



# The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

716-937-3700

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### 2023 Officers

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Christopher Gust

#### Secretary

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#### Treasurer

Sue DeWitt

### 2023 Trustees

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#### Town and Village Historian

Karen Muchow

#### Curator

Kris Rogers

#### Historical Society Historian

## HAPPY NEW YEAR... 1923!!



As we close out the Town's Bicentennial Year, let's take a step back, to the Town's Centennial Year in 1923. What was going on in the world, in the US, in New York, and in Alden in 1923?

The population of the world reached 2.02 billion in 1923. In contrast, last week it was announced that the world's population had reached 8 billion. The "war to end all wars" had ended five years before; however, there were already rumblings of trouble again in Europe. In September, following a military coup in Spain, Miguel De Rivera took over setting up a dictatorship. In October, Turkey became a republic, bringing an end to the Ottoman Empire. Then in November, Adolf Hitler led the Nazi Party in a failed coup attempt in Germany. He was arrested, tried for treason, sentenced to five years in prison, but was released after only nine months. In Asia, the Great Kanto earthquake devastated Tokyo and Yokohama, killing over 100,000 people.

The President of the United States was Warren Harding. Upon word of his death on August 2, Vice President Calvin Coolidge, who was vacationing at home in Vermont, was administered the oath of office by his father who was a Justice of the Peace.

The US was in the early years of nationwide prohibition and in the decade known as the Roaring 20s and the Jazz Age. Some other happenings one hundred years ago were:

- Insulin became widely used as treatment for diabetes.
- Surgeons performed the first successful brain tumor operation.
- Transcontinental airmail service began.
- The first baseball game was played in Yankee Stadium—Yankees vs. Boston Sox; the Yankees won.
- The first radio broadcast of a hockey game was heard.
- The first sound short films were shown in New York City.
- Roy and Walt Disney founded the Disney Brothers Cartoon Studio.
- Time magazine published its first issue.
- Firestone produced its first rubber tire.
- Women's hems went up and waists went down.
- Top names for boys were John, Robert and William; for girls Mary, Dorothy and Helen.
- #1 songs were "Yes, We Have No Bananas", "Barney Google", and "Who's Sorry Now?".

*continued*

Alfred "Al" Smith, a Democrat, was Governor of New York in 1923. He served from 1918- 1920, was reelected in 1922, 1924 and 1926. After a failed campaign for President of the United States in 1928, Smith became president of Empire State, Inc., the corporation that built and operated the Empire State Building.

In Alden, Otto Wende was Town Supervisor and Isaac N. Chase was President of the Village Board of Trustees and of the Village. Mr. Chase was the station master of the Erie Railroad station. The Alden High School, in the 1914 building on Park Street, had an enrollment of 261 students, 97 of which were high school students. The rural schools accommodated students from first grade through eighth grade.

The Alden Veneer Manufacturing Co maker of bushel baskets, Bennett Manufacturing Co., Alden Broom Works and Pfeil's Beanery were employers, as were the three black water bathhouses. The Alden State Bank, the Alden Advertiser and Stowell's Pharmacy were fledging businesses. You could buy just about everything at Wahl Brothers store or T.B. Yaeger's store in the village or Charles Arndt's store in Town Line. You could buy fresh, salted and smoked meats at A. Simme and Sons village meat market or Kieffer's Bros. in Town Line, You could buy hardware from John R. Dean or Charles Chelius. Alden Motor Sales Corp. sold Fords and Eastwood Garage sold tires and tubes. Frank Young, Ernest Siehl and G.F. Ayers ran feed mills. Frank Bishop and Henry Urshel were blacksmiths. Black Water Baths patients and travelers could stay at Chernoff's Hotel, Hotel Egbert, or at Rist Hotel (Whistle Stop). Alger and Hart sold insurance, J.B. Miller had a florist shop. A.E. Frantz had a furniture and undertaking business. Dr. C.A. Randel was the local dentist and Doctors Clarence Tyler, Benjamin Gipple and Warren Gipple held office hours and made house calls.

