

The Local History Museum in Ontario: An Intellectual History 1851-1985

by

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

This thesis is a study of the changing model of the local history museum in Ontario, Canada and the consequential changing interpretations of the past in these institutions.

Beginning in 1879, local history museums in Ontario developed largely from the energies of local historical societies bent on collecting the past. While science museums used taxonomy and classification to mirror the natural state of the world, history museums had no equivalent framework for organizing collections as real-world referents. Often organized without apparent design, by the early 20th century a deductive method was used to categorize and display history collections into functional groups based on manufacture and use.

By the mid-twentieth century an inductive approach for interpreting collections in exhibits was promoted to make these objects more meaningful and interesting to museum visitors, and to justify their collection. This approach relied on the recontextualization of the object through two methods: text-based, narrative exhibits; and verisimilitude, the recreation of the historical environment in which the artifact would have been originally used. These exhibit practices became part of the syllabus of history museum work as it professionalized during the mid-twentieth century, almost a full century after the science museum.

In Ontario, recontextualizing artifacts eventually dominated the process of recreating the past at museums. Objects were consigned to placement within textual storylines in order to impart accurate meaning. At its most elaborate, artifacts were recontextualized into houses, and buildings into villages, wherein the public could fully immerse themselves in a tableau of the past. Throughout this process, the dynamic of recontextualization to enhance visitor experience subtly shifted the historical artifact from its previous position in the museum as an autonomous relic of the past, to one subordinate to context.

Although presented as absolute, the narratives and reconstructions formed by these collecting and exhibiting practices were contingent on a multitude of shifting factors, such as accepted museum practice, physical, economic and human resources available to the museum operation, and prevailing beliefs about the past and community identity. This thesis exposes the wider field of museum practice in Ontario community history museums over a century while the case study of Doon Pioneer Village shows in detail the conditional qualities of historical reconstruction in museum exhibits and historical restoration.

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My family and friends have been consistently supportive of this work. In particular, my husband Bob Harris has provided unqualified support and accommodation of this activity into our family life. Our son, Alastair, has grown up with the idea that his mother is a life-long student. My friend, Sandy Auld helped immensely with copy editing and Kim McGuire fed us. My office neighbour Kathe Gray shared her computer expertise and other facilities.

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Dedication

To Bob and Alastair

Abbreviations

AASLH	American Association for State and Local History
CMA	Canadian Museums Association
CNE	Canadian National Exhibition
GRCA	Grand River Conservation Authority
GVCA	Grand Valley Conservation Authority
HRC	Heritage Resources Committee
HSAC	Historic Sites Advisory Committee
HSC	Historic Sites Committee
HSMBC	Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada
KPL	Kitchener Public Library
MAP	Museum Assistance Program
MERL	Museum of English Rural Life
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NYSHA	New York State Historical Association
OA	Ontario Archives
OHS	Ontario Historical Society
OHS MS	Ontario Historical Society Museum Section
OLA	Ontario Library Association
OMA	Ontario Museum Association
OPCF	Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation
RMW	Regional Municipality of Waterloo
ROM	Royal Ontario Museum
ROMLA	Royal Ontario Museum Library and Archives
TEIGA	Provincial Grant Reform Committee
UCV	Upper Canada Village
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WCHRS	Wellington County Historical Research Society
WCHS	Women's Canadian Historical Society
WCPMA	Waterloo County Pioneer's Memorial Association
WCPMC	Waterloo County Pioneer Museum Committee
WHS	Waterloo Historical Society

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*For the structure that we raise,
Time is with materials filled
Our todays and yesterdays,
Are the blocks with which we build*

Longfellow, "The Builders"
From a 1953 petition to establish an
Ontario Rural Life Museum



FP.1 Building at Doon, 1961
K-W Record Negative Collection University of Waterloo Library

Introduction

A Shifting Paradigm

I have seen the very notion of what a museum is undergo a process of change whose profundity seems to have escaped ordinary notice.¹

Hilde Hein and other scholars have recently identified an institutional and philosophical change of profound proportion in American and British museums in the post-second world war period.² Moving away from the “salvage and warehouse business”³ museums are now, according to Hein, in the “experience” delivery business. Steven Weil calls this shift an ongoing transformation in the museum purpose “from being about something to being for somebody.”⁴ The museum’s major client, once the museum artifact, has become the museum visitor. A critical component of this process, Hein argues, is the displacing of the museum object as an autonomous entity to an element in a larger storyline or reconstructed environment. Lisa Roberts describes this process of object reconstitution a change from ‘knowledge’ to ‘narrative.’

These authors interpret these changes as consequential to the following factors: increased funding for museums from government bodies, a need to rationalize expenditures through audience development, and a growth in professionalism in the field of museum work that has placed an emphasis on communicating with the museum visitor.

This thesis argues that a similar shift took place, and is still taking place in Ontario. My research examines specifically the nature of this change over a long period of time in the province’s local history museums, an institutional type that has been little studied.⁵

Long assumed to be isolated and idiosyncratic, in fact these museums are neither, having shared a museum habitus, in some cases, for over a century.⁶ This habitus included common motives and motifs of founding groups, similar collections and documents, a professional collective and shared knowledge-base, and after the Second World War, a central primary funding and advisory body. Through the activities of professional organizations and provincial museum advisors, museological ideas and practices elsewhere in Canada, the United States, Britain and Europe percolated into the ways in which local history museums in Ontario organized their collections and interpreted them to the public. As their numbers grew, so did the public investment in these places.

¹ Hilde Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000): viii.

² American authors include Hein, *The Museum in Transition*; Steven Weil, “From Being *about* Something to Being *for* Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum,” *Daedalus, Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 128 no.3 (Summer 1999): 229-258; Lisa C. Roberts *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997).

³ Term used by Weil, *ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ The few essays on these museums include Mary Tivy, “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario.” *Material History Review*, no. 37 (Spring 1993): 35-51.; Mary Tivy, “Dreams and Nightmares: Changing Visions of the Past at Doon Pioneer Village.” *Ontario History* XCIV (Spring 2002): 79-99.

⁶ Pierre Bourdieu uses the term “habitus” to mean a frame of reference: “the underlying dispositions, grammar or mental schema.” Cited by Gordon Fyfe and Max Ross “Decoding the visitor's gaze: rethinking museum visiting” in *Theorizing Museums: Representing Identity and Diversity in a Changing World*, eds. Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996):132.

Their form and substance changed dramatically, though not always seamlessly, between 1851 and 1985, the period of this study. Local history museums developed initially at time when science museums, such as the museum of the Canadian Institute and later the Ontario Provincial Museum set the standard in which museum collections were arranged and displayed by the prevailing theories of taxonomy. History museums were criticized for their lack of a similar intellectual structure and much of the narrative in this thesis describes the attempts made to place structure or context around the historical artifact. From housing assorted salvaged local relics ordered, if at all, by taxonomy or by sentiment to heroic individuals, these local history museums eventually developed into organized institutions, intent on both managing their collections and engaging their visitors through controlled narratives and recreated environments to depict the history of their region.

A combination of shared factors contributed to the shaping and re-shaping of these museums, which this thesis examines in detail. It begins by looking at the museological values and practices of the institutional predecessors of the local museum, examines the interests of founding individuals and organizations, the concerns of a developing museum profession and provincial and federal funding bodies that pushed for standards of operation for local museums, and ongoing changing notions of historical significance. Woven throughout this narrative is a discussion of the Province of Ontario's influence on local museums, and a detailed examination of the past and present of Doon Heritage Crossroads, a museum whose development is centrally placed institutionally, organizationally and professionally in Ontario's local history museum community. It forms the case study for this thesis.

The Presence of Local History Museums in Ontario

One could consider simply the phenomenal development of local history museums as institutions in the province. In 1875 there were none at all. At the time of this writing, there are about 400.⁷ They grew in waves, the initial surge of museums that appeared before the First World War ebbed during the Depression. Those that survived were joined by a flourish of local museums in the post second world war period leading up to and past the celebrations of the Canadian centennial. Reconstructed historical houses and villages appeared in greater numbers at this time.

Today half of these museums receive subsidies for their operations from the Province of Ontario, which regards these institutions as "community" museums.⁸ Where once these museums were predominately owned by historical societies, now three-quarters of them are owned by municipalities, and in decreasing numbers, by non-profit organizations including historical societies, conservation authorities, and Indian Band Councils. None of these museums are satellites of provincial institutions; there is no museum of provincial history in the province. To give a sense of their activities in Ontario, in 1996 (the most recent statistically-available year), 191 local history museums registered in the provincial Community Museum Operating Grant programme received direct operating support in excess of twenty-three million dollars from provincial and municipal governments. These museums showed earned revenue for the same year in excess of \$14,259,000. Over 1160 paid staff

⁷ Based on listings in <http://www.museumsontario.com/museums/onlineguide/>; accessed 11 June, 2006.

⁸ These museums received funding through an operating requirements administered by the Province's Community Museum Operating grant (CMOG) program, by meeting minimal standards of museum operation. Through this program's administrative files, historical data on these community history museums can be accessed through the Archives of Ontario (OA), RG 47-51. The Province of Ontario defines these museums as "an institution that is established for the purposes of acquiring, conserving, studying, interpreting, assembling, and exhibiting to the public for its instruction and enjoyment a collection of objects and specimens of heritage significance."

and 18,800 museum volunteers interpreted some aspect of local history to more than 2,300,000 visitors.⁹ The number of artifacts preserved in these museum collections was undetermined but can be conservatively estimated at over two million items, with most community history museums accepting hundreds of additional artifacts annually.¹⁰ The capital spending in these structures was not readily calculable; for the case study in this thesis alone, it will exceed twenty-five million dollars by the end of this decade. Yet, very little has been written about the history of these museums and their development in the province.¹¹

The Production of History in the Local History Museum

If the institutional development of local history museums in the province has garnered little ink, their intellectual constructs have produced even less.¹² This thesis examines the “intricate amalgam of historical structures and narratives, practices and strategies of display and concerns and imperatives of various governing ideologies,”¹³ that conspired to organize and reorganize collections and portrayals of the past. This study is interested less in whether museum presentations were historically accurate, and more with how certain artifacts, images and narratives became valid in the museum setting.¹⁴

This thesis augments the literature on institutional and intellectual change in the production of history in museums by examining a group of museums otherwise ignored. In doing so, it also shows the complexity of historical production in museums, which few studies address:¹⁵ the literature on the intellectual constructs and changing interpretations in museums has consistently looked at large

⁹ <http://www.culture.gov.on.ca/english/index.html>; Accessed 11 June 2006.

¹⁰ This is the author’s estimate based on the records of materials in the Province’s Community Museums Operating Grant files from 1989-90. RG-47-41, Archives of Ontario (OA).

¹¹ The history of museums in Canada is chronicled in Archie F. Key, *Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973); his study is cursory, frequently inaccurate and without analysis. Lynne Teather’s “Museum-Making in Canada (to 1972).” *MUSE*, no. 2&3 (Summer/Fall 1992): 21-40, examines the history of museum development in terms of periods of growth. Published essays include, Ken Doherty, “The Common Thread: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Museums in Peterborough” *Ontario History* LXXXVI, no. 2 (June 1994): 133-148; Dorothy Duncan, “From Mausoleums to Malls: What Next?” *Ontario History* LXXXVI, no. 2 (June 1994): 107-118; Joanne Lea, “Defining Terms: the Pioneers and other Myths” *Museum Quarterly* 18:1 (February 1990): 25-35; Margaret May, “Janet Carnochan, “Pioneer Museum Worker 1839-1926” *Museum Quarterly* 12:2 (Spring 1983):17-21. Ian Kerr-Wilson’s unpublished thesis “Historical Societies and their Museums: A Survey of the Ontario Case,” (M.M.St. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1988) includes a case study of the Murney Tower Museum in Kingston, Ontario.

¹² See Tivy, “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario,” and Chris Miller-Marti, “Local History Museums and the Creation of the Past.” *MUSE* 5:2 (Summer 1987): 36-39.

¹³ Terms used by Sherman and Rogoff to describe the process of production in history museums. Daniel J. Sherman and Igrit Rogoff eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994): ix.

¹⁴ These are the terms Gaby Porter uses in her study: “Seeing through solidity: a feminist perspective on museums” in *Theorizing Museums*: 105-126. I cannot state my goal in any better words.

¹⁵ With the noted exception of the following by Lynne Teather, “Unlocking the Secrets: Material Evidence and Museums,” *Museum Quarterly* 18, no.2 (May 1990): 3-7, and “From Silk Purses to Sow’s Ears,” *Material History Bulletin* 32 (Fall 1990): 29-43. The literature on the intellectual constructs and changing interpretations in museums has consistently looked at large institutions or on single case studies; see for instance, Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg*. (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).

institutions or on single case studies, none of which are Canadian.¹⁶ And, while several studies have derived arguments from Foucault arguing that the ‘modern’ museum is an institution formed towards the social control of knowledge,¹⁷ this thesis shows that although the shaping of local museums and their collections was usually conducted to honour community founders toward stabilizing community identity, this work was highly contingent on individual agency and immediate circumstances. The narrative in the thesis is presented chronologically, but begins with a contemporary discussion on museums and historical meaning.

A Dialogue on Museums, History and Culture (Chapter 1)

All history is a production: a deliberate selecting, ordering, and evaluation of past events and experiences. Community museums [in Ontario] are actively involved in the process of production of images of the past, and it is important to begin to investigate this process.¹⁸

In the last twenty years there has been a sharp rise of scholarly interest in historical structures, narratives, and practices within museums. Much has been made of the role of the museum as an institutional site for political, social or cultural reification. This work is reviewed and discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, designed to present a foundation for the historical and theoretical contexts, as well as the cultural purposes, of local history museums in Ontario. This scholarly discourse examines briefly the historical shaping of museums and more extensively the production of history in museums.

Reservoirs of the Past: Local History Museums to 1945 (Chapters 2–4)

One must look at museums historically, not because method dictates it, but because they are essentially historical. By putting forward an image of the past and managing the handing on of tradition through artworks and artifacts, museums participate in a historical production of history. Historiographic through and through, museums thereby beg the question of their historical appearance, of the role they fulfill toward history, in history.¹⁹

From the literature discussion this thesis embarks on a long voyage covering over a century of ideas and activities that shaped the preservation and presentation of the past in local history museums in Ontario. The first leg of this journey begins in the middle of the nineteenth century, and concludes at the end of Second World War. Chapter Two: “Making Objects Meaningful: the Scientific Paradigm and Ontario Museums 1851-1912” describes the object-based epistemology that defined museum collections during this period in Ontario as it did elsewhere in the North America. This prehistory of

¹⁶ John Dorst looks at the formulation and presentation of the local past in two museums in the same area in *The Written Suburb*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).

¹⁷ See for instance, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. (New York: Routledge, 1992).

¹⁸ Chris Miller-Marti "Local History Museums and the Creation of the Past" *MUSE* 5:2 (Summer 1987):36. Published almost twenty years ago, this is one of the few studies of the manufacturing of the past at a local history museum in Ontario. It focuses on the preservation and presentation of history at Ye Olde Museum in Beachville, Ontario.

¹⁹ Didier Maleuvre, *Museum Memories: History, Technology, Art*. (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999):1.

the local museum is highlighted by a fresh look at the work of David Boyle, Ontario's first museologist.

Chapter Three, "The Historical Paradigm and Local History Museums in Ontario to 1912" examines the influence of this scientific model on the ways in which historical societies formed and interpreted their collections. While science museums used taxonomy and classification to mirror the natural state of the world, history museums had no equivalent framework for organizing collections as real-world referents. They adopted the taxonomic model when possible, but relied heavily on a salvage approach to rescuing historical relics regarded as self-evident residue. These two methods dominated the intellectual purpose of museum practice in communities in Ontario from their inception until well after the Second World War. Along with historical data such as photographs, documents and written local histories, relics compiled an inventory of materials for further research. Interest in community founders, local archaeology and local heroes directed the collecting focus. The umbrella organization for museums operated by local historical societies was the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) whose members shared information on practices at their museums, and whose leaders included David Boyle, archaeologist and superintendent of the Ontario Provincial Museum. The OHS sought unsuccessfully to organize a provincial museum of history, and toward this end produced "The Canadian Historical Exhibition" in 1899. The construction of this exhibit provides a profile of the historical production in museums in this period, giving us insight to the cognitive basis of identifying historical significance and the conventions of categorizing material history.

Chapter Four, "The Waterloo Historical Society and its Museum" leads into the case study for this thesis. It examines in detail the historical philosophy, heritage concerns and museum operations of the Waterloo Historical Society (WHS), whose founder became a leader in the OHS, and whose collection and membership later forged the charter for Ontario's first outdoor museum village, Doon Pioneer Village, in 1954. Through the lens of this site, this thesis follows the development of museums in the post second world war period.

Professionalism, Narrative and Verisimilitude: Contextualizing the Past in Ontario Local History Museums 1945-1985 (Chapters 5–9)

How things get displayed in museums cannot be divorced from questions concerning the training of curators or the structures of museum control and management.²⁰

The third and final section of this thesis deals with local history museums in Ontario from the end of the Second World War up to 1985. This was an unprecedented period of museum growth and professional development for museum workers in the province. A rationale for this expanding field is proposed in Chapter Five, "Pioneers and Pioneer Museologists." Gradually, as in other museums across North America, the local history museum model changed from a passive library of artifacts collected for historical research, to an active display or theatre of material history, with the museum visitor, rather than the artifact, at its core. Throughout this process, the dynamic of recontextualization to enhance visitor experience subtly shifted the historical artifact from its previous position in the museum as an autonomous relic of the past, to one subordinate to context. The artifact was historically reconstituted for public consumption through two methods; text-based, narrative exhibits; and verisimilitude, the recreation of the historical environment in which the artifact would have been

²⁰ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge: London and New York, 1995): 176.

originally used. At its most elaborate, artifacts were recontextualized into historic houses, and buildings into historic villages, wherein the audience could fully immerse themselves in a tableau of the past, guided by costumed interpreters disguised as inhabitants. Although presented as absolute, the narratives and reconstructions formed by these collecting and exhibiting practices were contingent on a multitude of shifting factors, such as accepted museum practice, physical, economic and human resources available to the museum operation, and prevailing beliefs about the past and community identity.

While the case study, Doon Pioneer Village, was part of a province-wide cohort of local history museums, the details of its inception from a local history museum to a historical village, its growth and topsy-turvy development, its visions and revisions of the past as presented in the narrative here, convey much more than any broad brush-stroke could, both the complexity and contingency of preserving and producing heritage in a local museum.

This philosophical shift and its ramifications is charted through Chapter Six, “A Fellowship of Museums and the Education of Andrew Taylor 1945-1960,” Chapter Seven, “Controlling the Community Museum: Collections Narrative in Ontario and at Doon 1960-1971”; Chapter Eight, “Standardizing the Collected Past: Professionalizing the Community Museum 1972-1985” and Chapter Nine: “Reconstructing the Past at Doon: 1983-1985.” This last chapter examines the outcome of this paradigm shift as it transformed Doon Pioneer Village into Doon Heritage Crossroads. In this process the collected past at Doon was reevaluated and recontextualized. This chapter is followed by an epilogue. By the end of the thesis study, Doon and other local museums across the province, edited to better engage the public, were, paradoxically, in denial of their own pasts.

Chapter 1: Museums: An Historical and Philosophical Review

Introduction

Although the literature and subject are both expansive, the history of museums is a record of focused collecting and display activities within a limited number of formats. Universally, the collection serves as a mirror to both the exterior and interior worlds of the collector or collecting institution. Of prime interest to me are discussions in the literature of museum prototypes and belief systems that have shaped museums and collections to the present. Like Stephen Bann, my interest in this historical review and my study is to understand the relationship of Ontario history museums and collectors to the “historical-mindedness of their age.”¹ The first section of the literature review “Museum History and History Museums” examines materials on the history of museums, especially history museums. While the museum model is actually quite small, it lies across a wide landscape over an extended time, and in this review, eventually arrives at Ontario community history museums.

Historical presentation in any museum is a function of many variables, including the intellectual, social and political context of the collection and/or the institution; the intent of the historical enterprise; and the object-centred basis on which museums construct knowledge. As Daniel J. Sherman and Igrit Rogoff describe much better in *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, the presentation of the past in museums is: “an intricate amalgam of historical structures and narratives, practices and strategies of display and concerns and imperatives of various governing ideologies.”² Nowhere is this made more apparent than in T.H. Breen’s, *Imagining the Past: East Hampton Histories*.³ Breen’s account is of his professional role as a “hired humanist” to help a community construct its history in a museum format. It becomes a fascinating ethnography of the process of finding and making meaning and historical narrative from objects, landscape, documents and local myth, under the directions of competing local interests. This work is noted up front here; Breen’s account is singular in the opus of material on museums. The second section of the literature review “Making Histories in Museums” discusses works on the construction of history in museums and reviews dissonant social historical critiques of this history. This criticism is juxtaposed to studies on other dynamics that influence the shaping of the past as we see it; the function of heritage, the nature of collective memory and the limits of historical narrative.

The third section of the literature review, “Objects and Texts: Deconstructing the Late Twentieth Century Museum” is the epistemological piece - a review of cultural criticism on the museum and its forms of knowledge. It underlines for the reader recent thinking on objects as the elements of construction in a historical narrative or presentation. A growing interest in museums as cultural devices on the part of historians, cultural theorists and museologists has produced a diverse collection of works reconsidering the cultural function of museums and reassessing the construction of knowledge in these institutions. Reflecting the very small amount of written material on the case study, the brief summary of the literature review covers this material.

¹ Stephen Bann. *The Clothing of Clio: A Study of the Representation of History in Nineteenth-century Britain and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 78.

² Daniel J. Sherman and Igrit Rogoff eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

³ T.H. Breen, *Imaging the Past: East Hampton Histories* (Reading: Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1989).

Museum History and History Museums

The history of museums in the Western world has been chronicled since the turn of the century, in the United States with George Brown Goode's 1888 essay "Museum History and History Museums," and in Britain with David Murray's three volume compilation: *Museums: Their History and Use*.⁴ Since then, several authors such as Germaine Bazin, *The Museum Age*, Alma Wittlin, *Museums: In Search of a Useable Future*, Edward P. Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums*, Archie F. Key, *Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums* and Dylan Ripley, *The Sacred Grove: Essays on Museums*, have constructed a history of the museum from inception to present, developing a chronicle, narrative or analysis from evidence of collections.⁵ Common to their work is the dual definition of the museum as a prepared collection of objects and a place for storage and display. Characteristic of the American authors, Wittlin, Goode and Alexander, is their focus on assessing the transitional periods in museum history based on museum efforts toward public education, whereas in the history of European and British institutions "public" accessibility is considered within the transition of collection ownership from private hands to public tenure. Key's work on the overall history of museums is derived mainly from these other authors and used as a preface for his study of Canadian museums. Wittlin limits, her study of Canadian museums to one page; Alexander to one sentence. Neither Ripley nor Bazin mention Canadian institutions.

