



# The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

716-937-3700

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## Down on the Farm...

In years gone by this time of year would have been very busy on Alden's farms - preparing the soil for planting, planting crops, maybe a first cutting of hay, along with the everyday care of livestock and the milking of cows. Time has taken its toll on family farms. Today, active farms in Alden can be counted on one hand. It wasn't always that way.

Alden has a proud agricultural heritage. Nearly every early settler was a farmer, if only with a cow or two, and a vegetable patch. They had to be to survive. In 1850, 87% of the males, ages 16 and over, were engaged in agriculture. By 1940, only 36% of Heads of Households reported that their primary source of income was agriculture.

In Town Historian Ralph Stowell's 1953 history of Alden, "From Then to Now", he mentioned the Outstanding Farms in This Vicinity. One was the Castle Farm, south of the village on the west side of Exchange Street. The owner, Louis Castle, was an old Erie Canal man and wintered the canal mules on his farm. The Milliman Farm, pictured to the right, was also on Exchange St. Mr. Stowell said that some of the better farm land in the town was in West Alden and listed the Reiner, Krueffer, Gasman, Almquist, Eggleston and Rautenstrauch farms. Stowell's primary criteria for "outstanding" was how neat the farms were kept.



Milliman Farm

The 1909 Century Atlas of Erie County has a section describing the farms in each town and their picturesque names—Pleasant Hill Farm on Sullivan Rd., Locust Farm on North Rd., Woodside Glen on Crittenden Rd., Patterson Homestead on Three Rod Rd., Maple Lawn on Four Rod Rd., Willis Homestead and Indian Trail on Broadway in Town Line, Dellwood Park on Townline Rd., Meadow Slope, Weeping Birch and the 402 acre Wende Homestead in Millgrove.

Three large farms within the village limits were the Farnsworth/ Dold Farm on Broadway, the Bentley Farm on Main Street and the Green Farm on Crittenden and Broadway. The Alden Village Plaza stands on the site of Farnsworth/ Dold farm. Thomas Farnsworth

*Continued on page 2*



purchased the 209 acres in 1821. The Dold brothers raised champion dairy cattle on the farm in the early 1900s. The Bentley Farm was the land purchased by the Alden Grange in 1911 and where they conducted their Grange Fairs. The property was sold to the Town of Alden in 1940 and is now the Alden Memorial Town Park. The Green Farm is now the site of streets such as Mercer Dr., Baxter Ave., Lindan Ave., Park St., and Irving St.

Adney Mercer farmed the east side of Elm Street and Alexander Kellogg farmed most of what is now Kellogg St. Woodbine Place covered portions of Colonial Woods and was part of the Joseph Freeman property.

To this list we could add more recent farms such as the Erie County Penitentiary Farm and Jurek Farms in Millgrove, the Henske Farm on Henske Rd., the Heineman Farm on

North Rd., the Aldinger farm on Cary Rd., the Nuwer and Stehle Farms on Westwood Rd., and the Meides, Hinsken, and Foss Farms on Broadway.

Most of the barns and outbuildings are gone as well as a way of life. We may grow a few vegetables, but we depend on large farms and orchards elsewhere to supply our food needs, as well as the trucks to deliver them to nearby supermarkets.

*~Karen Muchow, Alden Town & Village Historian*

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## *Spring has Sprung and the Heritage Center is Open!*

Yes, after a rather mild winter, the Alden Heritage Center will reopen on Saturday, April 6th from 11 am to 1 pm. We have taken the last three months to do some inventorying (the hat collection this year), some cleaning, and the setting up of some new displays in the Davis Room.

We've gathered some toys used by children years ago to show what they used to have "Springtime Fun". There are wooden roller skates, some marbles, a miniature laundry drying rack, and more. See what was used to play mumblety-peg, a favorite school yard game played by boys. (It wouldn't be allowed today!)

In recognition of the Alden State Bank's reopening of their 1925 building at 13200 Broadway, there is a small display of old bank materials, including checks and a savings pass book with the portrait of John Alden on them. Remember John Alden was Hannah Alden Hebard's 3rd great-grandfather and Alden was named for Hannah. An early sketch of the proposed front exterior of the 1925 building even had John's portrait on it.



The third display is a whole display of Alden S.W.A.G. A clue? See how many businesses you remember.

The Heritage Center will be open the first and third Saturdays through December. We look forward to seeing you.

*~Kris Rogers, Curator*

## January program - History of Alden's Schools

Alden schools' 200+ year history was presented by Town and Village of Alden Historian Karen Muchow at the historical society's January 11 program. Karen began by identifying the location of the school believed to have been the first in the town and then went on to identify the location of many of the other schools built over the years. There were as many as sixteen different schoolhouses, each a different district collecting its own taxes. Some schools were shared with neighboring towns. As there were no buses, students had to walk up to two miles each way. Karen shared that school attendance terms varied as students were expected to help their families with chores during planting and harvesting seasons. Though few of the former schoolhouses still exist, most of those that remain have been repurposed. Only the Henskee Road Schoolhouse, located in Alden Town Park, still retains its original design.



