

# Syracuse

GREATER SYRACUSE ECONOMIC GROWTH COUNCIL RESOURCE CENTER

## NEWS & EVENTS

- › Newsletters
- › Press Releases
- › Syracuse Area History
  - › **Fun Facts and Firsts**
- › Video Overview
- › Testimonials
- › Recent Growth
- › Local Media

### Fun Facts and Firsts

*The spirit of innovation has a strong heritage in Syracuse. Since the great Indian Chief, Hiawatha addressed the mighty Iroquois confederacy on the shores of Onondaga Lake over 400 years ago, the Syracuse area has played a key role in the development of the nation. From the beginning, Syracuseans have worked hard, found a better way, and spearheaded growth and development through innovation.*

### Check out these fun and interesting facts and firsts about Syracuse:

- Syracuse's Charles Brannock, founder of the famous Park Brannock Shoe Company, invented the Brannock Device, the metal device that measures your foot when buying a pair of shoes. Furthermore, the world's first loafer shoe was patented in Syracuse in 1933 by Nettleton Shoe Company.
- The Tipperary Hill area of Syracuse, a predominately Irish neighborhood, is home to a most unique traffic light. Installed in 1924 at the intersection of Tompkins Street and Lowell Avenue you will find vehicles waiting for the only upside-down traffic light in the country where the green light is on top and the red on the bottom.
- Syracuse University was founded in 1870 and is home to the Carrier Dome, the only domed stadium in the northeast and the largest structure of its kind on a college campus. Before the "Dome"? Archbold Stadium stood in its place and was the first totally poured concrete stadium in the country. This modern adaptation of the famous Roman coliseum was hailed as the finest football and athletic complex in the nation and was used for 77 years starting in 1907.
- The first Franklin car was manufactured in Syracuse in the summer of 1902. With a four cylinder air-cooled engine and seating for two the car reached speeds of 30 mph! The very first Franklin ever sold is currently on display the Onondaga Historical Association Museum in downtown Syracuse!
- Syracuse has a long history with the stage starting with the legendary Shubert Brothers, who founded a theatrical dynasty stretching from coast to coast! Today Syracuse is home to Central New York's only professional theater group, Syracuse Stage, as well as


[SITE MAP/INDEX](#)
[PARTNERS](#)
[FIND IT FAST](#)
[CONTACT US](#)


an abundant supply of community theater organizations.

- Syracuse was given its name when John Wilkinson, the area's first postmaster, realized that there was a city in Sicily called Siracuse. This city, as well, was on a lake, was known for its salt deposits and had a neighboring town called Salina. There were too many similarities to ignore and since it was common to borrow names from old cities, the city was named Syracuse.
- Grover Cleveland, our 22nd as well as the 24th president, grew up in the greater Syracuse area, in Fayetteville. If you had been around about a century and a half ago you might have seen him taking one of his legendary dips in Limestone Creek.
- Author L. Frank Baum, best known for his book, the Wizard of Oz, also lived in the Syracuse area. He married the daughter of well-known abolitionist, Matilda Joslyn Gage, in the front parlor of their Fayetteville home.
- Syracuse is home to the longest running State Fair in the nation, dating back to 1841. In 1848, the invention of the Ferris Wheel occurred by local Erie Canal workers, Samuel Hurst and James Mulholland. Their invention debuted at the State Fair then held on James Street in downtown Syracuse and was rotated by hand. Now the NYS Fair is held at the Expo Center and encompasses more than 365 acres.
- L & J.G. Stickley Furniture Company, makers of beautiful mahogany and cherry furniture was founded in 1896. Syracuse China opened in 1871, the nation's largest producer of commercial china. Will & Baumer Candle Company begun in 1855 by German carpenter Anton Will, who is credited with founding the United States wax business. These businesses continue to thrive today and their products can be purchased right here in Central New York.
- Syracuse's Milton Waldo Hanchett invented the dental chair; he patented the recliner in 1840.
- In 1959, Syracuse's Bristol Laboratories, a division of Bristol-Myers Squibb manufactured the first synthetic penicillin.
- Merchants National Bank installed the country's first drive-in bank window in 1941.
- The Literacy Volunteers of America was founded in Syracuse in 1962, and has helped thousands worldwide learn to read.
- Syracuse's abundant water supply is perfect for industries that depend on it. The beer industry is just one of those. At one time, there were more than 50 breweries here in the Greater Syracuse area. Onondaga Lager, Haberle, Congress, India Pale and XX Brown Stout brands were among the many brewed here and shipped along the Erie Canal for distribution around the eastern United States.
- Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman physician in the United States, graduated from Upstate Medical Center's predecessor, Geneva Medical College, in 1849.

- Crouse-Hinds manufactured the country's first traffic signal, which was installed in Texas in 1921.
- R.E. Deitz Co., usually know for automotive and hazard lighting, can boast of ownership of an English patent issued by Queen Victoria to Robert E. Dietz in 1873 for a self-setting animal trap-a "better mouse trap".
- The first woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court was a Syracuse University graduate, Belva Lockwood.
- 27 antennae located on the moon were "Made in Syracuse" by Sims Casting Co.
- Lipe-Rollway manufactured parts for Henry Ford's first auto.
- Corinthian Club is the oldest continuous women's club in the United States.
- The Hemlock Highway, our country's first wood plank road, took convenience-minded wayfarers on a jolting journey all the way from Central Square to scenic Salina a mere century ago.

[↑ Top of Page](#)