

Uncovered toy-store sign hints at downtown's retail past

The Onondaga Historical Association

In case you missed it, on July 3, the Conde Toy Shop sign was unveiled after being hidden for years, and fortunately we were able to capture photos for you and our files.

Once it is covered again, who knows how long it will be before we get to see it again, if ever.

The Conde Toy Shop was opened by Harry L. Conde, who also founded Syracuse Automobile Taxi Co., the first taxi company in Syracuse.

He was a native of Oswego and his parents owned the Conde Knitting Mills in Oswego.

The Conde Toy Shop was located at 480 S. Salina St. and 452 S. Warren St.

The sign that was uncovered was at 452 S. Warren St., where Pavone's Pizza is located.

Mr. Conde promoted novel home-yard units designed to win and hold the interest of youngsters and keep them off the streets.

In addition to the play-yard equipment listed in the window above the sign there is listed "Tents — Table & Chairs, Electric Trains — Costumes" and of course "Toys." Not only did the cute toy clown hang over the sidewalk to catch the eyes of children (and parents) passing by, but he was also painted on the side of a building.

I remember going into Edward's Toy Store at Christmastime and Ed Guth's store. What are your memories of visiting/shopping at downtown toy stores?

Pamela Priest, who submitted this article, is the Onondaga Historical Association's archivist and research center manager.



Conde Toy shop is pictured above in September 1956, with its clown hanging over the sidewalk at 452 S. Warren St. The Conde sign recently was uncovered at the site which now houses Pavone's Pizza. The Conde clown, right, also was painted on the side of a building to advertise the toy store. (Photos courtesy of the Onondaga Historical Association)



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