The history of museums is viewed as a series of periods distinguished by collections and their purpose. The consensus is that the genesis of museums lays both ideologically and semantically in ancient Greece. The word museum derives from the Greek word mouseion, a temple to the nine Muses, goddesses of inspiration, learning and the arts. The most famous of these classical museums was in Alexandria, founded about the 3rd century B.C. Like museums today this mouseion was a gathering place of objects and ideas. As these authors relate, the idea of the museum as a public place disappeared until the eighteenth century. Until that time collections remained largely in private hands, for private purposes. During the middle ages, in what Anthony Shelton calls a "God-centred" universe, the church was the largest collector of objects, valued as religious reliquaries with magical potency.⁶ Bazin identifies a shift in collecting behaviour in the renaissance from a collections model

⁴ George Brown Goode, "Museum History and History Museums" in Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, ed. *The Origins of Natural Science in America: The Essays of George Brown Goode* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), 297-320; David Murray, *Museums: Their History and Use*, 3 vols. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1904).

⁵ Germaine Bazin, *The Museum Age*, trans. Jane van Nuis Cahill (New York: Universe Books, 1967); Alma S. Wittlin, *Museums: In Search of a Usable Future* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1970); Edward P. Alexander, *Museums in Motion: An Introduction to the History and Functions of Museums* (American Association for State and Local History, 1979); Dillon Ripley, *The Sacred Grove: Essays on Museums* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969). These authors derive a pattern of museum development through slightly different routes. Bazin's detailed study looks at the evolution of collections and museums over periods of time distinguished by political, social, and aesthetic changes in Europe, and in North America, typified by philanthropy, object-based scientific methods of inquiry and public education initiative. Wittlin's historical analysis focuses instead on the motivations for collecting that shaped different kinds of collections, and ultimately different kinds of museums as these collections became public. Alexander chooses to write the history of museums by museum type, and unlike the other authors specifically discusses history museums. Ripley's smaller book is more of a brief overview of museums, with chapters such as a "Glance at the Nineteenth Century."

⁶ Anthony Alan Shelton "Cabinets of Transgression: Renaissance Collections and the Incorporation of the New World" in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal eds., *The Cultures of Collecting*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 177-203.

centred on religious beliefs to a secularized model consolidating wealth and power in collections; here museums are identified as the private inventories of the powerful, such as the Medici. This period is also noted by the beginnings of “cabinets of curiosities,” also called “closet of rarities” and “Wunderkammern.” Found across Europe, these collections shared a common focus on natural history, on unusual man-made items and on items associated with famous historical figures. They were encyclopedic in scope. The world was represented in miniature by representative object samples and groupings.

According to these museum historians, by the seventeenth century both cabinets and galleries for the display of art had places in the homes of the nobility. In the late eighteenth century some of the largest collections in Europe were nationalized as state museums through political reform, also thoroughly discussed by Bazin. During the nineteenth century other museums gradually became publicly accessible as the collections of learned societies, mechanics institutes and others were exhibited.⁷

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries a new model of museum developed—the multidisciplinary museum—in many ways it was a cabinet of curiosities writ very large. The above authors cite the formation of large arts and science museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in North America, frequently a consequence of government interests in natural resource development and national promotion at international exhibitions. Centred on a classified and researched collection, displayed for public education and managed by professionals, these large museums reached their apex as research institutions in the period 1880-1920, considered by many as the “golden age” of museums. The authors cover comparably less of the twentieth century. Ripley and Wittlin stress the educational imperative of the twentieth century museum, but there is a surprising lack of comment on the rise of history museums and their views of the past.

While these studies are intensive in detail they lack the theoretical force of histories of museums recently published by museologists and cultural historians. Not content to let a somewhat progressive view of museum history lie undisturbed, others have reframed these museum periods as expressions of world view based on classification and collecting practices. Susan Pearce, in *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*⁸ sets out a structure for understanding the genesis, history and philosophy of museums, based on the common goal of institutionalized collecting. Her configuration (revealing her archaeologist background) is built on four successive periods of museum creation; “archaic” (up to and including the medieval period), “early modern” (renaissance collections and cabinets of curiosities), “classic modern” (museums from the eighteenth to mid twentieth centuries) and “post-modern” (mid-twentieth century to the present). The early modern period (beginning about 1650), she sees as the onset of manic widespread collecting driven by curiosity, the Renaissance stress on individualism and contemporary early capitalism. This method of classifying objects based on allegory and physical similarities was succeeded by the taxonomic models of the “classic modern” period, notably in museums of natural science. Ultimately, Pearce maintains that a shift toward a modern model of understanding objects in terms of context took place in the early twentieth century. This move she says, led to the development of habitat groups, and historic sites, and ultimately a move in the late part of the twentieth century to a shift in focus in museums from artifact collections toward community concerns.

⁷ The literature seems unclear about when the usage of the term museum became common.

⁸ Susan Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1992).

Susan Pearce's colleague, Eileen Hooper-Greenhill has recast the history of museums in the shadow of Foucault's *Order of Things*. In *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*,⁹ she argues against the notion of a rational evolutionary development of museums from disorganized private collections to public centres of learning as the authors above suggest. Rather, Hooper-Greenhill adopts the argument of discontinuity between periods of time when collections are known to have been made and spaces set aside for them. Using Foucault's notion of epistemes and looking at how objects were perceived, categorized and exhibited at different periods from the renaissance to the twentieth century, she argues that major shifts in understanding the world and its metaphoric representation in museums provide the underlying reason for the substantial differences in the collections known to exist: one might state simply that as world views changed, the view of the world presented metaphorically in collections also changed. By examining the Renaissance collections of the Medici and cabinets of curiosities in the 1500s, the collections of the Royal Society in the seventeenth, and the multidisciplinary museum of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, she distinguishes three major paradigms for viewing the world and collecting it. These she labels as renaissance, classical, and modern, each with defining notions of interpreting natural and man-made objects. The renaissance is typified by a centripetal view of the universe, captured in early cabinets of curiosities. What both Pearce and Hooper-Greenhill described as the classical episteme, one defined by the ordering of objects by similar physical characteristics, is exemplified in the collections of early museums to which the public had access, such as the Ashmolean museum, the collections of Sir Hans Sloane (the nucleus of the British Museum), and Charles Wilson Peale's museum, regarded as the first public museum in the United States.¹⁰ Aimed at comprehensiveness, this episteme according to Hooper-Greenhill was finally replaced in the early nineteenth century by another, a "modern" paradigm that focused on chronology in its language and ordering of material. Hooper-Greenhill concludes that this last phase was directed in part by state interests in social control, and this argument is taken to full force by yet another author looking to Foucault's writings for an interpretive understanding of museums. Tony Bennett in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, contends that by the twentieth century public museums served primarily as hegemonic devices, used to control knowledge and present a view of the world to create order and stability.¹¹ Although highly rhetorical, his observations on the construction of meaning in museums are significant to this thesis and discussed further in the literature review.

⁹ Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Stephen Bann in "Preface" *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1999), xvii-xxii, also argues for an interpretation of historical understanding based on Foucault's model of epistemes, showing not only that antiquarianism was not insufficient history, but that the map of knowledge at any one time has to be reconstituted structurally and synchronically, rather than through the "lazy and untested assumption that intellectual practices evolved uninterruptedly from age to age." Eileen Mak points out in her doctoral thesis, "Patterns of Change: Sources of Influence: An Historical Study of the Canadian Museum and the Middle Class 1850-1950" (Ph.D diss., University of British Columbia, 1996) that others have also argued the dissimilarities between modern museums and their precursors, citing Steven Mullaney, "Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance," *Representations* 3 (Summer 1983): 43.

¹⁰ On the Ashmolean Museum, see R.F. Ovenell, *The Ashmolean Museum 1683-1894* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1896), on Peale and his museum see Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1983).

¹¹ Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge: London and New York, 1995).

Similar in some ways to the thinking of Pearce and Hooper-Greenhill is Krzysztof Pomian's *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500-1800*.¹² Although not a comprehensive study of the history of museums per se, Pomian also seeks to understand how and why perceptions of the collectible shifted in the period he studies. He argues that objects formed visible semiophores for the invisible. Objects communicated and collectors mediated that invisible world, something that was spatially and temporally distant, such as God, or the past. That objects were at one time viewed as scrap and at another as collectible, Pomian attributes to the growth in humanism and antiquarianism and their classes of semiophores: antiquities, the exotic, art and science.

From these diverse and sometimes contradictory works several enduring aspects of the museum form can be recognized. Objects are collected and valued across periods of time for their perceived social power. Frequently this power is derived from conditions of rarity, a relationship to the mythic, or of physical evidence of structures of the universe across space and time. Changing world view casts certain objects into and out of collections; their meaning is contingent on existing circumstances. The collectors (later, the curators and museum administrators) shape their collections within changing intellectual and physical boundaries. Categorizations of collections and the main typologies of museums we use today: art, science, history and anthropology, can be distinguished in early collecting and organizing practices these authors describe.

Cabinets of Curiosities: The Precursor of the Modern Museum

According to Francis Bacon, a learned gentleman in the sixteenth century required:

A Goodly, huge cabinet, wherein whatsoever the hand of man by exquisite art or engine has made rare in stuff, form or motion; whatsoever the singularity, chance and the shuffle of things hath produced,; whatsoever Nature has wrought in things that want life and may be kept; shall be sorted and included.¹³

Hooper-Greenhill may be correct in her ideological separation of cabinets of curiosities from what she sees as the modern museum episteme, but they were the models for the first public museums in North America, and their contents are still to be found in public museums today. An interest in understanding the world views of collectors and the function of their collections is addressed in specific studies of these cabinets. In Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinets of Curiosities in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Europe*,¹⁴ contributing essayists look at the rational aspects of these types of collections, as well as the ideological basis for their collection. Trade in various types of specimens and artifacts are outlined in several essays, which describe the traffic in rare goods into Europe, such as J.C.H. King's "North American Ethnography in the Collection of Sir Hans Sloane."¹⁵ In John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The*

¹² Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice 1500-1800*. trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Protier (London: Polity Press, 1990).

¹³ Frances Bacon, *Getsa Grayorum* (1594) cited in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinets of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 1.

¹⁴ Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinets of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

¹⁵ J.C.H. King "North American Ethnography in the Collection of Sir Hans Sloane" in Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, eds., *The Origins of Museums*, 232-237.

Cultures of Collecting,¹⁶ a number of essays describe early collectors, the trade in collectibles and motivations for collecting. Historians such as Anthony Shelton regard these cabinets, composed of both exotic and natural history collections, as straddling the worlds of metaphysics and natural science. Shelton's essay highlights the cosmological uncertainties New World objects presented to European collectors, attempting to present a microcosm of the universe in their cabinets.¹⁷ Stephen Bann's study of one collector, John Balgrave, and his *wunderkammern*, shows, as do other essayists, that these collections were firmly tied to the self-identities of their collectors.¹⁸

Marjorie Swann's *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England*¹⁹ notes that the term cabinet eventually came to encompass the collection and the space that held it, either a room or a piece of case furniture to hold specimens. She argues that cabinets, unlike art collections, could be created by men of "middling" social class and wealth, and that this was "one aspect of the brave new world of consumer goods that emerged during the Renaissance."²⁰ Her arguments foreshadow writings on the public museum of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as middle class institutions.²¹ Referring to James Clifford and others, Swann concurs that collecting was, and is, an important part of identity formation, both cultural and personal.²² Her observation of the significance of collections catalogues is of special interest. She rightly regards this "impulse to textualize collections" as important, and the cabinet catalogues as artifacts in themselves; the collectors own explanations of the collections. The catalogues provided a rationale for the object's presence in the collection, and can be seen as an equivalent to today's inventory descriptions and exhibit labels. Cabinets became further organized into classes of materials broadly divided into naturalia (natural history specimens), artificialia (man-made objects) exotica (objects from foreign regions) and memorabilia (souvenirs). A *kunstkammer* was a chamber of art. These subject categories parallel the disciplinary divisions of museums that followed. Cabinets formed the foundation of research collections affiliated with universities and later public museums. In England, Tradescant's cabinet, opened to visitors by the mid-1600s, later became the Ashmolean museum at Oxford University. The earliest surviving account of the Tradescant collection was recorded by Peter Mundy,

¹⁶ John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, eds., *The Cultures of Collecting* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Anthony Alan Shelton "Cabinets of Transgression: Renaissance Collections and the Incorporation of the New World" in *The Cultures of Collecting*, 177-203.

¹⁸ Stephen Bann, *Under the Sign: John Bargrave as Collector, Traveller, and Witness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994): Other scholars have argued that the *wunderkammern*, given the objects they held and the system of classification used, could not have been a forerunner to the modern museum but were an institution specific to the Renaissance. See Steven Mullaney, "Strange Things, Gross Terms, Curious Customs: The Rehearsal of Cultures in the Late Renaissance," *Representations* 3 (Summer 1983): 43.

¹⁹ Marjorie Swann *Curiosities and Texts: The Culture of Collecting in Early Modern England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

²⁰ *Ibid*, 5.

²¹ This is a major interpretive theme, coupled with progressive ideas of universal education, in literature on museums in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See for instance, Joel Orosz *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990); Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, "The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal: Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia Museum 1790-1820" in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale*, Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward eds., (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 219-236; Eileen Mak "Canadian Museums and the Middle Class 1850-1950," Ph.D. thesis University of British Columbia, 1996.

²² As James Clifford notes "In the West collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture and authenticity." James Clifford "On Collecting Art and Culture" in *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: University of Cambridge Press 1988) 218.

who 'went to view some rarities' at John Tradescant's in 1634. It is clear from Mundy's account that the collection was encyclopedic; a site 'where a Man might in one daye behold and collecte into one place more curiosities than hee should see if hee spent all his life in Travell'.²³ Sir Hans Sloane's cabinet had 80,000 objects at the time of his death in 1753. Parliament bought it and it formed the nucleus of the British Museum.²⁴

The Cabinet: Early Museums in North America and the Syntax of Nature

The history of museums in the United States is not extensively reviewed anywhere. The cabinet was the model for the first museums in North America. Some of these are described in Walter Muir Whitehill, *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Five Episodes in the Evolution of American Museums*.²⁵ Joel Orosz maintains in his study, *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870*,²⁶ that it was the American Enlightenment that transformed private cabinets into public museums, distinguished by a curatorial concern for public education through object display and study. He regards Du Simitière's cabinet, opened in 1782 in Philadelphia as "The American Museum," as the first private cabinet transformed into a public museum.²⁷ While Du Simitière may have modeled

²³ 'In the museum of Mr. John Tradescant are the following things: first in the courtyard there lie two ribs of a whale, also a very ingenious little boat of bark; then in the garden all kinds of foreign plants, which are to be found in a special little book which Mr. Tradescant has had printed about them. In the museum itself we saw a salamander, a chameleon, a pelican, a remora, a lanhado from Africa, a white partridge, a goose which has grown in Scotland on a tree, a flying squirrel, another squirrel like a fish, all kinds of bright colored birds from India, a number of things changed into stone, amongst others a piece of human flesh on a bone, gourds, olives, a piece of wood, an ape's head, a cheese, etc; all kinds of shells, the hand of a mermaid, the hand of a mummy, a very natural wax hand under glass, all kinds of precious stones, coins, a picture wrought in feathers, a small piece of wood from the cross of Christ, pictures in perspective of Henry IV and Louis XIII of France, who are shown, as in nature, on a polished steel mirror when this is held against the middle of the picture, a little box in which a landscape is seen in perspective, pictures from the church of S. Sophia in Constantinople copied by a Jew into a book, two cups of rinocerode, a cup of an E. Indian alcedo which is a kind of unicorn, many Turkish and other foreign shoes and boots, a sea parrot, a toad-fish, an elk's hoof with three claws, a bat as large as a pigeon, a human bone weighing 42 lbs., Indian arrows such as are used by the executioners in the West Indies-when a man is condemned to death, they lay open his back with them and he dies of it, an instrument used by the Jews in circumcision, some very light wood from Africa, the robe of the King of Virginia, a few goblets of agate, a girdle such as the Turks wear in Jerusalem, the passion of Christ carved very daintily on a plumstone, a large magnet stone, a S. Francis in wax under glass, as also a S. Jerome, the Pater Noster of Pope Gregory XV, pipes from the East and West Indies, a stone found in the West Indies in the water, whereon are graven Jesus, Mary and Joseph, a beautiful present from the Duke of Buckingham, which was of gold and diamonds affixed to a feather by which the four elements were signified, Isidor's MS of de natura hominis, a scourge with which Charles V is said to have scourged himself, a hat band of snake bones'. On Tradescant's collection and the Ashmolean museums see R.F. Ovenall, *The Ashmolean Museum 1683-1894* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) and Arthur MacGregor ed., *Tradescant's Rarities: Essays on the Foundation of the Ashmolean Museum 1683 with a Catalogue of the Surviving Early Collections* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

²⁴ On Sir Hans Sloane and the British Museum see, J. Mordaunt Crook, *The British Museum* (New York: Praeger, 1972), Arthur MacGregor ed., *Sir Hans Sloane: Collector, Scientist, Antiquary* (London, 1994), Gavin R de Beer, *Sir Hans Sloane and the British Museum* (London, 1953).

²⁵ Walter Muir Whitehill ed., *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Five Episodes in the Evolution of American Museums* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1967).

²⁶ Joel J. Orosz, *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

²⁷ Orosz, *Curators and Culture*, 36. Bonnie Pitman identifies the first American public cabinet as the Charleston Library Society's natural history collections formed in 1773. Bonnie Pitman, "Muses, Museums and Memories" *Daedalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, 128:3 Special Issue "America's Museums," (Summer 1999), 1-32.

his aspirations on the British Museum he had no parliamentary fund to support his enterprise and it failed with his death in 1784. But the idea of a public museum was continued by artist Charles Willson Peale who opened his “Philadelphia Museum” in 1786. Peale’s cabinet has caught the greatest attention of historians of American museums, due to its size, arrangements, the talents of its artist curator and the archival materials that have survived.²⁸ Peale’s “world in miniature,” as he called it, was one designed by God, but ordered according to Linnean’s nomenclature.²⁹ As Peale stated, in his museum “the great book of nature may be opened and studied, leaf by leaf, and a knowledge gained of the character which the great Creator has stamped on each being.”³⁰ Peale’s history collections were more problematic, resistant to taxonomy, as implied in Gary Kulik’s essay “Designing the Past: History Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present.”³¹ Kulik sees Peale’s history collections as random and unconnected, amounting to a shrine of revolutionary leaders. Despite persistent lobbying Peale was unable to get the national endowment he sought to support his museum, and his sons moved more and more toward side-shows to attract a paying public. By 1850 the building and some of the collections had been bought by P.T. Barnum.³²

Pitman sees museums in the United States in this period as forming one of two types: public collections for educational purposes and “dime museums,” commercial cabinets of curiosities, such as those of P.T. Barnum. Orosz’s *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870*, also views the American museum in this time as one of two things: an institution “without pedigree” and one more concerned with research, and public education. By 1870 Orosz claims, a balance between these two functions had been reached in public museums, which he views as a uniquely American museum condition, so much so that he labels it the “American Compromise.” Orosz believes this model remains the prototype for museums in the United States.

The history of cabinets and museums in Canada, and specifically Ontario, is sketchy at best. Archie F. Key relates his chronicle of museum development in *Beyond Four Walls* with no overriding framework but chronology, and a view that Canadian museums foundered until after the Depression.³³

²⁸ On Peale and his museum see Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World* (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1983), Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980), David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, “The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal: Charles Willson Peale’s Philadelphia Museum 1790-1820” in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale*, Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward eds., (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 219-236, Susan Stewart, “Death and Life in That Order, in the Works of Charles Willson Peale,” in *The Cultures of Collecting* ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 204-223.

²⁹ Shirley Teresa Wajda “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them: American Children’s Cabinets of Curiosities” in Leah Dilworth, ed., *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 42-65.

³⁰ Charles Willson Peale “Introduction to a Course of Lectures on Natural History” Cited in Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World*, 123.

³¹ Gary Kulik, “Designing the Past: History-Museum Exhibitions from Peale to the Present” in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* eds. Warren Leone and Roy Rosenzweig (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 3-37.

³² Peale solicited annual subscriptions instead, counting the president, vice-president and members of the cabinet, senate and house among his supporters. Peale is credited with influencing the founders of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. Many of his Native American collections ended up in the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University.

³³ Archie F. Key, *Beyond Four Walls: the Origins and Development of Canadian Museums* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973).

Although his book is cursory, he proceeds province by province and provides a mine of (unfortunately) unreferenced detail. In her essay *Museum-Making in Canada to 1972*, J. Lynne Teather notes the rise and fall of various types of museums and the fates of their collections in Canada over almost two centuries to 1972.³⁴ Rather than viewing these collections ideologically, she emphasizes the overall condition of “the museum movement” as falling within one of four chronological periods: “the birth of the museum movement to 1860,” “the germination of the museum movement 1861-1919,” “cultivating the museum movement 1919-1949,” and “museums in flower 1950-1972.” She concludes that the local museum would become the most common museum type in Canada, flowering especially in the post-war period. More recently published is Robyn Gillam’s *Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public*.³⁵ Relying largely on secondary sources she also puts forth a history of Canadian museums as a preface to her examination of controversial Canadian museum exhibitions in the 1980s. The history of community museums in Ontario is briefly outlined in a paper by Dorothy Duncan “From Mausoleums to Malls: What Next?”³⁶

According to Key and Teather, Canada’s earliest recorded collections are earlier than those made in the United States. Collections of religious relics in Quebec date from the 1600s; these still exist in the collections of Séminaire de Quebec, Université Laval, Musée des Soeurs Grisse and Ste. Anne de Beaupré. Private cabinets open to the public for a fee were established prior to 1820 in Newfoundland and Montreal, and in 1827 a commercial museum opened at Niagara Falls.³⁷ As historians have shown, the signature growth of museums in the nineteenth century in Canada and the United States was fully integrated with the rise of natural science. Both Key and Teather attribute the early formation of natural history collections under individuals and agencies as the first “modern” museums in the country with the goals of collecting, research and education. They cite the work and collection of Rev. Thomas McCulloch who established the Pictou Academy in 1816, and developed a collection of natural history specimens for teaching, regarded by Audubon as the “finest in North America.”³⁸ Noted also by Gilliam is the expansion of mechanic’s institutes in the Maritimes in the pre-confederation period which fostered the growth of collections there, usually in natural sciences. In 1836 Charles Fothergill’s proposal to the Upper Canadian assembly that they fund a museum of natural history and fine arts to make public his private collection of 5,000 specimens was denied. Four years later fire destroyed his collections, but a provincially funded museum was initiated by Egerton Ryerson under the Public School Act of 1853. As John Carter and others relate, these collections were intended as educational resources for teacher training, and the museum was located at the Normal School in Toronto.³⁹ Objects were vital supports for teaching in a period that predated access to photographic reproduction. Like Fothergill’s lyceum collection, Ryerson focused his attention on natural history and reproduction art.

³⁴ J. Lynne Teather, “Museum-Making in Canada (to 1972),” *Muse* no.2&3 (Summer/Fall 1992), p.21-40.

³⁵ Robyn Gillam, *Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public* (Banff: Banff Centre Press, 2001).

³⁶ Dorothy Duncan “From Mausoleums to Malls: What Next?” *Ontario History* LXXXVI, no. 2 (June 1994), 107-118.

³⁷ The Niagara Falls Museum was a treasure hold of items ranging from natural history to archaeology, exotica and folk costume as well memorabilia from those who performed stunts in and over the falls. Located at the largest tourist attraction in North America, what R.L. Way describes as being “a colossal carnival” by the 1870s, the Niagara Falls museum was self-supporting. 37 R.L. Way *Ontario’s Niagara Parks: A History* (n.p. Niagara Parks Commission 1960).

