is a bill for items purchased at Charles Chelius Hardware, Plumbing and Tinning Store at what is now 13179 Broadway. A quart of paint for \$1.05?



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Alden
Historical Society
Established 1965

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Individual Renewals

Catherine Cyrulik
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Kristen Hudson
Kyle Kavanagh
Shirley Kocher
Sheila Metzger
Reneé Nelson

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Sue and Mike DeWitt
Brian and June Dussault
Antoinette & Matthew Shriver

Memorial Donations

Elli DeFilippo in memory of Clarke Burke
The Dussault Family in memory of June Beyer A Special Lady --- She Loved and was Loved

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April 14

Villager Herbert Schmidt will speak on local German history and traditions.



May 12

Erie County Historian Doug Kohler will speak on Erie County History, 'County's Top Ten History Events' with an emphasis on Alden for the county's bicentennial.



June 9

Karen Muchow will be speaking on the Grove. This is an outdoor event on the history of the Grove, now Firemen's Park (the triangular park with the bandstand in the center of the village).

Reneé Nelson

Return of Programs at Community Center a Success



The Historical Society held its first program at the Alden Community Center since March 2020 on January 13, presenting a screening of a 1994 video, "A Compiled History of Alden, New York", that was created for the Village's then 125th anniversary. The video covered the entire history of the Town and Village, including churches, schools, fire companies, hamlets, prominent residents, the Black Water Baths, business & industry and more. While the quality of the production was quite dated by today's standards, it was very well-received by the audience that filled the room. Thank you to all who attended. It was nice to see so many familiar faces and some new ones.

March Program Featured the Olympics

On Thursday, March 10, the Historical Society welcomed educator Theresa Wiater for a presentation on the Olympic Games. She gave a very engaging and interesting presentation on the history of the Ancient Olympics, the founder of the Modern Olympics, symbols and traditions of the Olympics, as well as information about the Olympic torch relay, the Olympic torches and ceremonies of the games. While attendance that evening was a little light, everyone enjoyed the fun and informative presentation.



Photos and articles Christopher Gust

Trivia

- Dolls are the oldest toys known to mankind.
- Modern playing cards date from around 1470.
- The first toothbrushes were probably twigs frayed at one end.
- A game played by the Iroquois Indians was named "lacrosse" by French settlers in North America. It literally means "hooked stick."
- First wristwatch, 1790.
- Crayons were invented by Nicholas Conte in 1790.

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 11 AM to 1 PM the first and third Saturday 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

Name.....

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Please make checks payable to Alden Historical Society

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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

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Nominating—Jane Burke, Elli DeFilippo, Sue Galbraith

Budget—Sue DeWitt, Christopher Gust

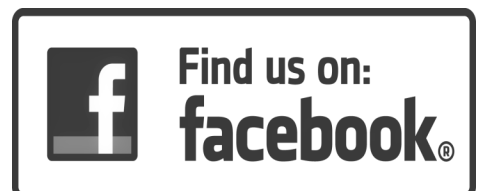
Historical Marker/Signs—Christopher Gust, Sue Galbraith, Karen Muchow, Jennifer Strong

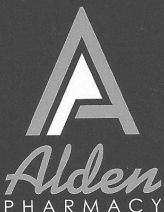
Members are welcome to serve on any of the committees. Contact us at 937-3700 or at aldenhistsoc@gmail.com.

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 \$47. Sue Galbraith






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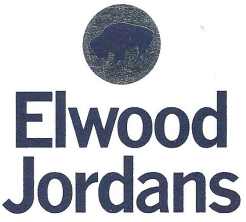
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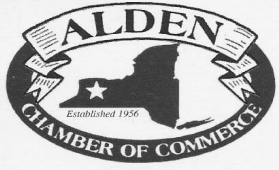
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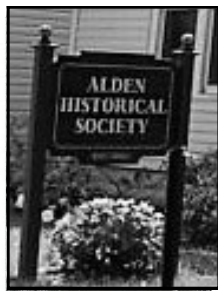
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MISSION STATEMENT

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.



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

*Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004*

Find us on Facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety

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

Thank you.

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