Perhaps the biggest news from Alden involved the Erie County Penitentiary and Farm and the Erie County Home and Infirmary in Millgrove. State inspectors who visited the newly constructed penitentiary in August acclaimed it "the best and most complete penal institution in the state", and to their knowledge "the best in the country." Three items of contention did crop up during the year. In February, the Commissioner asked that homes be built for the Farm employees, stating that getting back and forth to Buffalo would be "practically impossible" considering their hours of work. In May, the Buffalo Street Commissioner wanted to have the prisoners feed the pigs on the Farm with city garbage. Supervisor Otto Wende vehemently opposed the idea. In December, the Buffalo Street Commissioner proposed a garbage incinerator be built on the Farm to handle the garbage from the east side of Buffalo.

Better news that year involved the construction of the Erie County Home and Infirmary. The lowest bidder was an Erie, PA firm with a bid almost \$400,000 under the \$1 million estimate of the architects. The Board of Supervisors stated that they would rather have a local firm, but if the Erie firm would consent to employ Erie County residents, they would be satisfied. Construction began that fall.

Wonder what will be the news from Alden in 2023. *Happy New Year!*

*Photo and article Karen Muchow*

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## *Curator's Corner*

When the Alden Advertiser recently moved out of the old bank building, hundreds of photographs were found. One of those photos is now upstairs in the hallway of the Heritage Center. It features a handsome Holstein bull named Rex Wanderbelle Ormsby Jane.



He is the world's highest record bull who lived on the Dold Brothers farm called Alden Crest. His stud fee was \$100. The farm was located where the Alden Plaza (The Post Office and Save A Lot) now stands and extended across the railroad down Exchange Street.

The Dold Brothers also owned a huge meat-packing plant in Buffalo and were the founders of the Alden State Bank. All of this took place in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

On a side note: In May of 1919, a cattle auction was held for a Holstein herd from Elma, NY. Mr. Dold paid \$22,000 for a yearling heifer and \$10,000 for a two-week female calf. \$22,000 in 1919 is the equivalent of \$378,974.80 today. \$10,000 would be \$172,261.27. A \$100 stud fee would be \$1722.61.

*Photo and article Kris Rogers*

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## *Hurry! Time is running out*

We have sent out letters and applications to eligible Century House Owners. We are hoping to include an upcoming program for Town Century House Owners, so don't miss out. If you reside in a Century House 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, and century house signs are available for \$55.00. Thank you



*Sue Galbraith*

### Message from the Past President

After seven years of serving as President of the Board of Trustees for the Alden Historical Society, I decided to step aside when the Board elected officers for 2023. It was time to give someone else the opportunity to share their leadership talents and bring a fresh perspective and new ideas as President. I am honored to have been able to serve the Society and follow my passion for history and love for my community. I have learned so much and believe I have grown as a person and a leader during this tenure. I thank all the wonderful trustees and volunteers I have had the distinction of working with over these few years, many whom I came to know as friends. Their talents were many and their contributions great. Some are no longer with us, and I miss them but appreciate the opportunity to have known them. I welcome my friend Sue Galbraith as President of the Society. Her experience and kindness suit her well for the role. I have agreed to remain as an officer by serving as Sue's Vice President. I will do my best to assist her (or stay out of her way). Thank you for your interest and support of the Society. The pleasure has been mine.



Christopher Gust

### Society Acquires Truman Square Sign



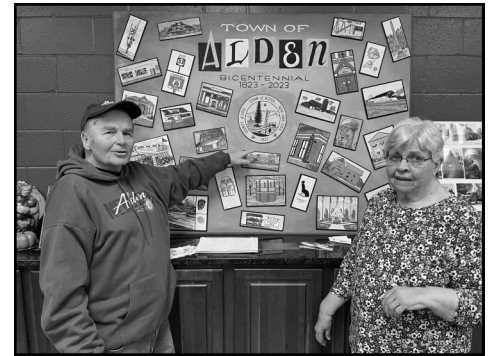
We are pleased to add to our collection at the Alden Heritage Center one of the Truman Square street signs that was placed at the intersection of Broadway and Town Line Road during the period when the Town Line hamlet "rejoined" the United States in 1946. Two signs were donated to the Society's collection by Bryce and Lisa Blair earlier this year and one of the signs was given to the Lancaster Historical Society for a future display that illustrates their half of our shared history of the Town Line hamlet.