³⁸ Teather, p. 23. Also see Carla Morse, “Early Museum Makers in Nova Scotia: 1800 – 1860” (Master of Museum Studies Research paper, University of Toronto, 1991).

³⁹ John Carter, “Ryerson, Hodgins, and Boyle: Early Innovators in Ontario School Museums,” *Ontario History*, LXXXVI, no.2 (June 1994): 119-131.

The Ascendancy and Decline of Natural History Museums

Historians have argued that natural history provided the metaphor for the growth of a new country in nineteenth century Canada.⁴⁰ In addition to Ryerson's museum, in Ontario, universities developed scientific teaching collections, and societies such as the Canadian Institute held a collection of materials made by their members.⁴¹ Canada's first purpose built museum building, the Redpath Museum, was opened in 1882 at McGill University to preserve and display the valuable collections of Sir William Dawson, a noted Canadian natural scientist. The remains from large expositions and government interest in natural resource exploitation, promoted the formation of natural history collections such as the Canadian Geological Survey, which collected the founding materials of the National Museum of Canada. Morris Zaslow's *Reading the Rocks*, relates the roots of the present-day Canadian Museum of Civilization in the Canadian geological survey.⁴² The collections of its first geologist William Logan were made in the 1840s and in 1853 he received what is considered the first government grant in Canada for the maintenance of a museum. The Provincial Museum of Nova Scotia supported similar collections as an economic and industrial exhibition. Provincial museum histories showing the scientific interests of their founders include W. Austin Squires, *The History and Development of the New Brunswick Museum (1842-1945)* which had its beginnings in the collections of a natural scientist and the mechanics institute; Peter Corley-Smith, *White Bears and Other Curiosities: The First 100 Years of the Royal British Columbia Museum*, and Eileen Mak, "Ward of the Government, Child of the Institute: The Provincial Museum of Nova Scotia (1868-1951)"⁴³ The history of the Royal Ontario Museum is the subject of Charles Trick Currelly's memoir, *I Brought the Ages Home* and Lovat Dickson's *The Museum Makers: The Story of the Royal Ontario Museum*.⁴⁴ The Royal Ontario Museum collections have their genesis in early scientific collections of the University of Toronto colleges, the archaeological and ethnological collections of the Ontario Provincial Museum and its predecessors, the Canadian Institute and the Ontario Historical Society, and Middle Eastern archaeological materials collected by Currelly and his supporters. The gathering of these collections into the Royal Ontario Museum is detailed in Lynne Teather's recent publication, *The Royal Ontario Museum, A Prehistory, 1830-1914*.⁴⁵

The growing connection between museum collections and a public clientele underlines analytical histories of large museums in this period. The increasing importance of public education in the public museums in North America is the theme of Orosz's study *Curators and Culture*⁴⁶, of

⁴⁰ Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.) Cited in Teather, p.28

⁴¹ Gerald Killan "The Canadian Institute and the Origins of the Ontario Archaeological Tradition 1850-1884" *Ontario Archaeology* 34 (1980), 3-16.

⁴² Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rocks*, (Ottawa: MacMillan, 1975).

⁴³ W. Austin Squires, *The History and Development of the New Brunswick Museum 1842-1945* (Saint John: New Brunswick Museum, 1945), Peter Corley-Smith, *White Bears and Other Curiosities: The First 100 Years of the Royal British Columbia Museum* (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 1989), Eileen Mak, "Ward of the Government, Child of the Institute: The Provincial Museum of Nova Scotia" (1868-1951) in Peter E. Rider ed. *Studies in History and Museums*, History Division, Mercury Series Paper, 47 (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994, 7-32) and Eileen Mak, "Patterns of Change: Sources of Influence: An Historical Study of the Canadian Museum and the Middle Class 1850-1950." (Ph.D. diss., University of British Columbia, 1996).

⁴⁴ Charles Trick Currelly, *I Brought the Ages Home* (Toronto: Ryerson, 1956). Lovat Dickson, *The Museum Makers: The Story of the Royal Ontario Museum* (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1986).

⁴⁵ Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum, A Prehistory, 1830-1914*. (Toronto: Canada University Press, 2005).

⁴⁶ Joel Orosz, *Curators and Culture: The Museum Movement in America, 1740-1870*. (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990).

Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, “The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal: Charles Willson Peale’s Philadelphia Museum 1790-1820”⁴⁷ and of Eileen Mak’s doctoral thesis “Patterns of Change, Sources of Influence: Canadian Museums and the Middle Class 1850-1950.”⁴⁸ Mak explains the rising interest in public education at the Royal Ontario Museum, Ontario Provincial Museum, The Provincial Museum of Nova Scotia and the British Columbia Provincial Museum during this period as a reflection of growing middle class aspirations of education and culture, endorsed by funding governments and promoted by a growing a museum profession.

Susan Sheets-Pyenson’s *Cathedrals of Science: The Development of Colonial Natural History Museums during the Late Nineteenth Century*⁴⁹ reaches similar conclusions in its study of the history of scientific thought and the development of science museums. The ascendancy of science museums in this period was such that many early museum professional movements developed in these museums: guides on collections classification and care, exhibit design and education programs came from curators of natural science collections. Sheets-Pyenson credits George Brown Goode, assistant secretary of the Smithsonian Institution as the man most responsible for the progressiveness of American museums at the turn of the century. His five principles of good museum administration: collections development, professionally-trained curators, adequate building, good management funded by the government, and an effective plan have remained constant to the present.⁵⁰ Goode’s model for museum exhibits is clearly linear, and educational in purpose. Arguing against a museum of bric-a-brac, he campaigned for exhibits to consist primarily “of instructive labels, each illustrated with a well-selected specimen.”⁵¹ This he viewed as the most effective way to transform the museum into “one of the principal agencies for the enlightenment of the people.”⁵² Sheets-Pyenson also discusses the plans of arranging artifacts and exhibits proposed by Sir Henry Flower, director of the British Natural History Museum in the late 1890s. Like Goode, Flower argued that museum exhibits should be streamlined for better public use with specimens displayed as illustrative of a theme or principle. A reserve area with study collections was to be set aside for researchers.⁵³

The intellectual basis of the work in large museums in the United States at the apex of science museums is thoroughly discussed by Stephen Conn in *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876-1926*.⁵⁴ These years mark the development and expansion of the largest museums in North America and the zenith of their role in the sciences. Conn avails himself of new theories in museology to understand the epistemological bases of the science, anthropology, history and art

⁴⁷ Sidney Hart and David C. Ward. “The waning of an enlightenment ideal: Charles Willson Peale's Philadelphia museum 1790-1820.” *In New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale*. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991).

⁴⁸ Eileen Mak, “Patterns of Change, Sources of Influence.”

⁴⁹ Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science*. (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Press, 1988).

⁵⁰ George Brown Goode, “Museum History and Museums of History” in Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, ed., *The Origins of Natural Science in America: The Essays of George Brown Goode* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 306.

⁵² George Brown Goode, “Museums of the Future” in *A Memorial for George Brown Goode, Together with a Selection of His Papers on Museums and the History of Science in America*. Smithsonian Institution, *Annual Report for 1897, Part 2; Report of the U.S. National Museum*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 53.

⁵³ Flower’s ideas are presented in Sir William Flower, *Essays in Museums and Other Subjects Connected with Natural History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898).

⁵⁴ Stephen Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876-1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

museum case studies he investigates.⁵⁵ He notes that the intellectual architecture used to build science museums in the late nineteenth century, was predicated both on Darwinism and on the assumption that objects could tell stories to the “untrained observer”—what others refer to as object-based epistemology.”⁵⁶ Like cabinets of curiosity, the objects exhibited in these museums functioned as synecdoches standing for bodies of knowledge. Extrapolating from semiologists such as Jacobson, Conn states:

The movement Jacobson sees as essential for constructing meaning in language might well describe a stroll through galleries of a late nineteenth century museum. As visitors moved (horizontally) through the galleries they saw objects which had meaning inherent in themselves. Combined together from case to case and exhibit to exhibit, the objects formed coherent visual sentences. That coherence ... was achieved only after those objects had been deliberately selected, quite literally from the basement storehouse, and ordered properly within the galleries. Meaning was thus constructed visually, with objects, like words in a text as the fundamental building blocks of the museum language. Almost without exception, the visual sentences that emerged from this process of combination and selection presented the metanarrative of evolutionary progress. A trip through the galleries followed a trajectory from simple to complex, from savage to civilized, from ancient to modern. The form that museums developed in the last half of the nineteenth century made this lesson inescapable to anyone who strolled their galleries. Museums functioned as the most widely accessible public forum to underscore a positivist, progressive and hierarchical view of the world, and they gave that view material form and scientific legitimacy. All of which is to say that the museums of the late nineteenth century developed a distinctive form, and that form was connected importantly to the content of what the museums presented... Museum objects and the relationships in which they were arranged were intended to convey a narrative. The glass cases made sure nothing interfered with that. If the museum purported to represent the world metonymically through its objects then the glass cases served as windows onto that world.⁵⁷

Likewise, Kulik says of Goode’s exhibits:

The Smithsonian’s exhibits confirmed the pieties of the age. In an age of cultural imperialism and mass production, the Smithsonian gloried in its objects. The cluttered nature of its displays, not unlike the Victorian parlor became a measure of its moral worth... Goode’s techniques would produce the dull, dark and lifeless museum of the early-twentieth century popular imagination: mausoleums of the old explicated in the arcane language of their increasingly professional staffs.⁵⁸

Ethnological collections were regarded as natural history specimens; evidence of the progress of the human race. Historians of anthropology explore similar interests in object-meaning and the philosophical frameworks for anthropological museums and departments in this period, when anthropology reached its professional apex within museums.⁵⁹ They conclude that the object-based

⁵⁵ Conn cites the works of Susan Pearce and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill.

⁵⁶ On this thinking see Edwina Taborsky "The Discursive Object" in Susan Pearce ed., *Objects of Knowledge* (London: Athlone Press, 1988), 50-77.

⁵⁷ Conn, 5.

⁵⁸ Kulik, 12.

⁵⁹ See for instance, Curtis Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981), George W. Stocking ed. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, History of Anthropology Series, Vol. 3

museum method of anthropology was effectively obsolete by the end of this period. As Franz Boas stated in 1907:

The psychological as well as the historical relations of cultures, which are only objects of anthropological inquiry, cannot be expressed by any arrangement based on so small a portion of the manifestation of ethnic life as is presented by specimens.⁶⁰

Primary research interests shifted away from artifact collections as did a paralleled disciplinary shift of anthropology research from museums to universities. Conn quotes Curtis Hinsley that in the twentieth century “the lessons of artifacts were not at all as single or obvious as the nineteenth-century museum.”⁶¹

The Dilemma of History in the Museum: The Nineteenth Century: United States and Britain

In his 1888 address to the American Historical Association on “Museum History and History Museums,” George Brown Goode pondered the undefined dimensions of the emerging historical museum:

What the limitations of historical museums are to be it is impossible at present to predict. ... In the scientific museum many things have been tried, and many things are known to be possible. In the historical museum, most of this experimental administration still remains to be performed.⁶²

Goode viewed historical collections as a no man’s land lying between the taxonomic view of science and the aesthetic categories of art, “a territory which no English word can adequately describe...”⁶³ His inability to intellectually apprehend historical collections deprived him of a vision for their future. Equipped so well for specimens of natural history, his taxonomic method was less suitable to historical materials. Goode finally resorted to a reliquary approach, producing “a hall of disconnected personal items and stray oddments where the Washington relics coexisted beside a section of oak tree shot down at the Battle of Spotsylvania.”⁶⁴ Like Peale’s gallery of revolutionary heroes, Goode collected and arranged historical objects based on their metonymic values conveying patriotic ideals, notions of progress, exemplary men, and the achievements of America’s founding families, including his own.

The problem of identifying and interpreting historical materials presented itself early on in American local history museums. Collections of local materials appear in 1791 with the establishment of the Massachusetts’s Historical Society and its public gallery. By 1876 there were 78 historical societies, many with object collections. The nature of these collectors and collections in the United

(Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). Mary Tivy adds a Canadian perspective in “Museums and Exhibits of First Nations: Old Paradigms and New Possibilities” Ontario Museum Association *Annual 2* (October 1993), 6-18.

⁶⁰ Franz Boas, “Some Principles of Museum Administration,” *Science* 25, 928.

⁶¹ Curtis Hinsley, “The Museum Origins of Harvard Anthropology” in Clark Elliott and Margaret Rossiter eds., *Science at Harvard University: Historical Perspectives* (Bethlehem Pennsylvania: Lehigh University Press, Toronto: Associated University Press, 1992), 141-142.

⁶² “A Memorial for George Brown Goode,” 53.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 340.

⁶⁴ Kulik, “Designing the Past: History Museum Exhibits from Peale to the Present,” 10.

States are discussed in a number of books and essays, including Whitehill's *Independent Historical Societies*, Hosmer's *Presence of the Past* and Leah Dilworth, ed. *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*, Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz, ed. *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850*; Michael Kammen *The Mystic Chords of Memory*, Leslie Dunlap *American Historical Societies 1790-1860*, and Whitehill ed., *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Five Episodes in the Evolution of American Museums*, and they appear remarkably like their Ontario relatives discussed further in this thesis.⁶⁵

Societies were admonished against “unintelligent” collecting without due concern for the historic value of objects resulting in a “receptacle of antique trash.”⁶⁶ The persistence of the problem is revealed in a number of reactions to American collections years later. With the exception of scientific collections, foreign critics viewed American museum collections as “trashy” and “worthless” comprised of:

The greatest puerilities and absurdities in the world – such as a cherrystone formed into a basket, a fragment of the boiler of the Moselle steamer, and Heaven knows what besides. Then you invariably have a large collection of daubs, called portraits of eminent personages, one-half of whom a stranger never heard of.⁶⁷

However worthless to others, the historical collections in the American Philosophical Society Cabinet referenced the nation's historical personages and events, even if Bell reduced them to “miscellaneous mementoes” (sic) aimed at producing reverent thoughts and patriotic impulses in those who held or beheld them.⁶⁸ This collection included locks of hair from George Washington and General Jackson, a fragment of Plymouth Rock, a piece of the works of the clock of Independence Hall, and a box made of wood from Penn's Treaty Elm, among others.⁶⁹

However, the position of historical materials in a framework of interpretation was not secured within a grand scheme as were scientific specimens. In a subsequent review of their collections by the society some sixty years later, the significance of some artifacts had changed. While some objects were kept, “certain articles of historic value, chiefly from association with the Members of the Society,” others were not. “No doubt [they] were of passing interest at the time they were deposited,

⁶⁵ See Walter Muir Whitehill, *Independent Historical Societies: An Enquiry into Their Research and Publication Functions and their Financial Future*, (Boston, 1962); Charles B. Hosmer *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons 1965); Charles B. Hosmer, “The Broadening View of the Historical Preservation Movement,” in *Material Culture and the Study of American Life*, ed. Ian M.G. Quimby, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 121-39; Charles B. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust 1926-1949*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981); Leah Dilworth, ed. *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003); Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz, ed. *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850*, (Aldershot, England ; Brookfield, Vt. : Ashgate, 1999); Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1991); Leslie W. Dunlap, *American Historical Societies, 1790-1860*, (Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), Walter Muir Whitehill ed., *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Five Episodes in the Evolution of American Museums*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1967).

⁶⁶ Dunlap, 76.

⁶⁷ Captain Marryat, *A Diary in America with Remarks on its Institutions*, (New York: Wm. Colyer, 1839), 148 cited in Whitfield J. Bell Jr., “The Cabinet of the American Philosophical Society” in Walter Muir Whitehill ed., *A Cabinet of Curiosities: Five Episodes in the Evolution of American Museums*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1967), 22.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 16.

have long since become useless, in fact comparatively uninteresting from any point of view.”⁷⁰ The relative value of natural science materials against historical materials was also questioned: “How could one consider a bird stuffed by an amateur as good as an old pamphlet?”⁷¹

The situation in Britain seemed likewise. In his address “Local Museums” Henry Flower, Director of the British Natural History Museum, spoke against “the general miscellaneous collection of all kinds of curiosities thrown indiscriminately together which constituted the old-fashioned country museum.”⁷² In 1891, and again in 1895, Flower expressed his ideas on organizing these types of collections, wherein historical materials were regarded as relics and folklore:

One section should contain local antiquities and illustrations of local manners and customs; another section local natural history, zoology, botany and geology. The boundaries of the county will afford a good limit for both. Everything not occurring in a state of nature within that boundary should be rigorously excluded.⁷³

Flower viewed museums as institutionally comparable to libraries; libraries of books with specimens instead of pictures. “A well-arranged and well-labeled museum will be considered a necessity in any well-considered scheme of progress.”⁷⁴

Local Historical Societies: Motivations for Collecting

On the motivations of historical societies toward collecting their community history, David Lowenthal’s essay “Pioneer Museums in the United States” argues that these organizations and their collections were forms of ancestor worship.⁷⁵ He maintains that the North American pioneer-museum type (which would include the museums in Ontario under study here), developed for filiopietistic reasons at a crucial point in time: a moment when the living memories they portray pass away from the descendents of the actual pioneers themselves.

Community founders were important individuals in the minds of those who participated in the Ontario Historical Society, and its predecessors, the Historical Society of Upper Canada and the United Canadian Association. Gerald Killan’s histories of the Ontario Historical Society and the Canadian Institute, and his biography of David Boyle are essential to understanding how museum collections, especially historical collections, were formed, interpreted and managed by individuals and organizations in Ontario.⁷⁶ As Killan notes, local historical societies in Ontario established themselves as the chief vehicles for popularizing the past by publishing local history, preserving documents, erecting monuments and plaques, and establishing the first of dozens of pioneer historical museums that Killan describes as “a permanent part of Ontario culture.”⁷⁷ These early institutions

⁷⁰ “Curator’s Reports, American Philosophical Society as to Cabinet,” Feb. 22, 1897, cited in *Ibid*, 30.

⁷¹ Dunlap, 76.

⁷² Sir Henry Flower, “Local Museums” in *Essays on Museums and Other Subjects*, (London: MacMillan, 1898). Reprinted in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. Bettina Messias Carbonell, (Oxford England: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 316.

⁷³ *Ibid*

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 317.

⁷⁵ David Lowenthal “Pioneer Museums” in *History Museums in the United States*, 116-127.

⁷⁶ Gerald Killan, *Preserving Ontario’s Heritage: A History of the Ontario Historical Society* (Ottawa: Ontario Historical Society, 1976); “The Canadian Institute and the Origins of the Ontario Archaeological Tradition 1850-1884” *Ontario Archaeology* 34 (1980), 3-16; *David Boyle: From Artisan to Archaeologist* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983).

⁷⁷ Killan, *David Boyle*, 160.

became the first community history museums in the province and were motivated by filiopietistic interests and the patriotic ideals of British imperialism.

Killan's *Preserving Ontario's Heritage* is focused largely on the personalities and philosophies which affected the direction and activities of the executive of the Ontario Historical Society, and deals much less with museum issues which tended to be a sideline for the organization's primary focus on publication. But his work has served as a springboard for theses and research papers on these societies and their museums. The imperialist imperative behind the activities of these groups in the period 1880-1912 is emphasized by Boyd Beck, "Museums and Ideology: Ontario Museums in an Age of Imperialism, 1890-1914."⁷⁸ John Carter's work on educators and museum development in Ontario underlines the pedagogical interests of early museum founders, especially Egerton Ryerson and David Boyle.⁷⁹ Boyle's interests in museum work and Ontario archaeology indelibly shaped the collections of the Ontario Historical Society and the field of Ontario archaeology. Killan's biography of David Boyle, *David Boyle: From Artisan to Archaeologist* delves into the ideas and issues that shaped museum development in Ontario during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Killan shows how Boyle shifted collections from the Canadian Institute to the Ontario Historical Society and ultimately the Ontario Provincial Museum.⁸⁰ The best (and only) review of American and Ontario historical societies and their museum efforts is Ian Kerr-Wilson's, "Historical Societies and their Museums: A Survey of the Ontario Case."⁸¹ Kerr-Wilson also looks at the filiopietistic and patriotic mission of these societies and their museums in the United States and Ontario, but examines in detail the relationship between these societies and their ideas and practices for managing museum collections. As do Killan and Kerr-Wilson, Margaret May's study of the Niagara Historical Society shows the currency of ideas at the turn of the century among history museum curators in the province.⁸² Charlie Garrad's "The Huron Institute and the Petun" describes the founding of the Huron Institute in Collingwood in 1904 by a group of local gentlemen, dedicated to the study of local natural history, archaeology and preservation of historical records of the town and county.⁸³ Gillam underlines what Killan says about these societies; that they appeared to be Anglo-Saxon, protestant and patriotic middle class organizations of individuals who had the resources to pursue these interests. These society museum collections, consisting of relics of community founders and pioneer life and archaeological collections arrived unplanned and usually uncontested into the museum collections. Managing them became an increasing problem for societies as their collections grew.⁸⁴ Killan and Kerr-Wilson show how the diverging concerns of academic historians and those working in museums led to the formation of a separate museum section of the Ontario Historical Society in the 1940s.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Boyd Beck, "Museums and Ideology: Ontario Museums in an Age of Imperialism, 1890-1914" (M.M. St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1988).

⁷⁹ John Carter. "Ryerson, Hodgins, and Boyle: Early Innovators in Ontario School Museums." *Ontario History* 86, no. 2 (June 1994) 119-131.

⁸⁰ On the Ontario Provincial Museum see James Hunter, "The Ontario Provincial Museum 1896-1933." (M.M.St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1987).

⁸¹ Ian Kerr-Wilson, "Historical Societies and their Museums: A Survey of the Ontario Case," (M.M. St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1988).

⁸² Margaret May, "The Niagara Historical Society Museum: A Study in Museum Development" M.M.St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1982).

⁸³ Charles Garrad "The Huron Institute and the Petun," www.wyandot.org/petun/rb27.htm , accessed January 14, 2005.

⁸⁴ See also Ken Doherty, "The Common Thread: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Museums in Peterborough" *Ontario History*, LXXXVI: no. 2, (June 1994) 133-148.

⁸⁵ The interests of the museum section and those working in museums have been addressed in thematic issues of *Ontario History*, for instance issues VIII (1961), LXXXVI (1994), XCIV (2002).

