

The Grannytown Gazette

The Newsletter of the Alden Historical Society

716-937-3700

www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org

www.facebook.com/aldenhistoricalsociety

aldenhistoc@gmail.com



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Karen Muchow

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Kris Rogers

Alden Grange & Community Fairs

Alden is proud of its agricultural heritage. The organization that supported those in the farming business was the Alden Grange. The Grange was a meeting place where friendships were made, leadership developed, and topics of interest and importance discussed.

The Alden Grange was organized in 1908 with twenty-nine charter members. The membership grew very rapidly, outgrowing their first meeting place. The Grange was able to purchase the Bentley farm on West Main St. in 1913 and built a temporary hall with volunteer labor of the members. That building became too small so the large home of the late Dr. Clarence Tyler was purchased and remodeled into a comfortable Grange home in 1925.

Lack of interest, aging members, and taxes caused the members to sell the Grange Home in 1944. The membership continued to meet, but with fewer and fewer members. The charter to Alden Grange No. 1138 was surrendered in September 1954.

Perhaps the greatest contribution the Grange gave to the Town of Alden was in sponsoring the Community Fairs. The fairs were held on the property the Grange had purchased in 1913. The first fair was held in 1920, a very small affair, more



like a bazaar, but the fairs grew and grew and became second to none. There were at least 16 different departments of exhibits with first place in each receiving at least \$5.00. There was a midway with rides, games and food. Baseball games between area competing teams were played daily. There was dancing every evening in the pavilion, at 10

cents a dance. Every year a big street parade with bands, uniformed fire companies, fire apparatus, decorated floats and cars closed the fair. The Alden schools and neighboring Granges were great helps in promoting the fairs and in exhibiting. The Erie County Board of Supervisors contributed money for prizes, but had to withdraw that support in 1932. Without that support, and the Depression, the Grange had to discontinue holding a fair. The 1932 Fair was the last.

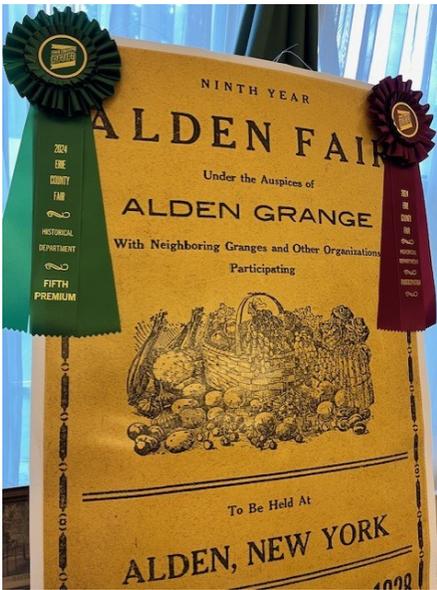
~ Karen Muchow, Alden Town & Village Historian

Alden Grange Display at Erie County Fair



The Alden Historical Society participated in the 184th Erie County Fair with an exhibit in the Historical Building. This year's theme was "Festivals and Celebrations," and the Society chose to pay tribute to Alden Grange No. 1138 and the annual Community Fairs held from 1920 until 1932. Alden was rewarded for its efforts with a 5th place ribbon. Special thanks to the committee of volunteers who worked hard to plan and set up this exhibit. Pictured on set-up day are Sue and Mike DeWitt, Christopher Gust, and David and Pam Henry. Committee members not pictured include Historian Karen Muchow, Curator Kris Rogers, and Carol Battista.

~Photos & Article, Christopher Gust



"Pole Raising" in Alden

As the 2024 Presidential Election approaches, a look at Buffalo newspapers from the 1800s reveals several reports of "Pole Raising" in WNY towns and hamlets, including Alden. What is pole raising? Dating to the mid-1800s, often a special feature of political party rallies during presidential campaigns involved raising a large wood pole for a candidate. Democrats used a hickory tree in honor of "Old Hickory," Andrew Jackson and Republicans favored a poplar tree. ~David Henry

Tuesday, October 27—Crittenden. Henley's Hall.

Saturday, October 24—West Alden. Pole raising at 2:30 P. M. at home of George Roll. Meeting at Alden Center, Sandman's Hall, 8 P. M.

The republicans of Crittenden will raise a pole this afternoon at 4 o'clock. A meeting will be held in the evening which will be addressed by District Attorney Hatch.

Credit: newspapers.com



With busy lives, it can be hard to find time to volunteer. However, the benefits of volunteering can be enormous. The benefits include: Bringing communities together, the opportunity to get involved in your local community, meet new people who share your interest, and gain a sense of pride and achievement.

The Alden Historical Society always welcomes and appreciates any volunteers. Whether it is being a docent (tour guide) when the Heritage Center is open, a Trustee on the board, suggestions for programs or helping during special events. Any help is greatly appreciated.

Winston Churchill once said: "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give". Thank you.
~Sue Galbraith, President

Hull Family Home and Farmstead History Camp

This summer was the second summer in which the Alden Historical Society sponsored scholarships to the Hull Family Home & Farmstead History Camp. The camp, offered in July, is open to young people who will be entering grades 5-7 in September. The historical society sponsored three scholarships to young people from Alden who had to submit an essay to be considered.

