

Italian Heritage Exhibit Coming to Syracuse Museum

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The Onondaga Historical Association welcomes its first Italian Heritage exhibit. (c) Waldy Diez 2014
AUDIO

First ever Italian Heritage Exhibit

The Onondaga Historical Association is honoring the city's past with its new exhibit.

By Waldy Diez SYRACUSE, N.Y. (NCC News) – Italian immigrants populated Syracuse in the 1800s. They were the largest immigrant group to come to the city, as well as one of the largest ethnic populations to date. Dennis Connors, curator of history at the [Onondaga Historical Association and Museum](#), says many first-, second- and third-generation Italian-Americans live in Onondaga County.

In order to celebrate the city's connection with Italy, the OHA will be hosting its first [Italian heritage exhibit](#) called, "It's In Our Very Name: The Italian Heritage of Syracuse." According to a [project](#) of the [Preservation Association of Central New York](#), Syracuse is named after the Italian city of Siracusa because of its similar geographic appearance.

About the exhibit

The free, six-month exhibit will include a little bit of everything, Connor said.

"It'll just examine different aspects of the Italian experience in Syracuse," he said.

These aspects include important landmarks, religious organizations, schools and traditions. The exhibit will be made of various documents, photos and artifacts associated with the Italian experience.

The museum has a large collection of documents, including a telegram from the 1930s written by a man who tried gaining support from Italy to build a monument of Christopher Columbus in downtown Syracuse.

"Part of that effort was to get, at that time, the head of the government in Italy, the dictator Benito Mussolini, to give his blessing and perhaps financial support to the project," Connors said.

Connors believes the city's residents will enjoy the exhibit and hopes they will support the museum as its collection grows.

"We hope it might generate donations from the Italian-American community," he said. "People have things that have been passed down in their family ... and it speaks to the experience.

"As a historical organization, we would like to have those things in our collection to pass on to the future."