HISTORY PRESERVED
Special moments are on exhibit now; online ‘virtual museum’ coming

> Ike Harrison, executive director of the Dunbar Center, is photographed working with students. | Courtesy of Onondaga Historical Association

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A major new exhibit of Syracuse’s African-American history — illustrated by dozens of vintage photographs, antique documents and transcripts of oral history interviews — is on display at the Onondaga Historical Association. The collection will serve as a preview of a larger display, the Black History Preservation Project, which the association will put online later in the year.

“This collection is first of its kind in Syracuse and just a sample of what we will display when the virtual museum is ready,” said Gregg Tripoli, OHA’s executive director.

Other partners for the project include the Dunbar Center, Syracuse University’s Southside Initiative and the Onondaga County Public Library.

The presentation, which opened Feb. 1, will be on display through March at the OHA Museum.

The exhibit is open during regular museum hours, and admission is free.

The exhibit chronicles people, places and events significant to the Syracuse black community.

“Visitors will recognize the places where they grew up, their family members and people they haven’t seen in years,” Tripoli said.

Almost every artifact on display was donated from local collections, Tripoli said.

Project members held digital collection fairs, where community members brought their photographs to be scanned and archived into a digital database.

“We’re trying to preserve this history for future generations,” Tripoli said.

“We hope this becomes a wonderful walk down memory lane for our community.”