Forty years earlier a similar process took place in the United States: the distinguishing differences between local historical society needs and interests and those of university historians in the American Historical Association led to the separate development of the Conference of State and Local Historical Societies.⁸⁶ As Tivy puts it in her paper on historical research and museum collections in Ontario, history museum curators became “country cousins” in the historical profession.⁸⁷

Kulik cites the influence of Arthur C. Parker’s innovative approach to history exhibits in the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences in the 1930s as the first major attack on the unsystematic nature of history museum collections. Parker believed that history exhibits should not be taxonomic, but should be organized around an overriding narrative, with artifacts illustrating the storyline. He outlined his ideas in his *Manual for History Museums* published in 1935 by the New York Historical Society.⁸⁸ While Kulik states how novel this idea was at the time, he fails to mention this also constituted an epistemological shift from understanding historical objects as synecdoches of the past to viewing them as illustrations of a story. By discouraging the display of local relics and inserting objects into narratives, without privileging any particular categories of artifact, Parker shifted the source of historical meaning away from the object and into text. As Kulik notes, the goal of this method was to make museum exhibits more educational. Lisa Roberts maintains the same argument in *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum*.⁸⁹ Kulik regards the work of folklorist Louis C. Jones at Cooperstown in the 1950s and 1960s as building on Parker’s work to pioneer the idea of thematic exhibits based on commonplace objects of ordinary people. Authors such as Mary Tivy in "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario," and Kerr-Wilson show that the ideas that Parker and Jones promoted were brought forward to Ontario museums in the post second world war period through the growth of professional organizations and government funding programs.⁹⁰ While applauding Jones on his work in the museum field, Kulik considers that the emphasis on the survival of the pioneer and their hand-made objects created museum narratives at Cooperstown that tended to be patriotic and progressive. Likewise it seemed in Ontario, as Key reported in 1968:

Driving from the Quebec frontier to Windsor on Highway 2, the smaller historical museums tend to become repetitious, illustrating the triumphs and tribulations of the original settlers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the God-fearing (usually Protestant) hard-working founders who now provide a modicum of reflected glory to the community with here and there a restored grist mill or military fortification.⁹¹

⁸⁶ Kerr-Wilson, 34. In 1940 this Conference fully severed from the American Historical Association to become the American Association for State and Local History, an independent organization.

⁸⁷ Mary Tivy "The Quality of Research is Definitely Strained: Material Culture Research in Ontario Community Museums," *Material History Bulletin*, 27, (Spring 1988), 61-67.

⁸⁸ Arthur C. Parker, *Manual for History Museums* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935).

⁸⁹ Lisa Roberts, *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum* (Washington: Smithsonian Press, 1997).

⁹⁰ Mary Tivy, "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario," *Material History Review*, 37 (Spring 1993): 35-51. For instance, Jones was the keynote speaker at the first professional development workshop for museum curators in Ontario in 1954. His theme was that community history museums should not be community attics. He also served as a consultant for Doon Pioneer Village. See also Mary Tivy, “Dreams and Nightmares: Changing Visions of the Past at Doon Pioneer Village” *Ontario History* XCIV (Spring 2002): 79-99.

⁹¹ Key, 249.

The Museum as Living History: The Success of an Experimental Model

What Goode overlooked in his musings on the “experimental administrative model” for history museums would become the hallmark of history museum development in the twentieth century. The struggle to show museum collections in a manner both visually interesting and thematically integrated was resolved in the period room and historic recreations. Again, it is Kulik who discusses the development of this exhibit model which he sees as “one of the principal elements in the vocabulary of history exhibits...At its best it was a device designed to establish context, to put back together the chairs, the tables, and the china that collectors had once separated.”⁹² The preservation and animation of period rooms, historic structures, houses and villages, is the contextual model which Pearce argues is the defining characteristic of museum development in this period. It is also the main model of the case study, Doon Pioneer Village, in this thesis. There is no overall history per se of these “living-history” museums in Canada but American studies provide a background to the incentives and models that inspired the creation of historic site museums in Ontario.

Motivations for the development of period rooms, historic houses and outdoor village museums in the United States are explored Kulik, and by Warren Leon and Margaret Piatt in “Living-History Museums.”⁹³ Kulik looks specifically at the role of curator R.T.H. Halsey and the creation of period rooms in the elite American Wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1924.⁹⁴ Leon and Piatt discuss the rise of the outdoor village as a museum model before World War II, including Colonial Williamsburg and Greenfield Village, and those village museums which were founded in the 1940s and 1950s such as the Farmer's Museum at Cooperstown, Sturbridge Village, Historic Deerfield, Old Salem, North Carolina, Mystic Seaport, Connecticut and the Shelburne Museum in Vermont. Richard Perrin's relatively early *Outdoor Museums* rationalizes their development as a necessary response to cultural uncertainties and the loss of traditional values.⁹⁵ Leon and Piatt argue that these places were inspired in part by a middle-class need to preserve Anglo-Saxon cultural values in the face of immigrant cultural intrusion. John Herbst states much the same case in his study of the development of historic houses, as does Michael Wallace most emphatically in “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States” and “Preserving the Past: A History of Historic Preservation in the United States.”⁹⁶ In the latter essay Wallace identifies four groups who successively mobilized to save the built past in the period 1880-1920 in order to salvage or establish social hegemony: New England Brahmins; descendents of antebellum planter families in the “Old South”; millionaires such as Henry Ford and John D. Rockefeller Jr.; and middle-class “nouveaux” professionals with a distinct distaste for unrestrained capitalism and the destructive consequence of uncontrolled land development. The classic study of historic preservation in the United States is Charles Hosmer's,

⁹² Kulik, 12.

⁹³ Warren Leon and Margaret Piatt, “Living-History Museums” in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, 64-97.

⁹⁴ The wealthy Halsey who could trace his American lineage back to the 1600s stressed period rooms “that have class” arguing that the quaint and curious should be left to historical museums. Kulik, 15.

⁹⁵ Perrin's *Outdoor Museums* (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1975) carries good descriptions of these villages in the early 1970s, and their goals: Greenfield Village is described as “the visualization, the embodiment of the American dream,” (51) while Williamsburg constantly brings to mind the “patriotic theme and great deeds and events of pre-revolutionary days”(60). See also Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History* (Nashville, American Association for State and Local History, 1984).

⁹⁶ John A. Herbst “Historic Houses” in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, 98-114; Michael Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

Presence of the Past.⁹⁷ He sees initial efforts at preservation as patriotically driven and later joined by professionals (as Wallace argues) concerned with a largely colonial aesthetic. Likewise, Stuart D. Hobbs' history of interpretation at the restored Thomas Worthington Home, Adena, argues that the prime context for interpreting this site was aesthetic.⁹⁸ In *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums*, Patricia West's study of the historic house museum and issues of gender, race, class and ethnicity at four sites in the United States, she makes clear that political expediency, and not historical interest provided the underlying motivation for the founding of these historic house museums.⁹⁹ The result, says West, has been a fantastically conservative undertow in their presentation of history. James M. Lindgren argues that earlier restorations were initiated by women with a personal approach to restoration that involved the domestic virtues of home and family, whereas men who eventually came to dominate profession were more concerned with "professional" issues of authenticity, architectural integrity. He also notes the role of anti-modernism in this movement, quoting the goals of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities: "to preserve the atmosphere of quaintness and calm to which belong so much of beauty and enchantment in contrast to the newness and restlessness of today."¹⁰⁰ Cary Carson's essay on changing interpretive goals at Colonial Williamsburg over several decades is a rare history of historiographical change at a museum.¹⁰¹ The intersection of personality and public history is fully explored in historical analyses of the two most prominent historic villages in the United States: Colonial Williamsburg, and Greenfield Village.¹⁰² Founded within a decade by philanthropists with quite different approaches toward representing the American past, they present contrasting images of patrician and working-class life in pre and post agrarian American society. Williamsburg is a rebuilt site in which each architectural element is a component of a larger picture of life in the colonial period. Greenfield Village by contrast is a collection of buildings and objects from various parts of the United States and transported to a site in Michigan by Henry Ford, who chose them based on their

97 Charles B. Hosmer *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons 1965); Charles B. Hosmer "The Broadening View of the Historical Preservation Movement" in *Material Culture and the Study of American Life*, ed. Ian M.G. Quimby (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978) 121-39; Charles B. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust 1926-1949* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981).

98 Stuart D. Hobbs "Exhibiting Anti-modernism: History, Memory and the Aestheticized Past in Mid-twentieth-Century America," *The Public Historian*, Vol. 23, No. 3, (Summer 2001) 39-61.

99 Patricia West *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington D.C. Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999). West looks at Mount Vernon, Louisa May Alcott Orchard House, Monticello, and the Booker T. Washington National Monument.

100 James M. Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism* (University Press of Virginia, 1993) ; James Lindgren, *Preserving Historic New England: Preservation, Progressivism and the Remaking of Memory* (Oxford University Press, 1995) and James M. Lindgren "A New Departure in Historic Patriotic Work: Personalism, Professionalism, and Conflicting Concepts of Material Culture in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries" *Public Historian* 18:2 (Spring 1996) 41-60. Also see William O. Murtagh *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (Pittstown, N.J. Main Street Press, 1988); *The American Mosaic: Preserving a Nation's Heritage*, ed. Robert E. Stipe and Antoinette J. Lee (Washington, D.C.: US/ICOMOS, 1987); Miles Orvell *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture, 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989).

101 Cary Carson, "Colonial Williamsburg and the Practice of Interpretive Planning in American History Museums" *Public Historian* 20:3 (Summer 1998) 11-51.

102 See for instance, Charles B. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust 1926-1949*; Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States" in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, ed. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986, and Stephen Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life*.

merit in presenting the past of working and industrial life. These two sites and their separate philosophies of village construction represent the two major forms of reconstructed historic villages in the United States.

Ford's village was modeled on the first outdoor museum, Skansen.¹⁰³ Historians credit Swedish folklorist Arthur Hazelius with introducing the idea of the museum village.¹⁰⁴ Motivated by a fear of loss of distinctive Swedish folkways, Hazelius created the first outdoor village museum in Stockholm in 1891. He dedicated his museum to the rescue, maintenance and recreation of the natural and built environment, and the traditional lifestyles of rural, peasant Sweden. Named "Skansen" it bore the motto "Know yourself by knowing the past." The history of Hazelius' work and the Skansen museum is laid out by Alexander in *Museum Masters*, Hudson in *Museums of Influence*, Perrin, *Outdoor Museums* and Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History*¹⁰⁵. Elizabeth Mosby Adler states that eighteenth century romanticism, nineteenth century European nationalism, and the venue of world expositions in London and Paris coalesced into the idea of preserving and acting out the past at historical villages in Europe while Michael Wallace and Gaynor Kavanagh maintain that Skansen and similar enterprises that followed in other European countries were motivated by a fusion of romantic nostalgia and dismay at the social products of the industrial revolution.¹⁰⁶ Skansen is compared to Williamsburg and Fortress Louisbourg by Terry MacLean in "The Making of Public History: A Comparative Study of Skansen Open Air Museum, Sweden; Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia; and the Fortress of Louisbourg National historic site, Nova Scotia."¹⁰⁷

With few exceptions, histories of historic house and historic village museums in Canada are largely unpublished. Key's *Beyond Four Walls* is the only source for this information in either a national or provincial context. The preservation of military fortifications in Ontario, most dating from the War of 1812 is explored in several publications including, by R.L. Way in *Ontario's Niagara Parks: A History*, and James C. Taylor's study of the Canadian Federal government's historic parks and sites program, *Negotiating the Past*.¹⁰⁸ Although the federal government sponsored historic preservation during the depression as make-work programs, other sites were preserved and memorialized by local historical organizations as early as the late nineteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Case studies

¹⁰³ Stephen Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876-1926* discusses Ford and his museum.

¹⁰⁴ Consensus rests that Hazelius and Skansen were the progenitors of this form of historic presentation. See Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History* (Nashville, Tennessee: The American Association for State and Local History); Charles B. Hosmer Jr.'s *Presence of the Past* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965) and *Preservation Comes of Age* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), states that eighteenth century romanticism, nineteenth century European nationalism, and the venue of world expositions in London and Paris coalesced into the idea of preserving and acting out the past at historical villages.

¹⁰⁵ Edward P. Alexander, *Museum Masters*, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1983); Kenneth Hudson, *Museums of Influence*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Richard W. E Perrin, *Outdoor Museums*, (Milwaukee: Milwaukee Public Museum, 1975); Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History*, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1984).

¹⁰⁶ Elizabeth Mosby Adler "Problems in the Development of an Outdoor Museum of Folklife: A Case Study." (MA thesis, State University of New York, 1974); Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States"; Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990).

¹⁰⁷ Terry Maclean, "The Making of Public History: A Comparative Study of Skansen Open Air Museum, Sweden; Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia; and the Fortress of Louisbourg National historic site, Nova Scotia" *Material History Review* 47, (Spring 1998).

¹⁰⁸ R.L. Way *Ontario's Niagara Parks: A History* (n.p. Niagara Parks Commission 1960); James C. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press 1990).

¹⁰⁹ The Women's Wentworth Historical Society, led by a descendent of the Gage family bought the Gage homestead, a War of 1812 site in 1899 to preserve it and its lands as an historic house and park. It was re-named

show clearly that the models of historic villages for these places in Ontario were drawn from European and American examples. Mary Tivy's "Dreams and Nightmares: Changing Visions of the Past at Doon Pioneer Village" charts the development of this village museum and the forces, including the model of Skansen, which shaped its interpretation of the past over a period of forty years.¹¹⁰ Joanne Lea's "Defining Terms: The Pioneers and Other Myths," looks at the prevalence of pioneer as a term in museums and historic villages in Ontario, and discusses the history and revisions in portraying the past at Muskoka Pioneer Village.¹¹¹ Unpublished papers on historic sites organized by provincial and municipal government agencies include Ann Martin's study of the development of Upper Canada Village and its interpretation of the past, "Loyal She Began.: The Beginnings of Upper Canada Village." Martin states that the models for Upper Canada Village were its "American cousins," Colonial Williamsburg, Greenfield Village, Old Sturbridge Village, Cooperstown and Shelburne.¹¹² Marty Brent's "Black Creek Pioneer Village" relates a frequent situation in Ontario: the operation of an historic village by a conservation authority, as was the case for some period of time in Doon Pioneer Village.¹¹³ John Carter's "Ontario Conservation Authorities: Their Heritage Resources and Museums" charts the development of these agencies and living history museums under their care.¹¹⁴ Paul Litt's, "The Apotheosis of the Apothecary: Retailing and Consuming the Meaning of a Historic Site" looks at the history of the restoration of the Niagara apothecary and the presentation of the past at this site, operated by a professional organization of pharmacists. He also notes the absence of professional historians in this project.¹¹⁵

Living history museums in Ontario were a post-second world war phenomenon. This period was a time of tremendous growth in history museums in Ontario. Killan, Key, Teather, Gilliam and Tivy consider the rapid post-war increase in museums in the province as a reaction to immigration and urban development. The number of local history museums grew dramatically, as did the number of these museums under municipal, as opposed to society administration. Funds available for museum development, operations and capital projects increased, and a provincial museum profession with a focus on community museums developed concomitantly.¹¹⁶ As Teather states about Canadian museums, is also true of Ontario museums, "the kind and quality of our museum movement has been sustained by the fabric of our government policies, funds and professional assistance woven in recent decades."¹¹⁷

Battlefield House. The Ontario Historical Society mobilized to save Fort York. See Gerald Killan, "The First Old Fort York Preservation Movement 1905 - 1909: An Episode in the History of the Ontario Historical Society," *Ontario History*, LXIV: 3 (Sept. 1972), 162-80.

¹¹⁰ Mary Tivy "Dreams and Nightmares: Changing Visions of the Past at Doon Pioneer Village" *Ontario History* XCIV (Spring 2002): 79-99.

¹¹¹ Joanne Lea "Defining Terms: The Pioneers and other Myths" *Museum Quarterly* 18:1, (February 1990)25-35.

¹¹² Ann Martin, "Loyal She Began...: The Beginnings of Upper Canada Village" University of Waterloo Unpublished paper, (1989), 8.

¹¹³ Marty Brent, "Black Creek Pioneer Village" unpublished paper presented at the Ontario Museum Association Annual Conference, 2002.

¹¹⁴ John C. Carter, "Ontario Conservation Authorities: Their Heritage Resources and Museums" *Ontario History* XCIV: 1, (Spring 2002) 5-28.

¹¹⁵ Paul Litt, "The Apotheosis of the Apothecary: Retailing and Consuming the Meaning of a Historic Site" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Society* 10 (1999), 297-321.

¹¹⁶ Tivy discusses these changes in "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario."

¹¹⁷ Teather, "Museum Making," 28.

Local History Museum Operation: From Society to Government

Government funding, municipal administrative control of local museums and the development of museums under the aegis of conservation areas are also noted by Key, as are federal heritage funding initiatives that spurred museum development, especially towards the celebration of the Canadian Centennial. Provincial government funding policies for museums and arts organizations in Ontario are discussed by Mary Tivy, Carrie Brooks-Joiner and in James File's discussion of the creation of the Ontario Ministry of Culture in 1974: "Jocks and Smocks: The Establishment of the Ministry of Culture."¹¹⁸ While historical societies laid the groundwork for local history museums in Ontario, Lee Jolliffe's doctoral work "Municipal Museums in Canada: Contemporary Directions" focuses on the increasing role of local governments in administering local history museums in the years following the Second World War.¹¹⁹ Federal funding for community museums included Canadian centennial funds for establishing museums. The largest federal initiative was the federal government national museums policy in 1972, with its aims to democratize and decentralize museum funding and resources to communities across the country. This programme made available funds for a variety of museum capital projects, special services and professional development for museum workers.

Unlike Britain, the history of professional development in museums in Canada is not synthesized, nor has its impact on the interpretation of history in museums been evaluated.¹²⁰ The sluggish growth of Ontario historical society museums after the First World War and their near-death during the depression is discussed by Killan and Kerr-Wilson. The first major study of museums in Canada was the Miers-Markham report in 1932; it chronicled their poor conditions, and

¹¹⁸ Mary Tivy, "Ministering History to the Community: The Province of Ontario and the Management of the Past in Community History Museums," *Ontario History* LXXXVI, no. 2 (June 1994): 149-167; Carrie Brooks-Joiner, "Cultural policy in Ontario: Provincial Funding for Museums and Art Galleries", M. M. St. thesis Toronto, 1987), James Files: "Smocks and Jocks"

¹¹⁹ Lee Jolliffe "Municipal Museums in Canada: Contemporary Directions" (Ph.D. diss, Leicester University, 1987.) Jolliffe sees the increase of museums in Ontario after World War II as a consequence of Centennial and provincial grants, economic prosperity and growth. Usually, at some critical point of operation, when the founding group no longer had the resources to maintain and develop the museum, it either folded, or more often in the post second world war period, a new governing body took over the operation, aided by local government funding. This pattern is illustrated by the following unpublished histories of community museums in Ontario: Bev Dietrich, "The Wellington County Museum" (1990), Mary Sheppard "The Wilson MacDonald Memorial School Museum" (1990), Dianne Bakker "The Spruce Row Museum (1990), Dorothy Cournoyer "History of the Iroquois Falls Pioneer Museum (1990), Patricia Taylor "Scarborough historical Museum - Its Growth and Development"(1990), Gail Sheridan "A History and Analysis of the Development of the Scugog Shores Historical Museum" (1989), Ghyslaine Legault "History of the Peterborough Centennial Museum and Archives (1989), Rose Mary Mason "The Gibson House" (1989) David Daley "A Museum History for Dufferin County Museum" (1989), Raymond Scotchmer "The Huron County Museum" (1989), Douglas Fyfe "MacKenzie House" (1989) and Jodi Bell "The Evolution of the Bruce County Museum: Stepping Forward Since 1955" (1991). On the histories of the Ermatinger Old Stone House, the St. Joseph Island Museum and the Sault Ste. Marie Historical Museum, see Christina Quance Tossell "The Local Museum: Three Case Studies in Northern Ontario" (M.M St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1978.) Exceptions to this pattern include outright purchases of heritage buildings and sites by conservation authorities without mediating groups, such as the Black Creek Pioneer Village and Bachus Heritage Complex, or municipal agencies such as a library board (Hiram Walker Museum, Windsor), or historic sites board (Spadina House). In some cases municipal responsibility for a local museum was assumed through a bequest to the city of a collection, building or funds for the purpose of a museum. See for instance Annie Reaume "The Chatham-Kent Museum" (1989) and Charles Taws "The Bowmanville Museum" (1991).

¹²⁰ See Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship*, and Gaynor Kavanagh, ed., *The Museums Profession: Internal and External Relations* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).

recommended the establishment of civic museums focused on history and natural science of the area in communities of over 30,000 and supported by taxes.¹²¹ The sorry state of the museum workplace and the lack of training for museum curators that was documented by the Miers-Markham report in 1932 was reiterated by Massey Report of 1951 in which the “sorry plight of museums in Canada” was matched only “by a widespread public indifference to their inadequacy.”¹²² In the 1957 study *The Canadian Museum Movement*, Carl Guthe wrote about the small history museums he visited: “None of them have facilities to render normal museum services to the public and many do not know what such services are.”¹²³ This condition changed very gradually at first and improvements escalated during increased funding opportunities of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.¹²⁴ Key also discusses the role of the Ontario Historical Society and its museum section with the training of museum workers as does Dorothy Drever in “The Museums Section: An Account of Its Beginning”¹²⁵ and Ian Kerr-Wilson. As Kerr-Wilson notes, by this time the workshops of the Museum Section were endorsing the exorcising of “relics” and the creation of exhibit storylines and themes.¹²⁶ The Canadian Museum Association, formed in 1947 at a meeting of the American Association of Museums in Quebec City, created the first credited diploma program for museum workers in Canada in the mid-1960s. This diploma program was an extension of the British Museums Association’s professional diploma. One of the first graduates was the curator of Doon Pioneer Village.¹²⁷ Carrie Brooks-Joiner examines the professionalization of museum work through the Ontario Museum Association, which largely superseded the OHS museums section in 1972, due in part to the Ontario Historical Society’s refusal to allow non-members to join the Museum Section professional development programs.¹²⁸ The state of professional development for museum workers in Canada was reviewed in 1978 by J. Lynne Teather.¹²⁹ Mary Tivy, Marty Brent and Lynne Kurylo examine the efforts of The Ontario Historical Society, Ontario Museum Association and the provincial government to establish required standards of operation in community museums in Ontario in the early 1980s.¹³⁰ The focus of funding and professional development programs were museum management issues: collections care, exhibition, education programs and financial management. Museological literature from the period centres

¹²¹ Sir H.A. Miers and S.F. Markham, *A Report on the Museums of Canada* (Edinburgh: T & A Constable Ltd., 1932), stated that most Canadian museums existed largely for the benefits of their members.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Carl E. and Grace M. Guthe, *The Canadian Museum Movement* (Ottawa: Canadian Museums Association, 1958).

¹²⁴ See Lee Jolliffe, “Municipal Museums in Canada.”

¹²⁵ Dorothy Drever, “The Museums Section: An Account of Its Beginning, Ontario History VIII:3 (1961)153-155.

¹²⁶ Kerr-Wilson, 89.

¹²⁷ By the 1970s an accreditation program was set up for American museums based on their standards of operation.

¹²⁸ Carrie Brooks-Joiner “The Ontario Museum Association and Professionalization of Museum Workers” Ontario Museum *Annual*, Vol.1 (1992) 4-7.

¹²⁹ J. Lynne Teather, “Professional directions for museum work in Canada : an analysis of museum jobs and museum studies training curricula: a report to the Training Committee of the Canadian Museums Association,” (Canadian Museum Association, 1978).