The campers sponsored by the historical society eagerly shared details about their activities at the camp, which is set up to simulate the lives of the Hull family who lived at the homestead and operated the farm in the 1800's. Activities in which the campers engaged included stenciling, tin punching, weaving, sewing, quill writing, and preparing food as was done during those times. They reported learning about the many uses of corn and playing games that children would have played in those years. While learning about the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, they practiced marching as a military unit. Additionally, they participated in an archaeological dig where they sifted soil and sharpened their skills for sorting and identifying the artifacts they found.

The scholarships are funded by a bequest from the estate of Joan Gadd. Donations to the scholarship fund are always welcome.

~Elli DeFilippo



Photos supplied

September program - Clara Armstrong & the “65 Valiants”

After a summer break for the months of July and August, the Alden Historical Society resumed its monthly programs at the Community Center. On September 12, guest presenter Carolina Jackson detailed the life of Clara Armstrong, a WNY



educator and administrator who joined with 64 other volunteer teachers or “valiants” to emigrate to Argentina between the years 1868 and 1898, in response to a call issued by then-Argentine President Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, inviting teachers to come to the country to establish “normal schools,” the name given to teacher training schools at that time. Ms. Armstrong is revered in Argentina to this day for her efforts over 30 years. Clara died in Los Angeles in 1917 and her remains are interred at the Armstrong family plot at the Alden Evergreen Cemetery. A plaque was placed in the cemetery in 1962 by a delegation from the Argentine Rotary Club which sought to honor Clara for her efforts.

~Elli DeFilippo

Photo: Christopher Gust

Upcoming Programs

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

October 10: Did you know that at its peak, The New York Glass Works produced 8.2 million bottles from its location on Railroad Street? Learn more about this industry that contributed to the flourishing of the Alden community during the early 1900s with a presentation by Alden Historian, Karen Muchow.

November 14: Join us for our annual Potluck Dinner and Annual Membership Meeting. We will elect new trustees and Society Vice President, Christopher Gust, will give a short presentation on the return of Alden State Bank to its 1925 location.

December 12: Long-time Pembroke educator and popular speaker, Greg Kinal, returns for a detailed look at the history of the Erie Canal on the eve of its bicentennial year in 2025.



Board of Trustees Election

At its annual meeting on Thursday, November 14, the Historical Society will hold elections for four board of trustee terms that are expiring. Trustees are elected to serve for three-year terms and are asked to attend board meetings every other month, to serve on at least one committee, and to occasionally volunteer as a docent at Heritage Center open hours held twice per month, April through December.

There are four trustee positions up for re-election: Elli DeFilippo, Sue Galbraith, Christopher Gust, and Sue Schumacher. Elli has indicated she will not be running again. At this time, it appears the remaining trustees will be running for re-election, but others interested in serving may submit their names. Only dues paying members of the historical society are eligible to submit their names for nomination and may do so by contacting Jane Burke (716) 937-7055, Elli DeFilippo (716) 574-9830, or by leaving a message at aldenhistsoc@gmail.com. If you think you may be interested in helping to preserve, promote, and present the history of Alden and its people, we encourage you to consider running.

Alden Heritage Center

October 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. Monthly programs for 2024 will resume on September 12.

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, October 2024

Christopher Gust, Editor & Layouts

Contributors:

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

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.....

Address.....

.....

Phone.....Email.....

Please make checks payable to Alden Historical Society

Mail to:
Membership Secretary
Alden Historical Society
13213 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004

DONATIONS AND MEMORIALS ARE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED

NOTE: Donations are tax deductible



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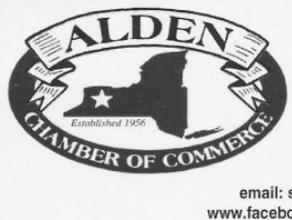
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ALDEN
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Established 1956

13500 Broadway
Alden
New York 14004

716-937-6177

www.aldenny.org
email: secretary@aldenny.org
www.facebook.com/aldenchamber



LAW OFFICES OF
MICHAEL W. COLE, PLLC

Michael W. Cole
Attorney and Counselor at Law

13349 Broadway Street
Alden, New York 14004
(716) 937-9150
Fax (716) 937-9580
mcole@michaelcolelaw.com



NEILL & STRONG

JENNIFER L. STRONG, ESQ.

NEILL & STRONG ATTORNEYS AND COUNSELORS P.C.

office 716.937.3353
jlstrong@neillstrong.com
13166 Main Street, Alden, NY 14004
www.neillstrong.com



Thomas A. Steffan
Attorney at Law

Cooke & Steffan, Attorneys

13132 Main Street
Alden, NY 14004
Ph: (716) 937-9111
Fax: (716) 937-4508
Email: tsteffan@cookeandsteffan.com




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Melanie Rimkus
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13295 Broadway
Alden, NY 14004
716-706-8156
www.melanierimkus.com

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
New York State Education Department*

13213 Broadway St.
Alden, NY 14004

Find us on: Facebook.com/AldenHistoricalSociety
Web Site: www.aldenhistoricalsociety.org
Email: aldenhistsoc@gmail.com

The Alden Historical Society gratefully acknowledges the support of our membership, the Town of Alden, the Alden community and Erie County.