~Elli DeFilippo

## February program - Buffalo's Power Couples

The Society hosted Explore Buffalo guest speaker Cheryl McDonald for a presentation on "Buffalo's Power Couples" from the mid 1800's – mid 1900's on February 8 at the Alden Community Center. In a full room, four couples were discussed, all successful in their chosen careers, who exerted significant impact on Buffalo and beyond. One of the individuals cited



Photo: Christopher Gust

had an Alden connection. Josephine Looney, daughter of Robert Looney of Looneyville, married Frank Goodyear. Looneyville was an early hamlet located on Town Line Rd between Westwood Rd. and Walden Ave. Frank Goodyear became a very successful businessman after beginning and expanding upon a lumbering business developed on lands in Pennsylvania previously belonging to Robert Looney. The lumbering business led to involvement in other successful endeavors in railroading and coal industries. Josephine Looney Goodyear went on to launch philanthropic endeavors.

~Elli DeFilippo

## March program – Buffalo's Favorite Daughters

Maria Blair of No Illusions Tours presented a thorough and interesting presentation on “Buffalo's Favorite Women” at the society's March 14 program. Ms. Blair focused on several women residing in Buffalo from the mid-19th through the mid-20th centuries. She opened by highlighting the accomplishments of Mary Burnett Talbert, an African American woman born in Ohio in 1866 who moved to Buffalo in 1891. Ms. Talbert was college-educated (the only African American woman in her graduating class), an educator, and later active in women's suffrage and anti-racism. She was a founder of the Niagara Movement, which evolved into the NAACP. Another of the women Ms. Blair discussed was Anna Katharine Green. Born in 1846, Ms. Green was an early female detective writer. She is said to have influenced Agatha Christie and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Yale Law School is reputed to have used one of her books to demonstrate the danger of relying on circumstantial evidence. Publishing 37 novels during her lifetime, she is known as the “Mother of Detective Fiction.” More information about Ms. Blair's tours is available online at [noillusionstoursbuffalo.com](http://noillusionstoursbuffalo.com).

~Elli DeFilippo



Photo: Christopher Gust

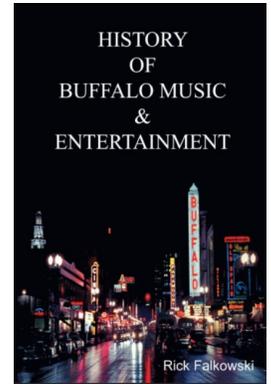
## Upcoming Programs

Programs are held at the Alden Community Center, unless indicated otherwise, and begin at 7 pm.

**April 11:** We welcome local author and founder of the Buffalo Music Hall of Fame, Rick Falkowski, for an insightful discussion of the History of Early Buffalo Music & Entertainment.

**May 9:** Alden is known for its Black Water Bath history. Joan Wanecski joins us to take a look at other mineral water health spas across the region you may not know about.

**June 13:** Sue Galbraith will present on the Hometown Heroes banners displayed throughout the Village of Alden.



## Curator's Corner



We recently discovered a 47 star flag in our collection. Very little information was found in our records. The name of the donator is all that we know. We don't know of any remaining family. The flag represents New Mexico. It was never official as Arizona achieved statehood just one month later. Our research revealed that only a few flags were made and fewer survived. Since the flag has no meaning to Alden, and I first contacted a museum in New Mexico, the Trustees voted to sell it with Kelly Schultz. It will be offered on April 19 in a three day live auction. I will report on the results in the next Grannytown.  
~Kris Rogers, Curator

## Annual Dues 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.  
~Sue DeWitt

**YOUR  
MEMBERSHIP  
MATTERS**

## There must be a story here...

### Elopement

Whereas my wife Rachel, has eloped from my bed and board, without provocation, I hereby forbid all persons from harboring or trusting her on my account, as I will pay no debts of her contracting after this date.

Daniel W. King, Clarence, Jan. 19, 1817

From the Buffalo Gazette February 11, 1817



# Alden Heritage Center

April 2024

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.

### *Grannytown Gazette*, April 2024

Christopher Gust, Editor & Layouts

Contributors:

- Elli DeFilippo
- Sue Galbraith
- Christopher Gust
- David Henry
- Karen Muchow
- Kris Rogers

Special Thanks to Carl Matthies

### *Alden Historical Society 2024 Committees*

- **Membership**
- **Collections**
- **Publicity / Newsletter**
- **Programs / Refreshments**
- **Audit**
- **Buildings & Grounds**
- **Fundraising**
- **Nominating**
- **Budget**
- **Historical Markers / Signs**

Members are welcome to serve on any of our committees

Contact us at 716-937-3700 or aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

### 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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Alden Historical Society

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Alden, NY 14004

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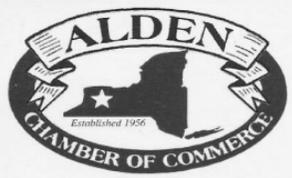
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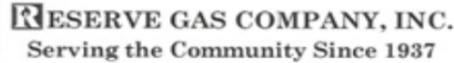
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*MISSION STATEMENT*

The Alden Historical Society, founded in 1965, is an all-volunteer organization dedicated to the preservation, presentation, and promotion of the rich heritage of the Town of Alden.



**Alden**  
Historical Society  
Est. 1965  
Alden Heritage Center | Henskee Road Schoolhouse

*Chartered by the Board of Regents  
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13213 Broadway St.  
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*The Alden Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the support of our membership, the Town of Alden, the Alden community and Erie County.*