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Renovations Have Begun at Skä•noñh Great Law of Peace Center

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It's a popular destination for history buffs and school field trips in Central New York. Now renovations are underway at the former St. Marie Among the Iroquois site. It's being converted into the Skä•noñh Great Law of Peace Center. Alana LaFlore shares why those behind the center say visits will be eye-opening.

LIVERPOOL, N.Y. -- When it opens this fall - the Skä•noñh Great Law of Peace center will tell a history lesson few have heard before.

This despite the former St. Marie site gracing the shores of Onondaga Lake for decades.

"Growing up, a lot of us have been presented with a Euro-centric version of history," said Daniel Connors, the general manager of the Skä•noñh Great Law of Peace Center. "And the native perspective is often gone unheard, but it's really a very important story they will have to tell."

The center which is run by the Onondaga Historical Association, will focus on the Onondagas -- the political leader of the Haudenosaunee. Leaders of the Haudenosaunee say they've been consulting with the association and are excited about the center.

"There's so little and what there is it's not very correct as to who we are," said Sidney Hill, Tadodaho of the Haudenosaunee. "And they'll hear a different story and start asking questions. So we hope to tell some of thing things about how bad it was."

The concept is to re-educate the public through a series of films.

"There's going to be one in each exhibit area that will highlight the oral history tradition as the Haudenosaunee have passed their stories down from generation to generation," said Connors. "So really the visitor is learning the story directly from the Haudenosaunee themselves the way they learned it."

One exhibit is the contributions and influences gallery.

"This gallery right here is going to highlight the way that the Haudenosaunee contributed to the American way of life, which includes things like Democracy, the women's movement, environment, lacrosse," said Connors.

Visitors will still be able to get information on the Jesuits -- and check out their recreated mission, but the hope is that people will come to hear a story that's been silenced for years.

The center is expected to open November 21. An opening event will be held to celebrate the occasion.