Photo credit and article Christopher Gust

### Bicentennial Mural at Alden Historical Society

Conrad Borucki and Alden Town and Village Historian Karen Muchow presented the Alden Bicentennial Mural at the October 13 program meeting of the Alden Historical Society. Conrad created the mural, consisting of images he drew of iconic structures throughout the town of Alden. At the meeting, Conrad and Karen presented historical context for the mural images which Conrad had drawn on rectangular pieces of masonite or "blocks." The blocks were colored by attendees at the September 2022 Alden Lancaster Art Show who volunteered to color them. The mural is on display at the Alden Town Hall.

Photo credit Christopher Gust Article Elli DeFillippo



### Historical Society Board of Trustees Elects Officers

After serving seven years as President of the Alden Historical Society, Christopher Gust declined another term as President at the Board of Trustees meeting on December 8. The board thanks Christopher for his strong and effective leadership. The board elected Sue Galbraith as president. Christopher agreed to continue serving the organization by accepting the role of vice president. Sue DeWitt will continue serving as treasurer and Elli DeFillippo will continue in her role as secretary. Membership in the various standing committees was also updated.

Elli DeFillippo

\*\*\*\*\*  
★ We have many items to purchase, including throws with photos of Alden buildings; books, including *Reflections of Alden* and *150 Objects and Photos of the Village of Alden*; Alden Central School Yearbooks; 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary mugs and other items. Several of the Items are pictured on our website, [www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org).  
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## Alden Historical Society Annual Membership Meeting

The Alden Historical Society held its annual membership meeting on November 10 at which time reports for the year 2022 were reviewed and an election was held for three currently serving trustees, whose terms were expiring. The trustees: Jane Burke, Sue DeWitt, and Renée Nelson were re-elected. Two additional candidates for trustee: Carol Battista and Sarah Miller, were added to the board, bringing the total number of trustees back up to eleven, the maximum number allowed by the Society's Constitution. The Society sought to increase the number of trustees to elicit assistance with the various tasks trustees perform in maintaining the organization and its operations.

Elli DeFillippo

(Membership in the Society is required for eligibility to serve as a trustee. Board of Trustee meetings are held on the first Thursday of the even numbered months. The Society thanks the trustees for their service and appreciates their willingness to continue serving.)

## Town Line Program



Following the annual meeting, the Society hosted a presentation by Town Line native Michael Weber, who shared his knowledge and family history related to the Town Line reunion with the United States in 1946.

Michael shared a ten-minute film of the event, recorded by his uncle. Also present at Michael's presentation were Dick Young and Claudia Marx (Michael's aunt), who were present at the 1946 event.

Photo Christopher Gust, article Elli DeFillippo



## Introducing our newest Trustees



**Carol Battista** has lived in Alden for 25 years and is the proud Mother of Nicholas (Math Professor) and Christina (Mathematician/Scientist). Though she shares a love **for** Math with her kids, History has always been her favorite subject. She hopes to encourage others to love History and plans to become more heavily involved in our Historical Society to pursue this goal. Carol has recently retired from Greenfields Health & Rehab and is now enjoying volunteering for Hospice and also helping build beds for children in need at "Sleep in Heavenly Peace". Her hobbies include walking, gardening, biking, kayaking (almost any outside activity), reading, and traveling.



Hello! My name is **Sarah Miller**. I am a 33 year old happily married wife to my husband Brian and a proud mother of 2 wonderful children, Anthony & Paige. I am also a fur mom to our chocolate Lab Cj, and our yellow lab, Cooper. I currently serve our community as Deputy Town Supervisor, after working 2 years in the Alden Town Court. I have always had a deep passion for anything Historical and antique. People often tell me "I have an old soul". My favorite part of Aldens history is of course the black water baths. As a holistic healing believer myself, I wish I could have experienced the rich minerals and benefits of the black water baths for myself! I look forward to getting more involved with the Alden Historical Society.



