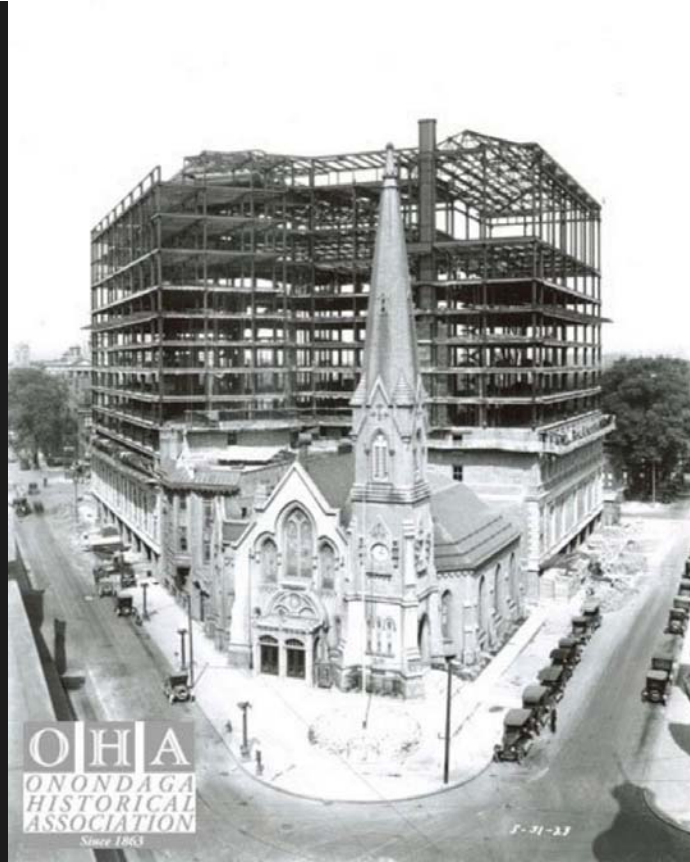
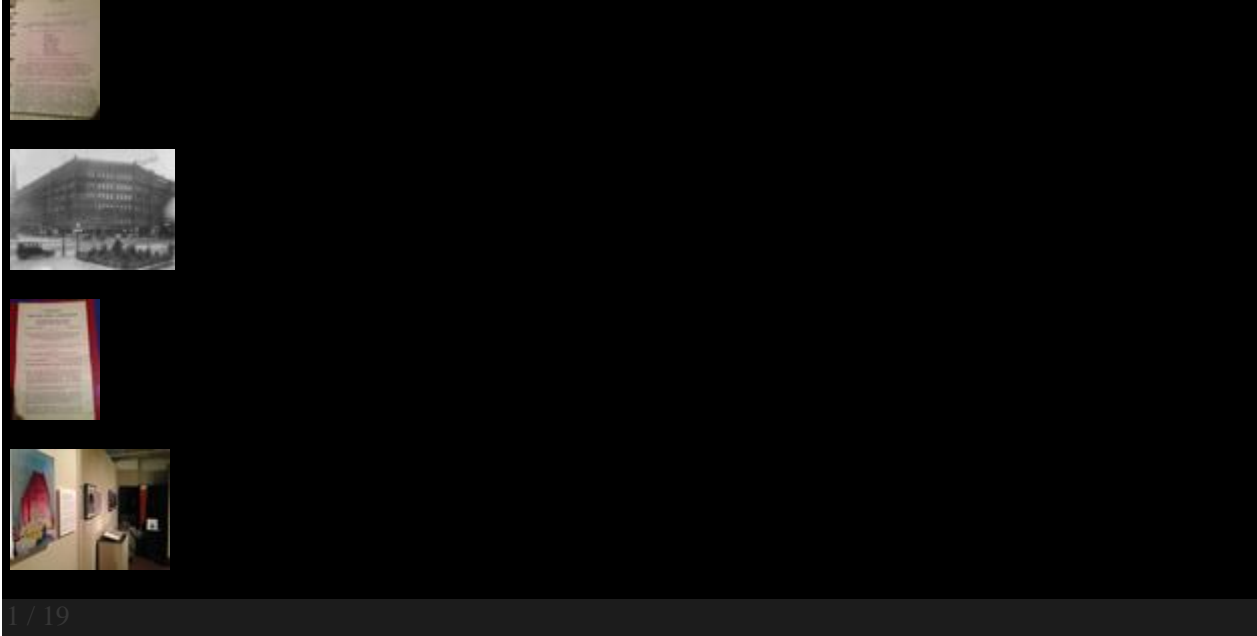


The future Uncle Fester's signature and other cool things at Hotel Syracuse exhibit (photos)







The Hotel Syracuse under construction at the corner of Harrison, East Onondaga and South Salina streets in 1923. In the foreground is the Fourth Presbyterian Church, built in 1877 and torn down in 1943. (Onondaga Historical Association)