¹³⁰ Mary Tivy, “Ministering History to the Community,” and the following in *Museum Quarterly* (Fall 1984), Marty Brent “The Standards for Community Museums in Ontario” 7-8; Lynne Kurylo “The Ministry of Citizenship and Culture’s Standards” 9-13. As yet unreviewed are the professional programs set up in educational institutions such as the Museum Technology program at Algonquin College and the Master of Museum Studies Program at the University of Toronto.

primarily on these concerns for the well-being of the museum collection and its interpretation to the public.¹³¹

Historical Dissonance: Historians, Objects, Museums and Heritage

Is the museum a cuckoo in the historian's nest?¹³²

The differences in pursuit of the past reflected in the separation of professional organizations of historians and those of museum workers, resonates in the way academic historians, especially social historians have viewed public history in the museum format. As Michael Frisch observes, "Recent commentary has tended to see modern scholarship as a kind of populist knight writing to rescue history from tradition-bound elite-serving museums."¹³³ Along with Gaynor Kavanagh and Mary Tivy he sees academic historical discourse and the museum's object-based reference to the past as traveling on separate tracks.¹³⁴ These differences lie in epistemology, method, audience and intent.

Museum Artifacts as Historical Evidence

For some academics, but least of all historians, objects appeared to provide historical evidence where none else was available.¹³⁵ This was the argument of Henry Glassie, James Deetz and Fred Kniffen, folklorist, archaeologist and cultural geographer, respectively, whose early work mentored many material culture scholars today in North America.¹³⁶ Although a multidisciplinary field, material culture analysts share an approach toward research with objects as primary evidence of the historical context of both creator and consumer. Tom Schlereth provides an overview of this work in his books, *Artifacts and the American Past*, *Material Culture Studies in America*, and *Material Culture: A Research Guide* which are comprehensive studies of the praxis and practice of interpreting objects as historical evidence.¹³⁷ Subsequent compilations of material culture theories and methods pertaining to

¹³¹ Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications, "Community Museums Policy for Ontario," 1981. See also Greg Baeker, Margaret May, and Mary Tivy "Ontario Museums in the 1990's," *MUSE*, X: 2 & 3 (Summer/Fall, 1992), 120-123, for a brief review of changes in Ontario community museums in the 1980s.

¹³² This is a paraphrase of James Lindgren's "A Cuckoo in Our Nest: Can Historians Handle the Heritage Boom?" *The Public Historian*.

¹³³ Michael Frisch, "The Presentation of Urban History in Big-City Museums" in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, 41.

¹³⁴ Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1990), Mary Tivy, "The Quality of Research is Definitely Strained: Material Culture Research in Ontario Community Museums," *Material History Bulletin*, 27, (Spring 1988), 61-67.

¹³⁵ William B. Hesseltine "The Challenge of the Artifact" in Thomas J. Schlereth ed. *Material Culture Studies in America* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982) 93-100 argues that artifacts are illustrations and do not provide answers to historian's questions.

¹³⁶ See for instance Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virgin: a Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975); James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten The Archaeology of Early American Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977); Fred Kniffen, "Material culture in the geographic interpretation of the landscape." In Miles Richardson (ed.), *The Human Mirror: Material and Spatial Images of Man*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Press, 1974), 252-268.

¹³⁷ Thomas J. Schlereth, *Artifacts and the American Past* (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1980), *Material Culture Studies in America* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1982); *Material Culture: A Research Guide* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1985). On Canadian discussions of material culture as historical evidence see Gregg Finley, "Material History and Curatorship: Problems and Prospects" *Muse* 11:3 (Autumn 1985), 36-39 and his "Material History and

objects in museums include Gerald L. Pocius ed., *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*, Susan Pearce ed., *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, and *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World*, and Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison eds., *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*.¹³⁸ A recent assessment of this work is Cary Carson's essay "Material Culture History: The Scholarship Nobody Knows."¹³⁹ Putting his finger directly on the problem with museum collections as data sources, he says researchers start with collections, not questions. The problems with using existing museum collections as solitary historical databases are significant. As pointed out by Schlereth, Carson and many others, history museum collections are limited by the randomness of artifact survival, skewed representation of certain objects over others, lack of documentation of existing artifacts and lack of resources to research collections. Michael Ettema states that history museum collections depict best the history of consuming goods.¹⁴⁰ In most museums, collections reflect the past collecting behaviour of the institution more than the past itself. However evidential the historical material, its textual and three dimensional arrangement in an exhibit format further shapes historical narrative. The historical identity of the object is also a function of the conceptual identity of the exhibition.¹⁴¹

Beginning in the late 1970s academics in both North America and Britain directed their gaze at the public consumption of history outside of academe. Historian Cary Carson argues that this relatively new interest in museums and public history, for historians at least, was a consequence of a growing academic interest in social history and the introduction of professional development programs in museum work. Books such as *Ordinary People and Everyday Life: Perspectives on the New Social History*¹⁴² identified cultural pluralism, women's history, rural life, and family life, among other subjects as the new focus of historical interest. As Carson states, "This annexation of family history and community history into mainstream historical scholarship amounted to an emancipation proclamation for history museums."¹⁴³ In addition, this work gave museums storylines ostensibly

Museums: A Curatorial Perspective in Doctoral Research," *Material History Bulletin* 20 (Fall 1984), 75-79; Robert D. Turner "The Limitations of Material History: A Museological Perspective" *Material History Bulletin* 20 (Autumn 1984), 87-92; Mary Tivy "The Quality of Research is Definitely Strained: Material Culture Research in Ontario Community Museums," *Material History Bulletin*, 27, (Spring 1988), pp. 61-67; Lynne Teather "Unlocking the Secrets: Material Evidence and Museums." In *Museum Quarterly* 18, no.2 (May 1990): 3-7, and her "From Silk Purses to Sow's Ears." *Material History Bulletin* 32 (Fall 1990): 29-43.

¹³⁸ Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison eds., *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*. (Winterthur, Delaware: Henry Francis Du Pont Museum Winterthur Museum and University of Tennessee Press, 1997) (Proceedings of 1993 conference "American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field"), Gerald L. Pocius, ed. *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*, (St. John's, Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), Susan M. Pearce, *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, (London: Leicester University Press, 1989).

¹³⁹ Cary Carson "Material Culture History: The Scholarship Nobody Knows" in Ann Smart Martin and J. Ritchie Garrison, (eds.), *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*. (Winterthur, Del.: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and University of Tennessee Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁰ Michael Ettema, "History Museums and the Culture of Materialism," in *Past Meets Present: Essays about Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, ed. Jo Blatti (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), p. 62-93.

¹⁴¹ Ann Reynolds, "Reproducing nature: the Museum of Natural History as a Nonsite," shows how habitat groups – used both in natural history and history museums are metonyms for some other place. *October* number 45 [Summer 1988]: 109-127.

¹⁴² *Ordinary People and Everyday Life: Perspectives on the New Social History*, eds. James B. Gardner and George R. Adams, (Nashville, Tenn: American Association for State and Local History, 1983).

¹⁴³ Cary Carson, "Colonial Williamsburg and the Practice of Interpretive Planning in American History Museums," *Public Historian* 20:3 (Summer 1998) 11-51.

more adaptable to museum collections, what Carson terms “the visual phantasmagoria that museum-goers come to see.”¹⁴⁴

History as Visual Phantasmagoria

Historians interested in museum history exhibits and accompanying interpretation programs attend largely to how recent historical scholarship has or has not been translated into the museum environment. Observations on historical integrity of exhibits, suggestions for revision, and examples of museums communicating social history themes are discussed in a number of books and essays. These commentaries include: Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, Jo Blatti, ed. *Past Meets Present: Essays about Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, eds. *History Museums in the United States: a Critical Assessment*, Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* and Mike Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*.¹⁴⁵ On the integration of women’s history into museums see Sharon Reilly, "Setting an Agenda for Women in Museums: The Presentation of Women in Museum Exhibits and Collections, Cynthia Wallace-Casey, "Into the Kitchens of Kings Landing: Interpreting the Private Sphere of Women's Work," Barbara Melosh, "Speaking of Women: Museums' Representation of Women's History" and Gaby Porter "Putting Your House in Order: Representations of Women and Domestic Life."¹⁴⁶ *History Museums in the United States* includes essays as well on integrating Black history and the history of labour into museums from social-historical perspectives.¹⁴⁷ On the interpretation of social history themes in Ontario community museums see Mary Tivy “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario.” Western Canadian history representation in museums is examined by David Richeson, ed. *Western Canadian History: Museum Interpretations*, and Robert Watts "The Role and Impact of History Museums in the Preservation and Interpretation of British Columbia History."¹⁴⁸ As Leon and Rosenzweig acknowledge, content and form cannot be

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, 46.

¹⁴⁵ Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier and Roy Rosenzweig eds., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Jo Blatti ed., *Past Meets Present: Essays About Historical Interpretation and Public Audiences* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1987); Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig eds, *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press 1989); Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990); Michael Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996.)

¹⁴⁶ Sharon Reilly, "Setting an Agenda for Women in Museums: The Presentation of Women in Museum Exhibits and Collections" *MUSE* 7:1 (Spring 1989), 47-51, Cynthia Wallace-Casey, "Into the Kitchens of Kings Landing: Interpreting the Private Sphere of Women's Work," *Studies in History and Museums*, Mercury Series Paper 47, Peter E. Rider, ed., (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, , 1994); Barbara Melosh "Speaking of Women: Museums' Representation of Women's History" in *History Museums in the United States*, 183-214; Gaby Porter "Putting Your House in Order: Representations of Women and Domestic Life" in *The Museum Time Machine*, 102-127; Wendy Rowney, “A Story of Her Own: Interpreting Women’s History in Living History Museums” (M. M. St. thesis, University of Toronto 1995).

¹⁴⁷ See James Oliver Horton and Spencer R. Crew “Afro-Americans and Museums: Towards a Policy of Inclusion” *History Museums in the United States*, 215-236; Mary H. Blewitt, “Machines, Workers, and Capitalists: The Interpretation of Textile Industrialization in New England Museums” *History Museums in the United States*, 262-293; Michael Wallace, “Industrial Museums and the History of Deindustrialization” in his, *Mickey Mouse History and Other Essays on American Memory*, 87-100.

¹⁴⁸ David Richeson, ed. *Western Canadian History: Museum Interpretations*, National Museum of Man Mercury Series, History Division Paper 27 (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1979), Robert Watts "The Role and Impact of History Museums in the Preservation and Interpretation of British Columbia History" *Museum*

separated in museum exhibits of the past. For this reason many critics choose to look at the construction of history in history museums by the exhibit model, examining, to rephrase Hayden White, “the form of the content.” The potential for widely differencing approaches to the past is carefully illustrated in John Dorst’s study of two museums in Chadd’s Ford, Pennsylvania, where differences in assessing the historically significant and collectable have created two diverse institutions.¹⁴⁹

The History Exhibit: Shaping Narratives

However evidential the historical object, its textual identification and three dimensional arrangement in an exhibit enclosure further shape its meaning. As discussed in the literature review on the history of museums, history exhibits take one of three primary forms: taxonomic displays of related objects; objects imbedded as illustrative or rhetorical points in an overriding narrative; and period rooms or recreated “living” environments. Taxonomic displays of historical material are, as Michael Ettema describes, completely object-centred, focusing on object form, function, producer and user.¹⁵⁰ The frequent mode of interpretation is an aesthetic theme to explain the inherent value of the piece, stressed through the lack of competing background material and use of spot lighting. Joseph P. Corn notes that museums of history and technology use taxonomic exhibits to demonstrate functional developments and variations in these objects and to highlight their apparent worth to society.¹⁵¹ That these exhibits are often consensual and stress progress mirrors criticism of written narratives of technology. As John M. Staudenmaier states, “nowhere ... can we find a master narrative so deeply entrenched in popular imagination and popular language as the mythic idea of progress, particularly technological progress.”¹⁵²

Meta-narratives in the History Exhibit

In *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, Hilde Hein sums up the narrative history exhibit process this way:

Historians and museum scholars working at semiotic meta-levels, discover narrative veins within their collections and extract their meaning for visitors by applying epistemically effective exhibition strategies to them. Objects, whether carefully preserved originals or exact replicas, are used as means to an end, rather than as ends to be contemplated for their own sake.¹⁵³

Round-Up 91 (1984) 4-13.

¹⁴⁹ John Dorst, *The Written Suburb* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press 1989).

¹⁵⁰ Michael Ettema fully discusses traditional history museums and their treatment of collections in the belief that these objects somehow contain and commute the past, “History Museums and the Culture of Materialism,” in *Past Meets Present: Essays about Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, ed. Jo Blatti (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), p. 62-93

¹⁵¹ Joseph J. Corn, “Tools, technologies, and contexts: Interpreting the history of American technics.” In *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989).

¹⁵² “Rationality versus Contingency in the History of Technology,” in *Does Technology Drive History: The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*, eds., Merritt Roe Smith and Leo Marx (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995), 262.

¹⁵³ Hilde Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000) Kavanagh, Frisch and Tivy argue that overriding narrative can sublimate the historicity of objects, and that it is this latter aspect of material culture which attracts visitors, rather than a mitigating narrative.

Assessments of narrative exhibits in community and urban history museums confirm that such master narratives also underline the tropes common to these exhibits: they are usually romantic stories of progress, patriotism, civic piety; and consensus. Michael Frisch notes that exhibits like these rely on the classic combination of a relatively unmediated display of artifacts, with an “authoritative historical voice intoning a seamless narrative” of the subject in a coherent movement through time.¹⁵⁴ He identifies the framework for urban biography in museums as almost always deductive, a linear, moral form into which the community’s growth and development is shaped. This process, he adds, has tended to harness the narrative of the past to a celebratory assessment of a community’s present and future. He regards the combination of narrative form, the self-promotional purpose and the evocation of presumptive community, as forming certain frameworks for interpreting history in the museum.

This parallel state in Ontario history museums is evident in the few essays published concerning the interpretation of the past in Ontario's community history museum exhibits. Chris Miller-Marti "Local History Museums and the Creation of the Past" discusses the diverging points of view of two community groups and the construction of historical narrative at Ye Olde Museum in Beachville, Ontario.¹⁵⁵ Mary Tivy looks at the construction of history in narrative exhibits in “The Trend Toward Specialized Museums in Ontario,” “The Quality of Research is Definitely Strained: Collections Research in Ontario Community Museums” and “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario," *Material History Review*, 37 (Spring 1993): 35-51.¹⁵⁶ Tivy argues that the metanarrative for the history galleries in Ontario museums in 1989-1990 was the creation of civilization out of wildness, through local success and development, illustrated by improvements in material technology, the development of social institutions and the growth of the community. To counteract this seemingly inclusive view of the past, historians such as Frisch advocate open-ended narratives, or multiple perspective story-lines. Frisch and others promote exhibits that are more community-based through collaboration with local groups, what Frisch calls a “shared authority” in historical interpretation. However, as Tivy shows, this “sharing” usually amounts to the presentation of similar tropes by different groups interested in celebrating their heritage.¹⁵⁷

Environmental Exhibits: The Rhetoric of Historic Buildings

Historic houses often owe their preservation to the significance of a resident or the building’s outstanding architectural form, shaping narratives of prosperity, progress, architectural styles, interior furnishings and domestic life.¹⁵⁸ As noted above, the historic recreation rescued the historical object from the scientific dimension of taxonomy. Stan Johannesen calls the restored house “a fictive artifact” in two ways: it assembles artifacts to create an illusion of completion, and the total effect is

¹⁵⁴ Michael Frisch, "The Presentation of Urban History in Big-City Museums" in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, 38-63.

¹⁵⁵ Chris Miller-Marti "Local History Museums and the Creation of the Past" *MUSE* 5:2 (Summer 1987) 36-39.

¹⁵⁶ “The Trend Toward Specialized Museums” *Museum Quarterly* 12:3 (1983), 19-24, “The Quality of Research is Definitely Strained: Collections Research in Ontario Community Museums,” *Material History Bulletin* 27 (Spring 1988), 61-68, “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario,” *Material History Review*, 37 (Spring 1993): 35-51.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ John A. Herbst “Historic Houses” in *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment*, eds. Warren Leone and Roy Rosenzweig (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989) 98-114, discusses traditional characteristics of historic house preservationists and their goals and advocates for social history themes at historic houses. He believes social history themes transform these sites from vehicles of myth to historic representations.

used as a foundation for story-telling.¹⁵⁹ Likewise Monica Risnicoff de Gorgas claims that fiction is portrayed as reality in these “theatres of memory” that are house museums.¹⁶⁰ The patently nostalgic clothing of the past at these sites has been addressed by several who offer suggestions for revising the history presented there.¹⁶¹ They also point out the difficulties faced in so doing, such as architectural and collections limitations, inherited sensibilities of the place which resist new and irreverent interpretations, and audience preferences for the nostalgic.¹⁶²

Environmental Exhibits: The Village as Historical Narrative

Historic village museums have long been called outdoor museums, where the past is presented in the context of a community of buildings and their actor-inhabitants. Historic houses and historic villages are touted as “living history museums” because of the role-playing activities of costumed interpreters. Because of its scale, the world’s largest historic village museum, Colonial Williamsburg, has attracted a good deal of attention from scholars about its portrayal of the past. Accused in the 1960s of being “an entirely artificial recreation of an imaginary past”¹⁶³ it has revamped its interpretive approaches to incorporate slavery, and the unsavoury living conditions of the colonial period.¹⁶⁴ Much of this message is conveyed through dramatic vignettes. Cary Carson, historian and vice-president of research at Colonial Williamsburg says that historic house or village sites are best understood as theatres furnished with appropriate and accurate artifacts for historical dramaturgy.¹⁶⁵ Village museums have

¹⁵⁹ Stanley Johannesen, “Fictive Artifacts” Unpublished essay, 1986.

¹⁶⁰ Mónica Risnicoff de Gorgas “Reality as illusion, the historic houses that become museums” in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, Bettina M Carbonell, ed., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2004), 356-361.

¹⁶¹ Works discussing history museums and historical sites inevitably discuss nostalgia. A small sample includes Mary Lynn Stevens, “Wistful Thinking: The Effect of Nostalgia on Interpretation” *History News*, 36 (December 1981), 10-13; Tom Schlereth, “It Wasn’t That Simple” *Museum News* 56 (January - February 1978) 36-44; Gaynor Kavanagh, “History and the Museum: The Nostalgia Business” *Museum Journal*, 1982; Pierce F. Lewis, “The Future of the Past: Our Clouded Vision of Historic Preservation” *Pioneer America* 7 (July 1975) 1-20; Michael Wallace, “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States” *Radical History Review* 25 (1981) 63-96, and Chris Miller-Marti, “Local History Museums and the Creation of the Past,” *MUSE* 5:2 (Summer 1987) 36-39.

¹⁶² Catherine M. Cameron and John B. Gatewood, “Excursions into the Un-Remembered Past: What People Want from Visits to Historic Sites,” *Public Historian* 22:3 (Summer 2000) 107-127, Peggy Hohenadel Phibbs, “Nostalgia Pays the Bills: Marketing the Past at Living History Museums in Ontario”, (M.M.St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1995). Mary Tivy, “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario,” *Material History Review*, 37 (Spring 1993): 35-51.

¹⁶³ Walter Muir Whitehill, “‘Promoted to Glory’... The Origin of Preservation in the United States” in Ablert Rains et al. eds, *With Heritage So Rich* (New York: Random House, 1966), 43. Cited in Leon and Piatt, fn.27.

¹⁶⁴ Cary Carson “Colonial Williamsburg and the Practice of Interpretive Planning in American History Museums” *Public Historian* 20:3 (Summer 1998) 11-51; Wallace “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States”; Carroll Van West and Mary Hoffschwelle “Slumbering on Its Old Foundations: Interpretation at Colonial Williamsburg” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 83 (1984) 157-75. For a defense of this portrayal see Warren Leon and Margaret Piatt “Living History Museums” in *History Museums in the United States*, 64-. “Colonial Williamsburg: Planning and Public History,” *Public Historian* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 10–99. A disparaging view of these changes is Richard Handler and Eric Gable, *The New History in an Old Museum: Creating the Past at Colonial Williamsburg* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).

¹⁶⁵ Historic villages and houses have frequently been compared to theatrical sets, especially in cases such as Plimoth Village, Massachusetts where virtually all of the structures and artifacts are reconstructed. See Jeanne Cannizzo, “Old Images/New Metaphors: The Museum in the Modern World” Transcript, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation “Ideas” Programme (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1982), p. 24. Others suggest that living history museums be viewed only as models of past communities where staff members present interpretations of history, such as those at Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village. See Michael Wallace

long been criticized as “peaceable kingdoms,” and the least authentic of historical reconstructions.¹⁶⁶ Tom Schlereth and others note the past presented in these museums is usually shaped by a romantic trope, characterized by homogeneity and consensus, moral sensibility, and motivated by progressive determinism.¹⁶⁷ As Leon and Piatt argue, these museums show an unrepresentative sample of past Americans – the lives of middle and upper-income Protestants in an agrarian setting – who are, as Lowenthal adds, “perpetually industrious.”¹⁶⁸

Tivy has shown this to be the same case for living history museums in Ontario, noting the pre-industrial facades of these villages.¹⁶⁹ Implementing social history themes into living history museums in Ontario is discussed by Carl Benn, “Living History Lies and Social History,” Lynne Kurylo “Grime, Crime and Slime: Museum Stories and their Limits,” and Joanne Lea, “Defining Terms: The Pioneers and Other Myths,” as well as unpublished research papers of graduate programs in museum studies.¹⁷⁰ Suggestions for revising the presentation of the past at these sites recommend topics not necessarily represented by the existing museum collections, such as conflict, aging and dissent, as well as the use of historical evidence beyond the collections, including oral history and documents to support these themes.¹⁷¹ Among many thematic issues on this topic in American museums is *History News* (March 1986). The emphasis on social history themes is a hallmark of North American critique, especially regarding historic villages. By contrast, in Britain the literature on historic villages and other history museums is categorically different in its recommendations for research and exhibition. Termed “folk-life” museums, these recreated villages and historic places have their academic genesis in Britain in local history and folk life studies. Kavanagh states in *History Curatorship* that history museums exist to record and interpret ways of living and working through evidence derived from objects, oral testimony, music and sounds. Drawing much more on an ethnological model, Kavanagh argues:

In an effort to address closely and faithfully the characteristics, experiences and cultural expressions of an area and its inhabitants, the museum needs to stray further and further away from what is commonly understood by the term “history.” Indeed

“Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States,” *Radical History Review* 25 (October 1981) 63-100.

¹⁶⁶ David Lowenthal “Pioneer Museums” in *History Museums in the United States*, 116-127. Kevin Lynch’s study of human response to historic landscapes is titled *What Time is this Place?* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972).

¹⁶⁷ Tom Schlereth “It Wasn’t that Simple” Thomas Schlereth refers to Michael Lesy’s *Wisconsin Death Trip* (New York: Pantheon, 1973), a study of death and insanity during the settlement of Wisconsin, in his *Artifacts and the American Past*, p.211. Howard Marshall “Folk Life and the Rise of American Folk Museums,” *American Folklore*, 1977.

¹⁶⁸ Lowenthal, “Pioneer Museums,” 116.

