

Children's Museum Seeks Help

Four dioramas portraying the early history of the Mohawk Valley in wax, wood, cloth and paper models - created in the early 1940s by artists working in the federal Works Progress Administration program - were damaged Jan. 17 at the Children's Museum in Utica, when a pipe in the sprinkler system burst in severe cold weather. Executive director Anthony A. Clementi is asking the community for help raising funds to repair the works.

The dioramas depict the early history of Utica in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. They were part of a larger exhibition that traces the history of the Mohawk Valley from the Great Fording Place on the Mohawk River to the First Telegraph Office in Utica.

Originally housed at the Oneida Historical Society when it was housed at Munson -Williams-Proctor's Fountain Elms, the four dioramas affected depict Moses Bagg's blacksmith shop, the Bagg's Hotel, a barge on the Erie Canal and Samuel Morse working in his studio/laboratory on the telegraph.

Although the museum has insurance, Clementi said there is a high deductible and it had not been assessed whether or not insurance can cover the repairs. Anyone wishing to make a donation may contact Clementi at the Children's Museum by calling 315.724.6129, writing the museum at 311 Main St., Utica, N.Y. 13501, or e-mailing Caryi@aol.com

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