## *Society Holds Christmas Open House*



We thank everyone who stopped by our Christmas Open House on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Many picked up a copy of the new Town of Alden Bicentennial History book, "Town of Alden, NY - A History", and have their copy signed by the author, Alden Historian Karen Muchow. The Heritage Center featured several displays of vintage Christmas ornaments and decorations and included a German inspired decorated tree in the parlor. We enjoyed seeing many familiar faces and welcomed several new visitors. St. Nicholas was also present to greet guests.



*Photos and article Christopher Gust*

## *Alden Historical Society Hosts German Christmas Traditions*



At its December 8 program, the Alden Historical Society hosted guest speakers Carolina Jackson and Elli DeFilippo who shared their knowledge of German Christmas traditions. Some traditional Christmas season decorations were displayed, German holiday treats were served, and German Christmas carols were sung.



*Photo credit Carol Battista article Elli DeFilippo*

## *Society Wins Chamber Holiday Lighting Contest*



A pleasant surprise for the Alden Heritage Center to be named the winner of the Alden Chamber Commerce's 2022 Residential and Business Lighting contest in the Business category. Many thanks to Trustees Sue DeWitt and Chris Gust and Sue's husband, Mike, for stringing the outdoor lights and red bows to give the Heritage Center a festive look.

*Photo credit Alden Chamber of Commerce Article Christopher Gust*

## *Winter Programs*

**January 12, 2023— with Mark Casell** A bicentennial look at the Alden North Woods and Slate Banks, from trilobites to more recent Aldenites we will look at the past, present and future of the North Woods, highlighting the unique area as it relates to the fabric of the community and its important aquifer protection. Come and explore millions of years of history and share some of your experiences.

**February 9, 2023 — with Historian Karen Muchow** Frank Westcott was known as the "Father of Alden's Black Water Baths". Who was he and how did he start a business that lasted nearly 60 years? Frank Westcott; his business partner, Edward Milliman; and Frank's son, Henry, will be the topic of this look back at Alden's past.

**March 9, 2023 — with the Board of Trustees** It's Trivia Night! As we close out our Bicentennial year, how much do you know about Alden's 200+ years of history? Grab a team, and let's see how well you do answering questions about people, buildings, places, businesses, and events. Prizes will be awarded, bragging rights are free.

## Individual Renewals

Charles Holcomb

## New Members

Henry, David & Pamela Couple  
Mazur, Joanne Individual  
Wild, Kathy Individual

## In Memory Of

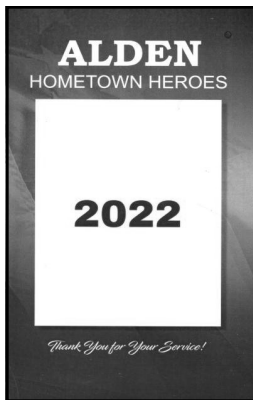
Burke, Jane in memory of Clarke Burke

## No Bake Bake Sale Donations

Battista, Carol  
Casell, Marlyn  
Crist, Randall & Debra  
Cyrulik, Catherine  
Czechowski, Walter & Mary  
Downhower, Judith  
The Elwood-Jordans Agency  
Fitscher, Ronald & Annette  
Francis, Larry & Donna  
Kegler, Richard & Elizabeth  
Kingswell, Michael & Diane  
Kipfer, Josephine  
Koelbl, Christian & Gwendolyn

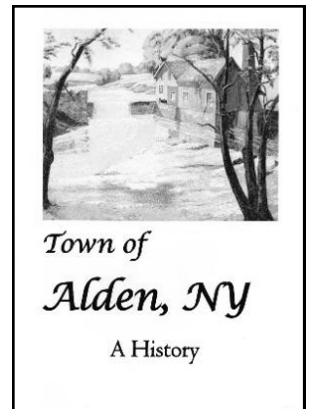
Kotlowski, Marlene & Maryrose  
Loehr, Laura & Paul  
Nebrich, Beverly  
O'Neill, Patrick & Judy  
Pilon, Suzanne  
Roberts Living Trust  
Schall, Donna  
Shriver, Ann & Matthew  
Sojka, Richard & Joyce  
Swyers, Gifford & Susan  
Werner, Paul & Mary Ellen  
White, Eleanor

## Two New Books



Two new books about Alden have been published. The first, *Alden Hometown Heroes*, is a guide to the hometown heroes banners that will be hung again along Broadway in the spring. Using information given by the sponsors, Town and Village Historian Karen Muchow gives information about the Heroes so you can learn more about them as you walk along. The names are arranged alphabetically.