¹⁶⁹ Tivy, “Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario”

¹⁷⁰ Carl Benn, “Living History Lies and Social History” *Museum Quarterly* 16:2 (Summer 1987) 3, 28, and Lynne Kurylo “Grime, Crime and Slime: Museum Stories and their Limits,” *Museum Quarterly* 18:4 (November 1990) 3, 4-13; Joanne Lea, “Defining Terms: The Pioneers and Other Myths,” *Museum Quarterly* 18:1, (February 1990) 25-35. The Masters of Museum Studies Program at the University of Toronto holds several unpublished student research papers and theses on the interpretation of social history in Ontario’s museums. See for instance, John Pinkerton “Canadian Living History: Tradition or Revision” (1989), and Manda Vranik, “An Exploration into Gender Roles and Family Patterns at Three Ontario Living-History Sites” (1990). In addition Jeanne Cannizzo’s three part Canadian Broadcasting Corporation radio series for “Ideas” called “Living in the Past” (1987) is available in transcript form and features interviews with Carl Benn, and Lynne Kurylo as well as Michael Wallace, Jay Anderson and Cary Carson.

¹⁷¹ See also John Patterson “Connor Prairie refocuses its interpretive message to include controversial subjects” *History News*, 41:2 (March 1986) 12-15 and Andrew Baker and Warren Leon, “Conflict and Community at Old Sturbridge Village and Conner Prairie” *History News* 41:2 (March 1986) 6-11.

the term may be unsatisfactory for the definition of the museum's discipline. This is because much that is undertaken by museums involves not diachronic studies tracing changes over time, but primarily synchronic ones, where the texture and meaning of a specific moment or period is sought from the surviving material and social evidence of the people who experienced it. What museums tend to be engaged in are regionally based cultural studies, through which the interplay of social, political and physical environments is explored within an historical dimension.¹⁷²

Although the ethnohistorical approach does not relieve museums of the need to attempt accuracy, the focus on custom and belief might be more in keeping with the concept of the public museum in the first place. History produced in museums is also contingent on the cultural process of memorialisation: While some authors allocate museums to the intellectual dust-bin of nostalgia and identity, as non-historical enterprises,¹⁷³ others investigate issues surrounding museums and heritage identification, collective memory and the limits of historical narrative.

Museums and the Dynamic of the Past: The Pull of Heritage

his·to·ry

Etymology: Latin *historia*, from Greek, inquiry, history, from *histor*, knowing, learned; akin to Greek *eidenai* to know -- : a chronological record of significant events (as affecting a nation or institution) often including an explanation of their causes: events that form the subject matter of a history.

her·i·tage

Etymology: Middle English, from Middle French, from *heriter* to inherit, from Late Latin *hereditare*, from Latin *hered-*, *heres* heir - : property that descends to an heir: something transmitted by or acquired from a predecessor :something possessed as a result of one's natural situation or birth

Above and beyond the Merriman-Webster dictionary, heritage as a concept has been differentiated from history by a number of historians and cultural critics. Chief among these is David Lowenthal in his books, *The Past is a Foreign Country* and *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History*.¹⁷⁴ From a wide range of sources, and bolstered by a thorough contemplation of Western fascination with the past over a number of centuries, Lowenthal argues that heritage is at variance with history. Heritage, Lowenthal maintains is mythic, tied to group or individual identity, celebratory, and a profession of faith. History he views as an objective inquiry into past, open to inspection and continually revised. Lowenthal draws sustenance from the classic writings of Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory* on collective memory and identity, and Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm,

¹⁷² Gaynor Kavanagh, *History Curatorship* (London: Leicester University Press, 1990), 55. Certainly historical ethnology is what folk villages seem to do best. Tivy has described their "timelessness" and annual cyclical repetition of activities appropriate for the historical setting.

¹⁷³ See for instance, Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987); Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985); Michael Wallace, *Mickey Mouse History and other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996).

¹⁷⁴ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) and *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

eds., the *Invention of Tradition*¹⁷⁵ on identity and invented tradition. Museums fall into the category of heritage institutions, governed by heritage departments, and critiqued by those interested in the contours of heritage manifestation. Lowenthal's view of museum artifacts is that they serve as conduits between past and present, and like other authors, he views this relationship as subjective, a malleable axis (called in the literature "past-present dialectic") that turns with present need. Present need seems to be succour: Lowenthal and others argue the main engine of heritage is nostalgia, a condition aggravated by change.

One of the foremost and earliest studies of nostalgia is Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia*.¹⁷⁶ He maintains that nostalgia is one of ways in which we construct, maintain and reconstruct our identities. Davis reasons that the ability to feel nostalgia for events in our past has less to do with how recent or distant these events were than with the manner in which they contrast with the events, moods and dispositions of our present circumstances. As this author and others argue, much of the attraction to history museums, especially living history farms and villages, appears to be based in nostalgia's catalyst, antimodernism.¹⁷⁷ Certainly these are the motives spelled out for museum efforts in Tivy's "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario," Paul Litt's study on the Niagara Apothecary, Hobbs history of Adena, and Patricia Mooney-Melvin's "Historic Sites as Tourism Attractions: Harnessing the Romance of the Past: Preservation, Tourism, and History"¹⁷⁸ As Davis says, nostalgia's gaze looks backwards rather than forwards, for the familiar rather than the novel, for certainty rather than discovery. Nostalgia and memory operate on metonymic association, and relics or artifacts serve to inspire or jog memories of a real or imagined past. The power of buildings and objects to reflect values and beliefs is matched with the notion that objects somehow are imbued with the spirit of their makers.¹⁷⁹ To collect and display artifacts is to collect and communicate their virtues.

The Uses of Heritage

Wholesale criticisms of museums and governments monopolizing on nostalgia for tourist purposes are the subjects of Robert Hewison's *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* and Patrick Wright's, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain*.¹⁸⁰ Michael Wallace's writings on heritage preservation in the United States strive to show the distorted views of the past suited to the needs of museum promoters and government propaganda, while

¹⁷⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. F.J. Ditter and V.Y. Ditter, (New York Harper and Row, 1980); Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm, eds., *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁷⁶ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York : Free Press, 1979).

¹⁷⁷ The classic book on antimodernist proclivities is Dean MacCannell *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York : Schocken Books, 1976).

¹⁷⁸ Mary Tivy, "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario," Paul Litt: "The Apotheosis of the Apothecary: Retailing and Consuming the Meaning of a Historic Site," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Society* 1999; Hobbs, "Adena", Patricia Mooney-Melvin. "Historic Sites as Tourism Attractions: Harnessing the Romance of the Past: Preservation, Tourism, and History," *The Public Historian*. Vol.13, No.2 (Spring 1991) 35-48.

¹⁷⁹ Key to the purpose of traditional history museums and their treatment of collections is the belief that these objects somehow contain and commute the past. This idea is fully discussed by Michael Ettema, in his essay, "History Museums and the Culture of Materialism," in *Past Meets Present: Essays about Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences*, ed. Jo Blatti (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 62-93.

¹⁸⁰ Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* London: Methuen, 1987; Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London : Verso, 1985).

Richard Handler provides an analysis of the relationship of state to identified heritage in his *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture* in Quebec.¹⁸¹ Handler makes the case that, by focusing on the idea of cultural property, the Quebec government identified and funded a certain kind of Quebec “patrimoine” that privileged the French regime and Roman Catholic culture. Museum curators and architectural historians assisted in this activity through what Handler regards as a fetish of material culture from this period.¹⁸² Likewise, John Bodnar’s *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* is concerned with specific patterns of commemoration shaped by patriotism.¹⁸³ Bodnar relies heavily on the writings of Clifford Geertz on symbols, identity and meaning.¹⁸⁴ His look at the symbolic role of the pioneer in the Midwest echoes the research on pioneer fascination in Ontario museums and commemorative activities as described by Mary Tivy in "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario" and Geoffrey Hayes "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga."¹⁸⁵ Mary Tivy’s, “Ministering History to the Community” looks at government regulation and history at Ontario history museums. In contrast to Quebec, the Ontario provincial museums branch stressed secular standards within the self-determination of municipal identity. Hobsbawm and Ranger’s *The Invention of Tradition* is a classic study of the creation of cultural identities (with attendant symbolic objects) for hegemonic purposes.¹⁸⁶

Pierre Nora and Michael Kammen track commemoration changes over time in France and the United States, respectively. In “Between Memory and History” Nora argues that forms of public history such as the museum, archives and marked historical sites replaced oral tradition and places held in memory at about the same time as the emergence of the modern nation state.¹⁸⁷ Tony Bennett argues unequivocally that the government sponsored modern museum in Australia, which emerged in the late nineteenth century, was designed to civilize and control a public audience. Working over a much broader and less politically rooted landscape is Michael Kammen’s *Mystic Chords of Memory*. On this large palette he distinguishes changes in identifying tradition in American culture, defined by a sense of the past that he sees shifting from memory and ancestor worship to a present day view of heritage as consensus, used to satisfy an array of psychic needs, commercial enterprises and political opportunities. Kammen says the nostalgia boom did not “take off” until 1970s, a period singular in its democratization of tradition in terms of content and accessibility, as opposed to earlier periods in which heritage activities were motivated by cultural and political challenges posed by immigration.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸¹ *Mickey Mouse History and other Essays on American Memory* (Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1996).

¹⁸² Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

¹⁸³ *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991).

¹⁸⁴ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures; Selected Essays* (New York: Basic books, 1973), and *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York : Basic Books, 1983)

¹⁸⁵ Mary Tivy, "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario," *Material History Review*, 37 (Spring 1993): 35-51; Geoffrey Hayes "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga :A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County's German Identity" *Ontario History* XCI:2 (Autumn 1999), 130-149.

¹⁸⁶ Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm, eds. *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York : Cambridge, University Press, 1983).

¹⁸⁷ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire.” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 7-25.

¹⁸⁸ Pierre Nora’s *Lieux de Memoire* tracks changes in commemoration practices in France. In “Between Memory and History” Nora argues that forms of public history such as the museum, archives and marked historical sites replaced oral tradition and places held in memory at about the same time as the emergence of the

Collective Memory and History

If heritage is diametrically opposed to history as Lowenthal contends, then its soul mate is collective memory. Museums are often considered as seats of collective memory by writers such as Anthony Alan Shelton who views them as repositories of the collective memory of a social-historical formation.¹⁸⁹ Although Carl Becker called for a study of the difference between history and memory some 70 years ago,¹⁹⁰ it seems to be only in the last decade that historians have really become interested in this topic which has become the special theme of historical journals and conferences. The irony, of course, is that memory – so long seen as the underbelly of historical self-discipline, is now its intellectual darling.

In his classic analysis, *The Collective Memory*, Maurice Halbwachs conceived of collective memory as a flexible manifestation of a group of individuals "who sustain their common interests by their own selective and highly partial view of history."¹⁹¹ He underlined the limits of collective memory; it retains from the past only what still lives or is capable of living in the consciousness of the group keeping the memory alive. It does not exceed the boundaries of this group and is formulated around their traditional thoughts and beliefs.¹⁹² Thus, as Patrick Hutton observes, Halbwach's thesis was that memory survival was dependent on social context.¹⁹³ Halbwachs viewed memory as Lowenthal does heritage: socially constructed and present-orientated, arbitrary, an instrument of reconfiguration over reclamation or retrieval, drawn up by resemblance and emotional appeal and characterized as personal, referential and reverential. Combined with the forces of nostalgia which Fred Davis suggests are, at the collective level, "passive and inward" memory promotes "tender musing and mutually appreciative self-regard over a shared past."¹⁹⁴ It is indeed an instrument of "reconfiguration."¹⁹⁵ As Michael Kammen observes, the historian's vocation is to provide society with a discriminating memory.¹⁹⁶ Natalie Zemon Davis and Richard Starn observe "In the logic of these oppositions, the sceptic about the reliability of memory becomes the true believer in the objectivity of history."¹⁹⁷

However, scholars such as Raphael Samuel in *Theatres of Memory* expand the definition of history to include most historical activities.¹⁹⁸ He argues that history is a social form of knowledge and not the prerogative of the historian, rather he sees it in a much more flexible form as an ensemble of activities and practices in which ideas of history are embedded in a dialectic of past-present relations. This thinking includes museums and their presentations of the past, as one of various

modern nation state.

¹⁸⁹ Anthony Alan Shelton, "In the lair of the monkey: notes towards a post-modernist museography" in Susan Pearce, ed. *Objects of Knowledge*, 78-102.

¹⁹⁰ Carl Becker, "Everyman an Historian," *American Historical Review*, 37:2, 221-235.

¹⁹¹ In her introduction to Maurice Halbwachs' *The Collective Memory*, Mary Douglas interprets Halbwachs' concept of a collective memory as a flexible manifestation of a group of individuals "who sustain their common interests by their own selective and highly partial view of history." Mary Douglas, introduction to *The Collective Memory* by Maurice Halbwachs, trans. F.J. Ditter and V.Y. Ditter, (New York Harper and Row, 1980), 17.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁹³ Patrick Hutton's *History as An Art of Memory* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993), reviews the work of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora and Walter J.Ong.

¹⁹⁴ Fred Davis, *Yearning for Yesterday: A Sociology of Nostalgia* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 110.

¹⁹⁵ Term used by Natalie Zemon Davis and Randolph Starn, "Memory and Counter-Memory" *Representations* (Spring 1989), 4.

¹⁹⁶ Michael Kammen, "Vanitas and the Historian's Vocation" *Reviews in American History* 10:4 (1982), .19-20.

¹⁹⁷ Davis and Starn, 5.

¹⁹⁸ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London and New York:Verso, 1994).

perspectives of the past, without moralizing or prioritizing them.¹⁹⁹ Rather, his interest lies in how these activities or “resurrectionisms” continue and how they function. Samuel also disagrees with Maurice Halbwach’s notion of memory as an unconscious retrieval of the past as opposed to the consciousness of historical practice. He views memory as an active shaping force that is dynamic, and is dialectically related to historical thought, rather than some kind of negative other. Moreover, he states, history splinters and divides, and also reconstructs a whole. Another formative piece on memory and history is David Thelen’s “Memory and American History.”²⁰⁰ Thelen likewise maintains that memory is constructed, associational and based on present need. History he views as an explanation of change over time that has its roots in storytelling.

The Nature of Storytelling

Cabinets, collectors and museums are often viewed as antiquarian in nature. The term is used in a derogatory manner to refer to a form of study based on collecting and detailing sources, without articulating a narrative of change. But Lucy Peltz and Martin Myrone in *Producing the Past* show how the interests of antiquarians bear a similarity to those of modern historical studies. “This concern with material as well as textual evidence, the obsession with detail – almost as a means of stalling the conclusive historical text – the fixation on the disjecta and marginalia of the past, the willingness to extract meaning from the most trivial and neglected of things are all strangely typical of modern historical studies.”²⁰¹ As Alan Liu notes, the reconstruction of the past through fragmentary pieces, the metaphoric and metonymic extrapolations used in reconstructing meaning and narrative, and the romantic tendencies typify the “thick description” in some historical studies.²⁰² Stephen Bann in *The Inventions of History* argues the need to understand what he calls the “antiquarian sensibility.” Although this may have been disavowed long since by the professional historian, Bann states that antiquarianism should not be viewed as insufficient history, but as a distinctively material form which historical representation acquired over the nineteenth century, and which formed the precursors of the historical museum.²⁰³

Museums and Historical Narrative: The Mythic Purpose

Despite criticisms of heritage and museums interpretations of the past, the discipline of history itself recognizes that historical narrative is story-telling with facts. As noted by Hutton, in *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, Walter J. Ong views this development, “the reconstruction of the past” as a consequence of print literacy.²⁰⁴ The museum operation in portraying the past is doubly bound by the methods and critiques of the historical enterprise. In the field of

¹⁹⁹ It should be noted though that Samuels dislikes living history, not for its historical objectives, but for its presumption of animating the past.

²⁰⁰ David Thelen, “Memory and American History” *Journal of American History* 75:4 (March 1989), 1117-1129.

²⁰¹ Lucy Peltz and Martin Myrone, eds., *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850*. (Aldershot, England; Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate, 1999).

²⁰² This is the central point of Alan Liu’s essay “Local Transcendence: Cultural Criticism, Postmodernism and the Romanticism of Detail” *Representations* 32 (Fall 1990), 75-113.

²⁰³ Stephen Bann, *The Inventions of History: Essays on the Representations of the Past*, (Manchester UK: Manchester University Press, 1990), 6.

²⁰⁴ Hutton’s discussion of Walter J. Ong’s work is in his chapter, “Placing Memory in Contemporary Historiography” in *History as an Art of Memory*, (Hanover: University Press of New England 1993), 1-26.

critical writing on historical narrative, Hayden White is pre-eminent, and many of his observations in *Content of the Form* derive from anthropologist Levi-Strauss' *The Savage Mind*.²⁰⁵

As White notes, Levi-Strauss and others argued that historical accounts are inevitably interpretative. Levi-Strauss said that "Confronted with a chaos of facts, the historian must "choose, sever and carve them up" for narrative purposes.²⁰⁶ In short, historical facts, originally constituted as data by the historian, must be constituted a second time as elements of a verbal structure which is always written for a specific (manifest or latent) purpose. In museums, with objects as keystones, the narrative is reconstituted again and again in its classification, exhibition and education activities. If one substitutes "artifact" for element the following quote from *The Savage Mind* prefaces later critiques of knowledge production in the museum.

Pursued in isolation each element would show itself to be beyond grasp. But certain of them derive consistency from the fact that they can be integrated into a system whose terms are more or less credible when set off against the overall coherence of the series. The coherence of the series is however, the coherence of myth. ... History consists wholly of its method, which experience proves to be indispensable for cataloguing the elements of any structure whatever, human or non-human in its entirety. Thus history is in no sense a science, although as a method it does contribute to the sciences by virtue of its cataloguing operations. What the historian offers as explanations of structures and processes in the past, in the form of narratives, are simply formulations of those fraudulent outlines which are ultimately mythic in nature.²⁰⁷

While not calling these narratives fraudulent, White concurs with Strauss and Northrop Frye that they are mythical in shape.²⁰⁸ Certainly this is the quality also of local history writing, as discussed by Royce MacGillivray on local history writing in Ontario.²⁰⁹ As White says, facts become meaningful through figurative devices which shape narrative: literary tropes such as romance, tragedy, comedy, irony. "This means that historiographical disputes will tend to turn, not only upon the matter of what are the facts, but also upon that of their meaning."²¹⁰ Thus, in history, as in the history museum, facts and artifacts have the potential of multiple meanings.

As Ludmilla Jordanova says about museums and knowing the past "What is present, like that which is omitted is not accidental, even if the selection processes are largely unconscious. It is precisely in this way that historical myths are constructed – myths that express powerful, if silent needs."²¹¹ Tony Bennett adds about the museum's role in myth-making:

As educative institutions museums function largely as repositories of the already known. They are places for telling, and telling again, the stories of our time, the ones which have become a doxa through their endless repetition. If the meaning of the artifact seems to go without saying, this is only because it has been said so many

²⁰⁵ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987. Claude Levi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966).

²⁰⁶ Levi-Strauss quoted in Hayden White, *The Content of the Form*, 24.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 55.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 57.

²⁰⁹ Royce MacGillivray, *The Slopes of the Andes: Four Essays on the Rural Myth in Ontario*, (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1990).

²¹⁰ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form* 72.

²¹¹ Ludmilla Jordanova, "Objects of knowledge: A historical perspective on museums." In Pter Vergo ed., *The New Museology*. (London: Reaktion Books, 1989), 26.

times... The authenticity of the artefact then, does not vouchsafe its meaning. Rather, this derives from its nature and functioning, once placed in a museum, as a sign – or more accurately, a sign vehicle or signifier. The consequences of this are far-reaching.²¹²

This area of thinking about objects as signs and text is explored in another recent body of writing about museums and the interpretation of the past.

Objects and Texts: Deconstructing the Late Twentieth Century Museum

While historians addressed the substandard narratives in history museums with the zeal of academic reform for a social purpose, cultural critics dissembled the museum during the same period aiming at cultural reform with a political purpose. These forces have led to a revision of the museum and its role in the community. As Hilde Hein states, “Museums have descended from the heaven of authoritative certainty to inhabit the flatlands of doubt.”²¹³

There is remarkably little published chronicling this descent from authority or what Peter Van Mensch likewise regards as a “revolution” in museum thinking.²¹⁴ In both cases, these authors refer to a broad movement which they say transformed Western museums in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. This museological revolution, known as “the new museology,” had two fronts. One, a brigade of academics at universities, used cultural criticism as their chief weapon to deconstruct museums through scholarly analyses of the museum construction of knowledge.²¹⁵ Meanwhile, a second flank of other academics, public interest groups, journalists and museum professionals launched a much more public, full-frontal advance at museums confronting them over issues of cultural representation, ownership and access to collections, and the museum role in community development and social change. Ultimately, these efforts would change the professional and public views of museums and their presentation of the past. This section considers the discourse on the shifting construction of knowledge in the museum.

²¹² Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge: London and New York, 1995), 147.

²¹³ Hilde Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 142.

²¹⁴ Peter van Mensch, “Magpies on Mount Helicon” *Museums and Community* ICOFOM Study Series, 25 (Stavanger 1995), 133-138.

²¹⁵ Recent publications on this topic include: *Theorizing Museums*, eds. Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), 105-126; Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge: London and New York, 1995); Daniel J. Sherman and Igrit Rogoff eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1993); Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (Routledge: London and New York, 1992); *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); Susan Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: University of Leicester Press, 1992); Susan Pearce ed., *Museum Studies in Material Culture* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), Susan Pearce ed., *Objects of Knowledge* (London: Athlone Press, 1988), Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.) *Museum Languages: Objects and Texts* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), Peter Vergo ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaction Books, 1989).

Knowledge and Meaning in the Museum

Lisa Roberts' *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum*, Hilde Hein's *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*, Tony Bennett's *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory Politics*, and essays by Cary Carson on the interpretive history of Williamsburg, and others, discuss this shift from different perspectives, but with similar conclusions.²¹⁶ As Roberts and Hein both argue, a growing museum focus on visitor experience replaced the museum collections as the principal museum client during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The intellectual unseating of the object and its subordination to narrative or thematic devices was coupled with a democratizing of the museum enterprise, as the locus of authority in defining and interpreting cultural significance was broadened to the community. Stephen Weil provides a brief overview of this process in the United States in "From Being about Something to Being for Somebody: The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum."²¹⁷ He attributes this shift to changes in ideology, professional standards, and cultural norms. Elaine Heumann Gurian's essay "What is the Object of this Exercise: A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums" argues outright that now, "objects are not the heart of the museum."²¹⁸

A Path of Discourse in the Museum: A Brief Journey to the Flatlands of Doubt

One of the earliest calls to reform the museum came from Duncan Cameron, a leader in the Canadian museum profession. His essay, "The Museum: A Temple or the Forum?" published in *Curator* has become a landmark piece contesting the form and function of museums.²¹⁹ Museums, Cameron stated, were in desperate need of psychotherapy. Artifacts, he added, were little more than autistic reflections of an individual's perception of reality, be it private collectors, or museum curators. Curators, he viewed as an elite club endowed with the power to enshrine in museums things they held to be significant and valuable. Cameron had already published a theoretical model of exhibition as communication system based on language models and he argued that instead of centering on revered

²¹⁶ Lisa Roberts, *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1997), Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (Routledge: London and New York, 1995), Cary Carson "Colonial Williamsburg and the Practice of Interpretive Planning in American History Museums" *Public Historian* 20:3 (Summer 1998) 11-51. Other recent publications on this topic include: *Theorizing Museums*, eds. Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996): 105-126, Daniel J. Sherman and Igrit Rogoff eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994), Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1993), Eileen Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (Routledge: London and New York, 1992), *The Cultures of Collecting*, ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), Susan Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: University of Leicester Press, 1992), Susan Pearce (ed.) *Museum Studies in Material Culture* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989) Susan Pearce (ed.) *Objects of Knowledge* (London: Athlone Press, 1988), Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.) *Museum Languages: Objects and Texts* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991), Peter Vergo (ed.) *The New Museology* (London: Reaction Books, 1989).