[Onondaga Historical Association](#)

[Print](#)



By [Rick Moriarty | rmoriarty@syracuse.com](mailto:rmoriarty@syracuse.com)

[Follow on Twitter](#)

on February 05, 2015 at 9:30 AM

0

Reddit

HOTEL SYRACUSE RENOVATION

- [The future Uncle Fester's signature and other cool things at Hotel Syracuse exhibit \(photos\)](#)
 - [More than 600 apply for up to 40 Hotel Syracuse renovation jobs](#)
 - [Hidden for decades, mural of city's early history rediscovered at Hotel Syracuse](#)
 - [Hotel Syracuse renovation to start next week, workers sought](#)
 - [Company picked to operate Hotel Syracuse after reopening in 2016](#)
-

Syracuse, N.Y. — A new exhibit at the Onondaga Historical Association has lots of cool artifacts from the Hotel Syracuse's past, including the signature of its first registered guest, child actor Jackie Coogan.

Among the artifacts on display at the [association's museum](#) is the hotel register signed by Coogan on Aug. 14, 1924, the day the downtown Syracuse landmark opened.

Coogan, whose grandfather John Henry Coogan was a pharmacist in Syracuse, was 10 years old at the time and had already gained fame starring in Charlie Chaplin's 1921 movie "The Kid." The role helped to make him the first major child star in American movie history.

Coogan gained greater fame four decades after his stay at the Hotel Syracuse. He starred as Uncle Fester in 65 episodes of "**The Addams Family**" television series from 1964 to 1966, often sticking a light bulb in his mouth to make it light up. He died in 1984 at age 69.

The historical association assembled the exhibit because of renewed public interest in the hotel in light of plans by new owner Ed Riley to perform a \$57 million renovation and reopen the hotel in early 2016.

"It's kind of a salute to the hotel," said Dennis Connors, curator of history for the association. "There's going to be a whole bunch of people staying there who have no clue about the history of the hotel."

Here are some of the other artifacts from the hotel's past on display at the museum:

- The menu for the hotel's grand opening dinner on Aug. 16, 1924, in what was then called the Terrace Dining Room (later called the Persian Terrace).

The main entree was Kennebec salmon. Of note, though, is the listing of "Deep Rock Ginger Ale" as the beverage for the dinner. At the time, Prohibition was in full swing, so liquor was not allowed in the hotel, at least not legally.

- The orange dress, beaded coat and shoes worn by Anna McKay Delaney, a 1921 graduate of the Syracuse University School of Nursing, to the hotel's grand opening.

Delaney **died in 1975** at the age of 81. The clothing she wore to the hotel's opening was donated to the historical association by her daughter Mary Ann Delaney in 2010.

- Bryce Brothers glassware, a cocktail shaker set and a Syracuse China plate used in the hotel's dining and drinking spots as far back as the 1940s.

The Syracuse China plate contains a water lily pattern specially designed for the hotel and used on its dinnerware from 1941 to 1973. A plate containing the pattern can be seen in a 1942 photograph, also on display, of diners in the Persian Terrace.

- Minutes of the December 1921 meeting of the Syracuse Hotel Corp., at which the directors discussed how many rooms the Hotel Syracuse hotel should have (400, 500 or 600) and whether its construction would doom the older [Yates Hotel](#) just a few blocks away at Washington and Montgomery streets.

They eventually decided the new hotel would have 600 rooms. But its opening three years later did not doom the Yates, at least not right away. The Yates, which opened with 175 rooms in 1892, survived until 1971, when it was torn down. Its site, diagonally across Washington Street from Syracuse City Hall, is now a parking lot.

- A photo of the 60-room Hotel Truax being turned around and [moved across Harrison Street](#) in 1922 to make room for the Hotel Syracuse.

At the time, the Truax was the largest building in the world to be moved completely intact. It was torn down in the 1960s and replaced with a parking garage.

- A \$1 million bond issued in 1923 to help finance the hotel's construction. The 20-year bond paid 7 percent interest.
- A sketch, or "maquette," by Carl Roters of the 40-foot mural he would paint for the hotel to commemorate the city of Syracuse's centennial in 1948.

The final version of the mural (which was actually finished in 1949) still hangs on the wall above the hotel's registration desk. It was hidden behind mirrors 30 years later, but workers preparing for the hotel's renovations [recently uncovered](#) it.

The exhibit is scheduled to close Aug. 2. However, Connors and Riley are in discussions about creating a permanent exhibit within the hotel when it reopens in early 2016.

The hotel closed in 2004, though some of its function rooms continued to be used for a few more years. Preparations for the [hotel's renovation](#) started this week.

Hotel Syracuse history exhibit

Where: Onondaga Historical Association museum, 321 Montgomery St., Syracuse.

Hours: The museum is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Friday, and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Cost: Admission to the museum is free, but donations are welcome.

Contact Rick Moriarty anytime: [Email](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | 315-470-3148