The demand for the guides was so great that a second printing has been ordered, and a 2023 addendum will be added for the new banners being ordered. If you want to order a guide, call the Village of Alden at (716)937-6969 and talk to Village Clerk Sue Galbraith to have your name put on the waiting list.



A second printing of the second book, *Town of Alden, NY...A History*, has also been ordered. This book covers the 200+ years of Alden's history in honor of the Town's Bicentennial. The cost is \$20 and can be picked up at the Town Hall, the Village offices and the Alden Pharmacy.

- For our out-of-town Aldenites, the History books may be ordered by contacting the Historian at [aldenhistorian1@gmail.com](mailto:aldenhistorian1@gmail.com). A \$5 shipping and handling charge will be added to the price of the book. Checks should be made out to the Town of Alden and sent to the Town & Village Historian, 13213 Broadway, Alden, NY 14004.

## Alden Trivia

Buffalo Evening News October 9, 1896 — Alden, N.Y.—(Special)—J. W. Wolcott (*Railroad Street*) had 21 ducks and 36 chickens stolen last night. It will be possible to discover the thief if proper efforts are made, for the fowl had a private mark and the horse driven by the thieves had a peculiar kind of shoe.

## Heritage Center Closed for Winter Break



The Heritage Center **will not** be hosting Open House hours from December 18 through April 1, in order to continue inventorying the collection and updating the displays for spring. We appreciated your visits this past year and look forward to showing you something new in April.

If you have questions, please call Town and Village Historian Karen Muchow at 716-937-6400 for answers and appointments.

We hope to see you **Saturday, April 1, 2023** during our regular hours from 11 am — 1 pm and any first and third Saturday through December 16, 2023.

## 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 and March.** Tours for individuals and groups may be arranged by calling 716-937-3700 or 716-392-4295.

### 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, as protocols allow. 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

Mail to:

Lynda Tucker, Membership Secretary  
Alden Historical Society  
13213 Broadway  
Alden, NY 14004

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

### NOTE: Donations are 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, Karen Muchow

**Program/Refreshments**— Sue Galbraith, Jennifer Strong, Elli DeFilippo, Sandy Dussault, Greg Kent **Refreshments**—Renée Nelson

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

**Building and Grounds**— Christopher Gust, Carol Battista, Greg Kent, Sarah Miller, Jennifer Strong

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

**Nominating**—Jane Burke, Elli DeFilippo, Kris Rogers

**Budget**—Sue DeWitt, Christopher Gust

**Historical Marker/Signs**— Sue Galbraith, Greg Kent, Karen Muchow, Jennifer Strong

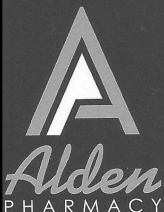
Members are welcome to serve on any of the committees. Contact us at 937-3700 or at [aldenhistsoc@gmail.com](mailto:aldenhistsoc@gmail.com).



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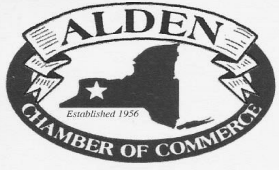
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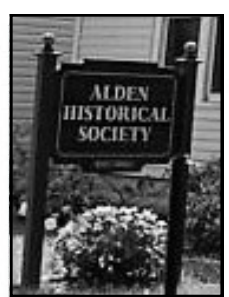
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*MISSION STATEMENT*

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  
on the web at www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org  
and by email at aldenhistoc@gmail.com*

*We appreciate the support we receive from the Town of Alden.  
Thank you.  
www.alden.erie.gov*