²¹⁷ "The Ongoing Transformation of the American Museum" *Daedalus* 128:3 (Summer 1999): 229-258.

²¹⁸ Elaine Heumann Gurian, "What is the Object of this Exercise? A Meandering Exploration of the Many Meanings of Objects in Museums" *Daedalus* 128:3 (Summer 1999) 163-183.

²¹⁹ Duncan Cameron, "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum," *Curator* 14:1 (1971): 11-24. (This essay is an oft-quoted touchstone for later essays arguing for change in museums.)

objects, museums needed to mobilize their efforts toward democratizing their operations, by operating as centres for the open exchange of ideas.²²⁰

This thinking, called since that time, “the new museology” is concerned in part with the construction of meaning in the museum and its influence can be seen in the recent writings of museum historians such as Stephen Conn’s *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876-1926*. It may be that Cameron had read French cultural critic André Malraux’s 1967 book, *Museum Without Walls*.²²¹ Malraux was one of first to observe how museums such as the Louvre transformed artifacts by removing objects from their original contexts, transferring them into a museum space and classifying them in academic terms. While Lisa Roberts in *From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum* credits Malraux as the intellectual catalyst for cultural criticism of the museum, it can be argued that, Cameron aside, anthropologists interested in the construction of meaning and semiotics had a greater impact on the academic discussion about museums and meaning that followed, especially in Britain and North America. This perspective is not discussed in the literature but can be discerned from key publications in the last thirty years.

The Poetics of the New Museology: Objects and Meaning-Lessness

The shift in academic thinking about museums and objects owes much to the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology, which had strong ties to material culture in museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the 1960s and 1970s, anthropologists began to reconsider the accepted notion of objectivity in their discipline especially regarding observation and analyses of other cultures. This discursive turn is evident in Dell Hymes’ 1972 edited collection of essays, *Reinventing Anthropology*.²²² Contributors called for a new anthropology - one that rejected a pose of objectivity and detachment, and emphasized instead reflexivity, relativity and context.²²³ Hymes suggested anthropologists begin by examining their own culture. Subsequent titles supporting this view include Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture*,²²⁴ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology makes Its Object*,²²⁵ and James Clifford and George Marcus, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*,²²⁶ whose essays questioned the objectivity of cultural description, the anthropologist’s voice of authority and the rhetoric of anthropological writing. These points were later mirrored by critics of museums and curators, who questioned the objectivity of museum exhibits, the authority of the “curatorial voice” and the rhetoric of museum texts.²²⁷

At the same time, a “myth and symbol” school developed in the discipline of anthropology focusing on the study of symbols, meaning, and belief. The 1977 publication, *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings* is a standard reader from this

²²⁰ Duncan Cameron, “Viewpoint: the museum as a communication system and implications for museum education,” *Curator* 11:1 (1968): 33-40.

²²¹ Andre Malraux, *Museum Without Walls*, (New York: Doubleday, 1967). Published in France in 1965 as *Le Musee Imaginaire*.

²²² Dell Hymes, ed., *Reinventing Anthropology*, (New York: Pantheon, 1972).

²²³ Quoted from David Kaplan, “The Anthropology of Authenticity: Everyman his own Anthropologist,” *American Anthropologist*, 76:828, 1974.

²²⁴ Roy Wagner, *The Invention of Culture*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).

²²⁵ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

²²⁶ James Clifford and George E. Marcus, (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

²²⁷ See for instance, *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Karp, Ivan and Steven D. Lavine, eds. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991).

period.²²⁸ Fostered by the writings of Claude Levi-Strauss, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, Ferdinand de Saussure, Clifford Geertz, Douglas Leach and others, anthropologists used linguistic theory and models for understanding the production and communication of meaning attributed to objects. For instance, Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood's *The World of Goods*,²²⁹ considered the role of objects in social systems, as did Pierre Bourdieu's sociological study: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*.²³⁰ Mihaly Czikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton looked at the meanings that humans ascribe to objects in their personal surroundings in *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*.²³¹ Museums are prima facie worlds in which goods are collected, stored and presented and often in the name of 'taste', and it was mainly anthropologists who initiated critiques of the construction of knowledge in the museum. While many of these earlier anthropological works on material culture were primarily structuralist in their orientation, the dynamic between material culture and its incorporation into museums as evidence promoted a discursive approach to understanding objects in this context. Some of first studies were directed at anthropological museums and their collections, such as George W. Stocking's, *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* and Michael Ames', *Museums, the Public and Anthropology*.²³² As Canadian anthropologist Jeanne Cannizzo observed:

A museum collection may be thought of as a cultural text, one that can be read to understand the underlying cultural and ideological assumptions that have influenced its creation, selection and display.²³³

Subsequently, several books written or edited by British anthropologists, museologists and cultural critics, drew on literary theory to understand the manner in which museums use objects to create narratives and reinforce cultural beliefs. In Britain, Leicester University Press has published several books by academics in that university's Museum Studies Department. These writers include Susan Pearce, by far the most prolific of these authors, especially interested in semiotics and the production of meaning in the museum in her books: *Objects of Knowledge; Museum Studies in Material Culture; Museums: Objects and Collections: a Cultural Study; and Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World*.²³⁴ Her colleague at Leicester University, Gaynor Kavanagh, also pursues this study in

²²⁸ Janet L. Dolgin, David S. Kemnitzer and David M. Schneider, (eds.), *Symbolic Anthropology: A Reader in the Study of Symbols and Meanings*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

²²⁹ Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods* (London: Penguin, 1978).

²³⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, translated by Richard Nice, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

²³¹ Mihaly Czikszentmihalyi and Eugene Rochberg-Halton, *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

²³² George W. Stocking, (ed.), (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), Michael Ames *Museums, the Public and Anthropology: A Study in the Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986).

²³³ Jeanne Cannizzo, "Negotiated realities: towards an ethnography of museums." in *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture* (St. John's, Nfld.: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), 19.

²³⁴ Susan Pearce (ed.) *Objects of Knowledge* (London: Athlone Press, 1988) Susan Pearce, *Museum Studies in Material Culture*, Susan Pearce (ed.) (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (Leicester: University of Leicester Press, 1992), Susan Pearce (ed) *Experiencing Material Culture in the Western World* (Leicester: University of Leicester Press, 1997) Recent publications on this topic include: 105-126. Daniel J. Sherman and Igrit Rogoff eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994), Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Boston: Massachusetts Institute of Technology 1993).

Museum Languages: Objects and Texts.²³⁵ Elsner and Cardinal's *The Cultures of Collecting*, with essays by semioticians Jean Beaudrillard, Mieke Bal and literary theorist Susan Stewart looks at theories of collecting and the meaning of collections, along with several case studies of early collectors.²³⁶ Both Sharon MacDonald in *Theorizing Museums*, and *The Politics of Display: Museums, Science, Culture* and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, another Leicester University professor, in *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* and *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* use Foucault's *Order of Things* as an interpretive model for understanding what constitutes knowing and knowledge in the museum.²³⁷ While Christopher Tilley's *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Poststructuralism* supplies a very detailed analysis of the interpretation of material culture according to different cultural theorists, Peter Vergo's edited collection of essays, *The New Museology* is a good introduction to changing ideas about museums, object-meaning, and narrative.²³⁸ In the United States, The Smithsonian Institution, which has several programs in museum studies, has convened conferences and published proceedings on issues of meaning and representation in the museum: Ivan Karp and Stephen Lavine's edited books *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* and *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture*, are compilations of essays presented at a 1988 Smithsonian conference "The Poetics and Politics of Representation" (obviously titled after Clifford and Marcus' book, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*).²³⁹ Other American works of note include Sherman and Rogoff's *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, and Kaplan's *Museums and the Making of 'Ourselves': The Role of Objects in National Identity*.²⁴⁰ Canadian publications on the topic include special issues of journals such as *Museum Quarterly*, and Jeanne Cannizzo's essay "Negotiated Realities: Towards an Ethnography of Museums" on museums and their collections as cultural metaphors.²⁴¹ Cannizzo also broadcast her ideas on museums and objects as metaphors to the general public in 1982 through the CBC radio program "Ideas."²⁴²

²³⁵ Gaynor Kavanagh (ed.) *Museum Languages: Objects and Texts* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1991).

²³⁶ John Elsner and Roger Cardinal eds. *The Cultures of Collecting*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

²³⁷ Sharon Macdonald and Gordon Fyfe, (eds.), *Theorizing Museums*, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996) Sharon Macdonald (ed), *The Politics of Display. Museums, Science, Culture* (London: Routledge, 1998); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge* (Routledge: London and New York, 1992); Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 2001).

²³⁸ Christopher Tilley (ed.), *Reading Material Culture: Structuralism, Hermeneutics and Poststructuralism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd. 1990), Peter Vergo, ed., *The New Museology* (London: Reaction Books, 1989).

²³⁹ Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1991); Ivan Karp, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992).

²⁴⁰ Daniel J. Sherman and Igrit Rogoff, eds., *Museum Culture: Histories, Discourses, Spectacles* (Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1994), Flora E.S. Kaplan ed., *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves" The Role of Objects in National Identity* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1994).

²⁴¹ Jeanne Cannizzo, "Negotiated Realities: Towards an Ethnography of Museums" in Gerald Pocius, (ed.), *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*, (St. John's, Newfoundland: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991).

²⁴² Jeanne Cannizzo, "Old Images/New Metaphors: The Museum in the Modern World" Transcript, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation "Ideas" Programme (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation 1982).

The Discursive Object

One of the pioneering essays on the topic, "The Discursive Object," written by Canadian Edwina Taborsky, sets out the argument clearly.²⁴³ Museum collections and exhibitions are based on the premise that objects both embody and convey natural, cultural or historical realities which the museum collects and transmits intact to the public. Taborsky labels this notion an "observational paradigm," a mistaken assumption which regards object-meaning as innate and constant. Arguing that things have no intrinsic value, Taborsky and others cited above maintain that meanings do not reside in objects and speak for themselves; rather meaning is a product of social discourse, always constructed and always contingent. Without context, the object is meaningless.

Classification as Meaning

"To catalogue is not merely to ascertain... but also to appropriate."²⁴⁴

In museums the meaning of an object is transformed from a manifest (functional) discourse to a latent or symbolic discourse through the process of being selected and collected by the museum.²⁴⁵ In other words, by becoming an artifact, the collected object becomes relative to a subject. Beaudrillard explains this as follows: "Possession cannot apply to an implement since the object I utilize always draws me back to the world. Rather it applies to that object once it is divested of its function and made relative to a subject."²⁴⁶ Gaynor Kavanagh states that in museums the physicality of the objects is secondary to their function as signs or symbols and Tony Bennett agrees: "Once placed in a museum, an artifact becomes, inherently and irretrievably a rhetorical object."²⁴⁷ Moreover, the literature argues, the categories into which museums place objects are fully subjective. Foucault illustrates this aspect of classification by referring to a Chinese encyclopedia that categorized animals into sets based on logic completely foreign to Foucault's way of seeing. In wondering about these bizarre divisions, Foucault stated that it broke up:

All the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continued long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age old distinction between the Same and the Other... In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing that we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of this fable, is demonstrated as the charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own.²⁴⁸

The museum processes of artifact isolation, classification, exhibition and communication around this subject, confer meaning and shape narratives purportedly revealing authentic aspects of life, past or present. Eugenio Donato describes these as "fictions":

The set of objects in the museum is sustained only by the fiction that they somehow constitute a coherent representational universe. The fiction is that a repeated

²⁴³ Edwina Taborsky "The Discursive Object" in Susan Pearce, (ed.), *Objects of Knowledge*, 60.

²⁴⁴ Barthes, "The Plates of the Encyclopedia" in Susan Sontag, (ed.), *Selected Writings*, (London: Fontana, 1982) 222, cited in Pearce, *Museums, Objects, Collections*, 118.

²⁴⁵ Jean Beaudrillard, "The System of Collecting" in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds) *The Cultures of Collecting*, trans. Roger Cardinal, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 7-24.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 7.

²⁴⁷ Gaynor Kavanagh, "Objects as Evidence or Not?" in Susan Pearce ed., *Museums Studies in Material Culture*, 128; Tony Bennett, 12.

²⁴⁸ Foucault 1970, vx. Cited in Hooper-Greenhill *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 4.

metonymic displacement of fragment for totality, object to label, series of objects to series of labels, can still produce a representation that is somehow adequate....Such a fiction is the result of an uncritical belief in the notion that ordering and classifying, can produce a representational understanding of the world. Should the fiction disappear, there is nothing left of the museum but bric a brac, a heap of meaningless and valueless fragments of objects which are incapable of substituting themselves either metonymically for the original objects or metaphorically for their representations.²⁴⁹

This fictional component is highlighted again by Bennett who points out that change in systems of classification have led to a change in meaning of artifacts. As Hilde Hein notes, this means what museums share, is not the material knowledge of their objects whose meaning is polyvalent, but a system of meanings according to the mutations of interpretive fashion. Hein sums up this process:

Inevitably history museums are implicated in the politics of representation. All stories and strategies announce design. They are at once its product and the means of its realization.... History museums strive to recreate the past in an idiom accessible to the present; but accessibility itself is a matter of interpretation. ... One increasingly popular way to meet the challenges of recontextualization while doing homage to authenticity, is to concentrate on constructing an experience whose genuineness does not depend on that of the displayed object. Thus, theatrical stagings of “recreated” moments of history are becoming more common, and mediation sometimes takes the place of traditional physical conservationist priorities. Objects, whether carefully preserved originals or exact replicas, are used as means to an end, rather than as ends to be contemplated for their own sake.²⁵⁰

Bennett effectively nullifies the issue of historical integrity of museums and historic sites in his summary, in relation to both the museum and current historical academic posture:

Given this, it is clear that the significance of particular history museum displays or heritage sites is not a function of their fidelity or otherwise to the past “as it really was.” Rather it depends on their position within and relations to the presently existing field of historical discourses and their associated social and ideological affiliations – on what Patrick White has called their past-present alignments.”²⁵¹

Or, as Cary Carson wryly observes:

By now we can all recite the catechism by heart: all artifacts are evidence; all evidence is text; all texts are open to discourse, all discourse is socially constructed; all constructions seek hegemony, all hegemonies dominate through the exercise of power. That formula has become the litany of modern academic scholarship. It has made its way into material culture studies as well.²⁵²

²⁴⁹ Eugenio Donato “The Museum’s Furnace: Notes Toward a Contextual Reading of Bourvard and Peuchat,” in *Textual Strategies: Perspective in Post-Structuralist Criticisms*. Josué V. Harari, ed., (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979) 223.

²⁵⁰ Hilde Hein, *The Museum in Transition: A Philosophical Perspective*. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2000), 31.

²⁵¹ Tony Bennett, 201.

²⁵² Cary Carson, “Material Culture History: The Scholarship Nobody Knows” in Ann Smart Martin and J. Richie Garrison, (eds.), *American Material Culture: The Shape of the Field*. (Winterthur, Del.: Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and University of Tennessee Press, 1997) 401.

Summary

The literature review here is expansive. But each of these areas of review is relevant to the understanding how history museums in Ontario developed and changed ideologically and functionally. These observations on the history of museums are brought home to Ontario in this thesis in part through the case study of Doon Pioneer Village. As a museum, Doon Pioneer Village serves as a model itself of the changing nature of museums in Ontario over the last hundred years. Beginning with the collections of a local historical society, and the later model of an historic village, Doon has collected, shaped and refashioned the past since its inception. The only published study of this village is Mary Tivy, "Dreams and Nightmares." Literature pertinent to the development and interpretation of local history at this village beyond Tivy includes, W.H.E. Schmaltz's unpublished chronicle "A Dream Come True" a history of Doon Pioneer Village,²⁵³ and Kenneth McLaughlin, "Historical Background," in Doon *Master Plan Study*.²⁵⁴ Local histories such as Mabel Dunham's 1924 saga *The Trail of the Conestoga*, and more recent academic revisions such as John English and Kenneth McLaughlin's *Kitchener-Waterloo: An Illustrated History* give a context for the development of historical interests locally.²⁵⁵ The ascendancy of Pennsylvania-German Mennonites in the collective memory and commemoration activities of Kitchener-Waterloo is further explored by Geoffrey Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga."²⁵⁶ Biographical information on the founder of the Waterloo Historical Society, W.H. Breithaupt is also included in Andrew Thompson's doctoral thesis "The Breithaupts and Breithaupt Leather: Building a Family Business in Berlin, Ontario"²⁵⁷

Let's return for a moment to T.H. Breen and his thoughts on producing history in the museum in *Imagining the Past*. On working with the museum curator to create an exhibit based on his research he says he realizes that:

I speak of abstraction, an imagined past that I have glimpsed in the archives; it will be lost unless he [the curator] can capture it as set of meanings -- a story that East Hampton can tell itself about itself -- in evocative displays of artifacts. Together we shall create symbols of everyday objects, investing bits of glass and ceramic, scarred furniture and faded cloth, with special properties of interpretation. Jay has an intuitive sense that exhibitions of this kind are not neutral or objective statements. To

²⁵³ W.H.E. Schmaltz, "A Dream Come True" Doon Pioneer Village Files, Doon heritage Crossroads, 1965.

²⁵⁴ Kenneth McLaughlin, Mark/Musselman/McIntyre Combe, *Doon Master Plan Study*, (Grand River Conservation Authority, 1979).

²⁵⁵ John English, and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Kitchener: an Illustrated History* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983).

²⁵⁶ Geoffrey Hayes "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga :A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County's German Identity" *Ontario History* XCI:2 (Autumn 1999), 130-149.

²⁵⁷ Andrew Thompson "The Breithaupts and Breithaupt Leather: Building a Family Business in Berlin, Ontario" Ph.D diss. University of Waterloo, 1992).

pretend that they are is intellectually dishonest. Like written documents, the things of material culture, by their very arrangement, and their exclusion or juxtaposition, become highly charged texts...²⁵⁸

²⁵⁸ T.H. Breen, *Imaging the Past: East Hampton Histories* (Reading: Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1989), 215.

Chapter 2: Making Objects Meaningful: the Scientific Paradigm and Ontario Museums 1851–1912

Introduction

Museums of science, art and history materialized in Ontario in the second half of the nineteenth century. They emanated from three sources: scientific societies and individuals gathering natural history specimens and archaeological remains, provincial educational philosophy incorporating art, artefacts and specimens as teaching devices, and historically minded societies memorializing Ontario's pioneers by preserving documents and relics. By the turn of the century these three elements, respectively represented by organizations such as the Canadian Institute, the Ontario Department of Education, and the local history affiliates of the Ontario Historical Society, had developed collections and museums; all of them directly influenced by Ontario's first museologist, David Boyle.

This chapter first describes the epistemology that defined museum collections in Ontario during this period as it did elsewhere. This exploration includes discussions on natural history museums and the taxonomic model that dominated professional museum work at this time in the Canadian Institute and the Ontario Provincial Museum. The chapter continues with an examination of Boyle and his methods of museum management, since both would later affect local history museums in the province.

From Wonder to Knowledge: Early Museums in Ontario; Transitory, Commercial and Scientific

In the first part of the nineteenth century, private, commercial museums set up shop in both York and Niagara Falls. Directed at the tourist market, Thomas Barnett opened a museum of his personal collection of local and foreign specimens and curiosities at Niagara Falls in 1827.¹ Sustained by tourist dollars, it changed owners but did not close its doors until 1999, with little change to the original collections and exhibit design.

¹ J. Lynne Teather, "Delighting the Eye and Mending the Heart," *Canadian Proprietary Museums of the Early Nineteenth Century*, *Ontario History* Vol.XCIV:1, (Spring 2002), 49-77.

2.1 The Niagara Falls Museum:
“Freaks of Nature” Exhibit (1991)
(Photo by author)



Another private museum owned by William Wood, opened in market square in York in 1826 with collections of natural history, Indian curiosities, and medals and coins, yet it did not fare well and was short-lived.² Private collectors sometimes unveiled their collections for brief periods of public viewing.³ Travelling museums of “wonders” and moving images of historical events toured Toronto, such as Colonel Wood’s Museum of Living Wonders (perhaps a later mobile version of Woods’ earlier market square effort), and a panorama of dioramas on the funeral of Napoleon.⁴

Charles Fothergill, who requested funding to establish a lyceum based on his collections of nearly 5,000 natural history specimens, ethnological materials and fine arts, to include a museum, botanical garden and zoo, made the first recorded appeal for a provincially funded museum of science and arts in 1835. Although he received approval for land for the project, his requests for monies for a building were unfulfilled at the time of his sudden death in 1841. The project was almost immediately abandoned; shortly after Fothergill’s death, his collections in Toronto were destroyed by fire.⁵ Eight years later Henry Scadding, a scholar and canon in the Anglican Church, formed the Toronto Athenaeum, a literary society with a museum and library.⁶ The Toronto Athenaeum failed to survive as an organization, and Scadding became an active member of the Canadian Institute, which absorbed the membership of the Athenaeum and its literary and mineral collections in 1855.

² Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*, 54.

³ Such as naturalist S.W. Passmore’s museum advertised in *The Daily Globe*, 23 May 1863.

⁴ *The Globe*, 29 July 1856, and 1 November 1849.

⁵ Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*, 56-59.

⁶ Scadding would become a leading figure in the preservation of historical survivals and the development of museum collections in Ontario during his time, and his contributions in this regard are considered in the next chapter. On Scadding see Judith L. Parks, “The Reverend Henry Scadding 1813-1901: An English Victorian in Canada,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Guelph, 1969), and Killan, *Preserving Ontario’s Heritage*.

The Canadian Institute and the Scientific Model

Granted Royal Charter in 1851, the Canadian Institute ultimately shaped the museum field in Ontario and the adoption of the scientific museum model by the Ontario Provincial Museum some years later. The Canadian Institute unfolded in mid-century Canada West along the axis of Victorian scientific thought, which allied scientific research with public education: it would serve as a forum for the presentation of scientific developments in Canada that would confirm the progress of the nation and educate the public on scientific principles and national achievement.⁷ This education took the form of lectures, publications and exhibitions. The Canadian Institute, which was concerned initially with physical sciences entailed in the growth and development of the Canadas, played an early role in the formation of archaeological collections and an archaeological museum in Ontario.⁸ Its charter emphasized the goals of collection, presentation, and publication of scientific and literary works facilitating knowledge in surveying, engineering, and architecture. It aimed to:

Effect the formation of a Provincial Museum to hold and display the objects of research [and promote] those pursuits which are calculated to refine and exalt a people.⁹

The collections of the museum would exemplify:

Architecture and Engineering, Natural History and Botany, Mineralogy and Geology, Indian Antiquities and Arts and Manufactures.”¹⁰

Within the first year of the Institute’s founding, its members were provided with the rationale for organizing a proper museum: the diminishing archaeological resources of Canada required collection and sanctuary and only through proper arrangement and description in a public museum, and not the “cabinet of an amateur,” could such fossils contribute to public knowledge about the prehistoric past.¹¹

In the first year, Captain J. H. Lefroy, Royal Engineer, argued at the annual meeting that archaeological investigation “offered an immediate field for the exertions of the Institute,” particularly suited to its members whose own engineering work frequently unearthed archaeological remains. The accelerating rate at which these resources were being lost or destroyed underlined the urgency of the task:

Every year the plough is obliterating the last traces of our predecessors upon this soil. . . . We are fast forgetting that the bygone ages even of the new world were filled by living men, and fast

⁷ Such thinking was the basis of the growth of national and international expositions in the nineteenth century, whose residue was often incorporated into museum exhibits. On expositions and museums see Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science: the Development of Colonial Natural History Museums during the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Kingston, Ont.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988). On the Canadian Institute see William Noble, “One-Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Archaeology in the Canadian Provinces,” *Canadian Archaeological Association Bulletin* 4, (1972), 1-18; Douglas Cole, “The Origins of Canadian Anthropology 1850-1910,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8, (1973), 33-45; and Gerald Killan, “The Canadian Institute and the Origins of the Ontario Archaeological Tradition 1851-1884 .”

