

Historical facts & exhibits trivia of the 4 floors of The Children's Museum of History & Science



The building: The five story brick building at 311 Main Street in Utica NY was constructed in 1893 as The John C. Heiber Dry Goods Company, one of the best known wholesale dry goods houses in CNY. The interesting Romanesque Revival exterior remains as imposing as ever, and the charm of the period remains inside with its decoratively paneled central oak staircase, fourteen foot high ceilings sheathed in fancy pressed tin, its federal-style loft windows and oak flooring, all adding to the museum's charm.

1st floor: our History Wall contains a framed portrait of John C. Heiber and an original stock certificate for Heiber's Dry Goods, along with several other artifacts. Our Life Size Wooden Train with a recorded conductor's welcome is big enough for "kids" of all ages to climb aboard; the insides of our see-through Saturn car can be interactively explored; our Main Street stoplight and Switchboard were originally "live" in the Baggs Square area; Our Exploration Station contains 'mini-stores' up and down for children to explore.

2nd floor: Our exact full-scale replica of an Iroquois Native American Longhouse, the first exhibit created for the Museum upon its 1963 founding by The Junior League, features numerous native American artifacts. The interactive History Dioramas were created in 1941 by WPA artists under Egbert N. Clark, a local painter who oversaw the construction, along with sculptor Henry DeSpirito (nearby is a bust of Clark done in 1942 by DeSpirito, along with a large slate painting of early Mohawk Valley settling done by Clark). Our Erie Canal exhibits include a model of the canal along with several artifacts from that era. Our Diorama was created by Lewis S. Brown, a Moravia native & anthropology curator at The Museum of Natural History, who donated his dinosaur collection to our museum upon his death in 1992 (in 1998, multi-media was added by The GE Elfuns, in memory of Richard Salvo). Our popular LED Play Dance Floor, where visitors of all ages experience a 'green' entertainment system, combines the latest interactive technologies.

3rd floor: Our History Wall contains historical facts and information on the founders of the City of Utica and the Mohawk Valley from its inception to the present day. Nearby is a framed picture of an original 1901 Utica Saturday Globe (the first newspaper in color) and an original black and white large framed photo of VP-elect Sherman and President-elect Taft visiting Utica in 1908. Touch screen computers challenge visitors history knowledge. Our Intl Halls of Fame: Bicycling, Rowing, Canoeing & Kayaking annually induct outstanding local & global athletes (including Olympians). Our Weather Center, a collaborative effort of several local businesses, displays current weather from the only 'live' weather station in downtown Utica via our museum roof. Our "live" Radio Station, with the call letters of WCML, broadcasting on 560AM, was donated by Regent Broadcasting & built by an MVCC carpentry class and museum volunteers.

4th floor: Our Children's Museum is the only museum adopted by both NASA and the Office of Science. Among the several exhibits is an interactive space scale; a Mars Rover exhibit; exact scale of the Columbia Space Shuttle Orbiter; a Moon Lunar Lander; and a live NASA feed from a satellite dish on our museum roof. Also displayed are a drone airplane from one of the Riverside Aeronautics founders; a 17 foot genuine airplane kids can hop in and work the controls (originally flown out of Oneida County airport); the Hot Wheels Hall of Fame (Mike Zarnock, a two-time Guinness World Record Holder, featured in Ripley's 2008 Believe it or Not); and the Original New York Central switchboard used in Union Station until the late 1960's.

Jan. 2010 - Part of the museum's charm is the historic building it's housed in, and the fact you can actually handle & play with the 1000's of exhibits on our 4 floors. – Exec. Dir. Marlene B. Brown, <http://www.museum4kids.net>