⁸ To better understand the context of scientific organizations such as the Canadian Institute see Suzanne Zeller, “Merchants of Light: The Culture of Science in Daniel Wilson’s Ontario 1853-1892,” in Marinell Ash and Elizabeth Hulse eds., *Thinking With Both Hands: Sir Daniel Wilson in the Old World and the New*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 115-138.

⁹ *Canadian Journal*, 1: 3, (1852), 3.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 98.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

losing by neglect, all those delicate links in the chain of research, by which the archaeologist of another generation may hope to trace out the origin and the fortunes of a great branch of the human family.¹²

Further frustrated by the lack of a museum to hold them, preserving these archaeological materials became increasingly difficult:

If it has been found even in Great Britain, that scarcely five per cent of the rare and interesting remains from time to time brought to light are recoverable after a few years, unless they are lodged in some public museum, we may be sure that a proportion even larger, of such remains as Canada furnishes are lost for want of such an institution.¹³

Sir Sandford Fleming circulated a questionnaire in the first editorial of the *Canadian Journal* in 1852, asking members to collect details on archaeological resources in their area, and to donate artifacts including “specimens of Indian skulls or crania” for the “museum now in the progress of formation.”¹⁴ Objects collected for the museum were consequential to the physical path of development in Canada West, and to the intellectual interests of Institute members. The Institute collections grew to hold several hundred Indian relics and human crania; the latter addressed the scientific interests of Daniel Wilson. This Scot, who arrived in Canada in 1853 as chair of History and English literature at University College and who reportedly coined the term “prehistory,” had a particular interest in Native skeletal remains. In a model that connected physical and cultural differences as exemplifying evolutionary stages of mankind, North American Indians were thought to exist in a lower “savage” stage, analogous to that which existed in stone-age Europe, of which Wilson was an expert.¹⁵ This inclusion of human remains with scientific specimens was also practiced in other science museums, and endorsed by Louis Agassiz:

Every day the history of mankind is brought into more and more intimate connections with the natural history of the animal creation, and it is now indispensable that we should organize an extensive collection to illustrate the natural history of the uncivilized races.¹⁶

¹² Captain Lefroy’s address as chairman to the 1852 annual “conversazione” is cited in Sir Sandford Fleming, “The Early Days of the Canadian Institute,” *Transactions of the Canadian Institute*, Vol. VI, (1898-99), 13- 14.

¹³ Ibid. To emphasize his point Leroy gave an example of the Crozier of St. Fillan a famous Scottish relic held in a private collection in Canada, which could if necessary be “rescued from fire, theft or the Sheriff” but would remain vulnerable since “there should be no museum in which to deposit it.” Daniel Wilson would spend years trying to have this crozier repatriated to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, which he accomplished in 1876. “I have been in dread lest Barnum should hear of it. If he only knew its history the relic should have been secured by him long ago.” Daniel Wilson, B65-0014/004(01), 36 (5 December 1876), University of Toronto Archives, cited in Elizabeth Hulse, “Wilson with Family and Friends” in Marinell Ash and Elizabeth Hulse, eds., *Thinking with Both Hands: Sir Daniel Wilson in the Old World and New*, 274.

¹⁴ Fleming, *Canadian Journal of Industry, Science and Art* 1, (1852) 25. These surveys have since been lost.

¹⁵ See Wilson, “Remarks on Some Coincidences between the Primitive Antiquities of the Old and New World” *Canadian Journal* 2, 213-5. On Daniel Wilson’s life and work see Bruce Trigger, “Sir Daniel Wilson: Canada’s First Anthropologist” *Anthropologica*, 8, 3-38; William Noble, “One-Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Archaeology in the Canadian Provinces,” *Canadian Archaeological Association Bulletin* 4, (1972), 1-18; Douglas Cole, “The Origins of Canadian Anthropology 1850-1910,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8, (1973), 33-45; Gerald Killan, “The Canadian Institute and the Origins of the Ontario Archaeological Tradition 1851-1884,” *Ontario Archaeology*, 34, (1980), 3-16; Bruce Trigger, “Prehistoric man and Daniel Wilson’s later Canadian ethnology,” in *Thinking with Both Hands: Sir Daniel Wilson in the Old World and New*, 81-100.

¹⁶ Louis Agassiz, “Letter of 1863 to Mr. Thomas G. Gary,” from Elizabeth Cary Agassiz ed., *Louis Agassiz, His Life and Correspondence*, (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885), 582. Reprinted in *Museum Studies*:

Such collections, he recommended, should be arranged into two classes: man-made artifacts, and physical remains, preferably “perfect heads, preserved in alcohol” or alternatively, skulls.¹⁷

In the process of trying to measure the capacity of aboriginal peoples for civilized development, Wilson literally took to measuring the cranial capacity of excavated Native skulls. His “Hints for the Formation of a Canadian Collection of Ancient Crania” in the October 1855 issue of the *Canadian Journal*, argued that these crania would prove a valuable addition to the museum of the Canadian Institute and consequent research would bridge a Canadian gap in these studies so well pursued in the United States and Europe.¹⁸ The collections of the Canadian Institute consequently grew to hold several hundred Indian relics and human crania. In what could be the earliest museological advice published in Canada, Wilson distinguished the work of the museum scientist from that of amateur collectors, with its perspective of organized collections of objects as physical evidence of universal laws.

The object of the intelligent collector is not the mere gratification of an aimless curiosity or the accumulation of rarities of difficult acquisition, but the preservation of objects calculated to furnish valuable scientific or historical truths.¹⁹

The archaeological work of the Canadian Institute initiated by Lefroy and Fleming would have a lasting presence in the museums and universities of the province who eventually absorbed these collections. Museums where accumulating artifacts could be stored and exhibited were “clearly a stimulus to and a bi-product of early archaeological interest in Canada.”²⁰

For a number of reasons, the Canadian Institute did not fulfill its goal of establishing a museum with provincial status. By 1871, its science collections had been eclipsed by those collections in the expanding science departments in the University of Toronto, which offered public use of its library and a museum.²¹ However, the Institute’s archaeological collections were unparalleled, and Scadding, now president of Canadian Institute, suggested that the museum refocus on the strength of its collections:

When an institution like the University of Toronto establishes a Scientific Museum on a good scale by the side of a humble collection like that, which the Canadian Institute, with only limited resources, has been unable to make, the latter necessarily becomes somewhat insignificant. Nevertheless, there is a field which our museum might occupy. It might be made a repository of Canadian archaeological and historical objects.²²

An Anthology of Contexts, ed., Bettina Massias Carbonell, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 131-132.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ As Wilson stated, “The value which attaches to ancient skulls as indices of the characteristics of extinct races is being more and more generally appreciated.” Daniel Wilson, “Hints for the Formation of a Canadian Collection of Ancient Crania,” *Canadian Journal* 3, (October 1855), 345-347. Later Wilson would argue that cranial capacity did not reflect racial intelligence, and that the variability in cranial capacity and form among Native groups defied the notion of an aboriginal cranial type. Daniel Wilson, “Brain-Weight and Size in Relation to Relative Capacity of Races,” *Canadian Journal*, n.s. 15, 177-230.

¹⁹ Daniel Wilson, “Discovery of Indian Remains, County Norfolk, Canada West,” *Canadian Journal* n.s. 1, 1856, 519.

²⁰ Noble, 5.

²¹ As advertised in *The Daily Globe*, 7 February, 1860. See Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*, for a thorough discussion of these science museums.

²² Scadding, “On Museums and Other Classified Collections Temporary or Permanent as Instruments of Education in Natural Science,” *Canadian Journal* 13, (1873), 24.

Based on his visit to the 1867 Paris Exhibition and museums at Oxford, England, including the Ashmolean, Scadding proposed a method for developing such collections, one that he acknowledged was neither “novel” nor “abstruse.”²³ Scadding wrote that to be educational, collections needed to be classified according to a pre-arranged scheme of examination with a definite purpose based on a specific area of study. His vision for the Canadian Institute collections was paralleled by other science museums, and was realized over a decade later with the appearance of David Boyle.

The Ascendancy of Scientific Thought and Natural History Museums in the Late Nineteenth Century

The many large natural history museums built in the capital cities of Europe, North America, and British colonies during 1880-1920, (what has been termed the “golden age” of these museums) were the earliest medium for professionalizing museum work: guides on collections classification and care, exhibit design, and education programs came from curators of natural science collections.²⁴

Touted as ‘modern’ in its deductive, reductionist, and mechanistic management of the preserved bits of the natural world, the intellectual architecture used to build these science museums was predicated on the co-efficients of evolutionary theory and object-based epistemology.²⁵ Specimens could be fixed into a grand scheme that was a formalized and institutionalized expression of what museum founder Charles Willson Peale called a “world in miniature.”²⁶ Whether designed by God or nature, Peale’s museum, which opened in 1792, and its successors were ordered according to Linnaean nomenclature.²⁷

²³ Ibid, Scadding, 2.

²⁴ See for instance, Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science: the Development of Colonial Natural History Museums during the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s Press, 1988); Curtis Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981); George W. Stocking ed., *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, History of Anthropology Series, Vol. 3 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). I add a Canadian perspective on similar exhibits at the ROM in, “Museums and Exhibits of First Nations: Old Paradigms and New Possibilities,” Ontario Museum Association *Annual 2*, (October 1993), 6-18.

²⁵ On this thinking see Edwina Taborsky, “The Discursive Object,” in Susan Pearce (ed.), *Objects of Knowledge*, (London: Athlone Press, 1988), 50-77.

²⁶ Peale’s cabinet has received the greatest attention of American museum historians, due to its size, arrangements, the talents of its artist curator and the archival materials that have survived. On Peale and his museum see Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World*, (New York: Henry N. Abrams, 1983); Charles Coleman Sellers, *Mr. Peale’s Museum: Charles Willson Peale and the First Popular Museum of Natural Science and Art*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1980); David R. Brigham, *Public Culture in the Early Republic: Peale’s Museum and Its Audience*, (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995); Sidney Hart and David C. Ward, “The Waning of an Enlightenment Ideal: Charles Willson Peale’s Philadelphia Museum 1790-1820” in *New Perspectives on Charles Willson Peale*, Lillian B. Miller and David C. Ward eds., (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 219-236; Susan Stewart, “Death and Life in That Order, in the Works of Charles Willson Peale,” in *The Cultures of Collecting* ed. John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 204-223.

²⁷ Shirley Teresa Wajda, “And a Little Child Shall Lead Them: American Children’s Cabinets of Curiosities,” in Leah Dilworth ed., *Acts of Possession: Collecting in America*, (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 42-65.

Having formed a design to establish a MUSEUM by a Collection, Arrangement, and Preservation of the Objects of Natural History... and to preserve them in the Linaean [sic] method.²⁸

The great book of nature may be opened and studied, leaf by leaf, and a knowledge gained of the character which the great Creator has stamped on each being.²⁹

The Canadian Institute was by no means alone in its endeavours.³⁰ In Canada, the early nineteenth-century formation of natural history collections in Canada was characterized by the unified goals of collecting, research and education.³¹ In 1820, Reverend Thomas McCulloch established the Pictou Academy in Nova Scotia and developed a collection of natural history specimens for teaching, regarded as the “finest in North America” by Audubon.³² The expansion of mechanic’s institutes in the pre-confederation period also fostered the growth of natural science collections in the Maritimes.³³ The New Brunswick Museum had its mid-century beginnings in the collections of a natural scientist and the mechanics institute.³⁴ The remains from large expositions and government interest in natural resource exploitation, also promoted the formation of natural history collections. The geological survey of Canada, for example, led to the development of the present-day Canadian Museum of Nature. Its first geologist William Logan began collecting in the 1840s, and in 1853, he received the first government grant in Canada to maintain a museum.³⁵ The Provincial Museum of Nova Scotia, opened in 1868, supported similar collections aimed at economic and industrial exhibitions.³⁶ Later, the Redpath Museum, opened in 1882 at McGill University, to preserve and display the collections of

²⁸ Charles Willson Peale, 13 January 1772, “To the Citizens of the United States of America,” letter published in Dunlap’s *American Daily Advertiser*, Philadelphia. Public Domain, available on microfilm at the Smithsonian Institution. Reprinted in *Museum Studies: An Anthology of Contexts*, ed. Bettina Massias Carbonell, (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 129-130.

²⁹ Charles Willson Peale, “Introduction to a Course of Lectures on Natural History,” cited in Edgar P. Richardson, Brooke Hindle, and Lillian B. Miller, *Charles Willson Peale and His World*, 123.

³⁰ The currency for such ideas and institutions in nineteenth-century Canada has been explained as offering a metaphor for the growth of a new country in nineteenth century Canada. See Carl Berger, *Science, God and Nature in Victorian Canada*, (Toronto 1983); Suzanne Zeller, *Inventing Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987); and *Land of Promise, Promised Land: The Culture of Victorian Science in Canada*, (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1996).

³¹ Key, *Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums*, (McClelland and Stewart, 1973); J. Lynne Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*, (Toronto: Canada University Press, 2005). Also see Carla Morse, “Early Museum Makers in Nova Scotia: 1800 – 1860,” Master of Museum Studies thesis, University of Toronto, 1991.

³² Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*, 44.

³³ Ibid., Robyn Gillam, *Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public*, (Banff: Banff Centre Press, 2001).

³⁴ Austin W. Squires, “The History and Development of the New Brunswick Museum 1842-1945,” (Saint John: New Brunswick Museum, 1945).

³⁵ Morris Zaslow, *Reading the Rock*, (Ottawa: MacMillan, 1975).

³⁶ W. Austin Squires, “The History and Development of the New Brunswick Museum 1842-1945,” (Saint John: New Brunswick Museum, 1945); Eileen Mak, “Ward of the Government, Child of the Institute: The Provincial Museum of Nova Scotia,” (1868-1951) in Peter E. Rider ed. *Studies in History and Museums*, History Division, Mercury Series Paper, 47 (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1994), 7-32; and Eileen Mak, “Patterns of Change: Sources of Influence: An Historical Study of the Canadian Museum and the Middle Class 1850-1950.”

its principal, Sir William Dawson, a noted Canadian geologist.³⁷ It was this form of thinking that shaped David Boyle's understanding of the real world embodied in the museum.

David Boyle: Shaping Ontario's Prehistory

David Boyle, whose work would eventually have an impact on historical museums in Ontario, was a dynamic Scottish-Canadian teacher, writer, collector of natural history specimens, and book-seller, and Ontario's first museologist.³⁸ He began his professional career as a teacher in Elora, Ontario, in the 1870s.

Boyle joined the Canadian Institute on his arrival in Toronto. He shaped the collections and exhibits of the Canadian Institute, and later, of the Ontario Provincial Museum. He practiced in the discipline of archaeology, which, along with ethnology, predominated in large museums in North America in the period 1880-1920. When he became curator of the archaeological collections of the Ontario Provincial Museum, Boyle applied the scientific museum model to interpret archaeological collections.

Boyle became the major Canadian representative in the international and (literally) groundbreaking field of museum anthropology, and a well-respected peer within an international cadre of museum scientists. This section looks at Boyle as a museologist and at the ways in which he shaped the collections and exhibits of the Canadian Institute and later, the Ontario Provincial Museum.

Influence of Egerton Ryerson and the Object Lessons of Museums

Boyle began his professional life as a teacher in Elora in the 1870s. His enthusiasm for organizing and displaying scientific collections was grounded in an interest in natural history and in Pestalozzian pedagogy, which regarded specimens as primary sources of facts and tools for instruction. Called the "object lesson" method of teaching, this pedagogical thinking was promoted in Ontario by Egerton Ryerson, the superintendent of education.

Things and not words...Give the child what it can see, and hear, and feel; and from the known properties of such objects it will ascend by the common route of all true discovery to other attributes which are yet to be known."³⁹

Ryerson introduced these methods to teachers like Boyle through the Normal School curriculum and the provincial *Journal of Education*. This philosophy of intentionally using objects as edifying components of the known that led to an understanding of the unknown, was further developed in Ryerson's Normal School museum.

Where others failed to persuade the provincial government to provide monies for a public museum, the unassailable Ryerson was able to convince under the Public School Act of 1853. Ryerson intended his collections to be educational resources for teacher training, and his museum was

³⁷ Susan Sheets-Pyenson, *Cathedrals of Science: The Development of Colonial Natural History Museums During the Late Nineteenth Century*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), discusses this museum in detail.

³⁸ Gerald Killan's work, *David Boyle: From Artisan to Archaeologist*, thoroughly investigates Boyle's life and work as an archaeologist, ethnologist, curator, and writer, (University of Toronto Press: 1983).

³⁹ John George Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada* (Ontario), vol. XXIII, 212, cited in Needham, 76.

located at the Normal School in Toronto.⁴⁰ Like Fothergill's lyceum collection, Ryerson initially focused his attention "to encourage the study of different branches of Natural History" and later, art reproductions.⁴¹ Objects were vital supports for teaching in a period that predated access to photographic reproduction.

Ryerson's goal for the Normal School museum was threefold: to serve as a sample of material available for use in the classroom; to provide schools access to apparatus and specimens for the teaching of natural history; and to show reproductions of European art to nurture Canadians toward refinement, viewing these objects "as a direct means of training the minds and forming the taste and character of the people."⁴² In 1853, the provincial supplementary school act provided up to £500 per year for the school museum collections.⁴³

With this encouragement, Boyle formed his own museum in 1873 at the Elora public school where he taught. Although predominately interested in evidence of the physical and natural sciences, Boyle also solicited objects for his museum illustrating manufacturing and agricultural process, archaeological and pioneer relics, coins and documents. He avoided 'bric a brac.'⁴⁴

Boyle communicated with officials at the Canadian Geological Survey and the Smithsonian Institution to exchange specimens. He described his collection as a serious scientific resource, not a mere curiosity shop, distinguishing himself from the sort of museum that Barnett operated in Niagara Falls. Boyle rationalized his collections within the scientific frameworks available to him. Through his efforts in establishing a local Mechanic's Institute and library, Boyle had access to books on natural history and evolutionary theory.⁴⁵

In general, the natural science portion of the museums was labelled and displayed in a reasonably sophisticated way. The biological specimens were classified according to family, genus and species, the geological items by stratum, systems and formations, and the archaeological artifacts in descriptive typological sequences based largely on function and working methods.⁴⁶

⁴⁰ John Carter, "Ryerson, Hodgins, and Boyle: Early Innovators in Ontario School Museums," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXXVI:2, (June 1994), 119-131.

⁴¹ John George Hodgins, *Documenting History of Education in Upper Canada From the Passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791 to the Close of Rev. Dr. Ryerson's Administration of the Education Department in 1876*, vol. 12, 97. Cited in Fern Bayer, *The Ontario Collection*, (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984). 13.

⁴² Ontario Educational Report, 1858, 175. Cited in Needham, 71.

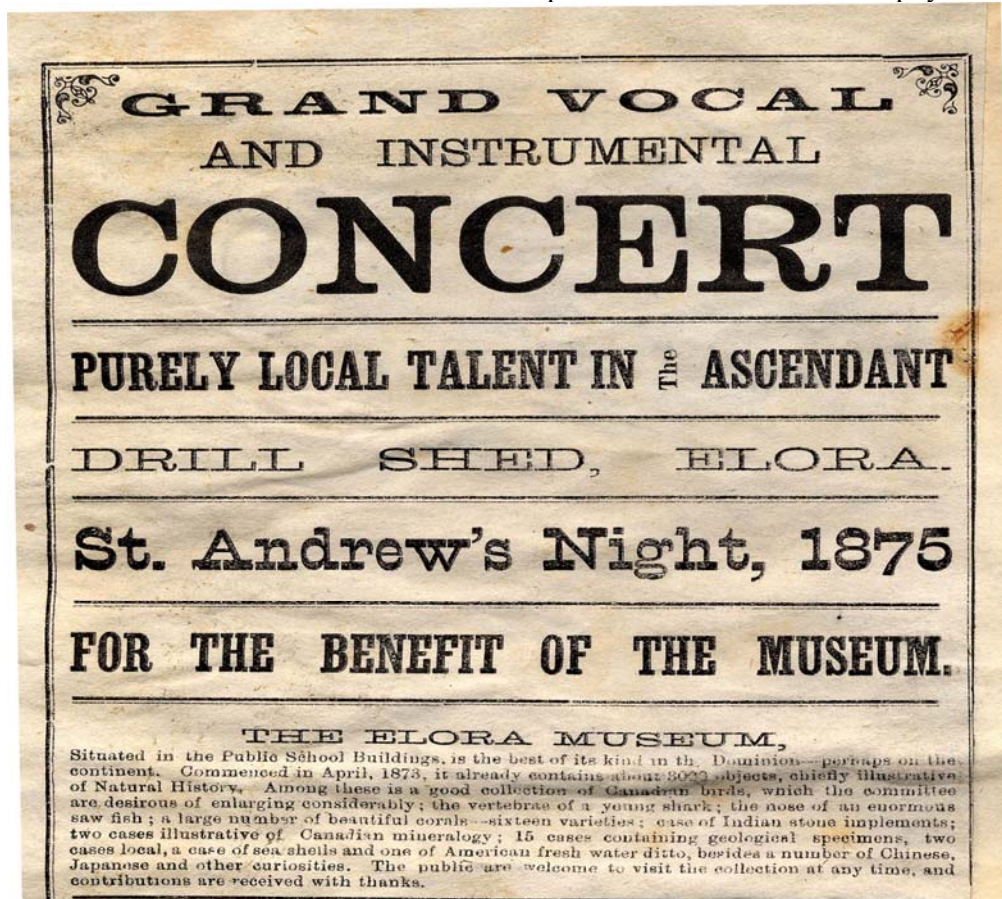
⁴³ Needham, 70. The fate of this collection is related in Fern Bayer's *The Ontario Collection*, (Markham: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984).

⁴⁴ Killan, *David Boyle*, 55.

⁴⁵ Killan, *David Boyle*, 43-44 .

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 55.

An 1875 circular for a museum fund-raiser reproduced below describes it aptly:⁴⁷



2.2 Section of circular for Boyle's Museum in Elora. *Wellington County Museum*

Boyle and the Canadian Institute

By 1879, Boyle was urging the provincial government to take responsibility for protecting “Indian relics and Canadian antiquities” through the provision of a provincial museum, observing as Lefroy had twenty-seven years earlier, that “many precious relics of a bygone system of civilization were being removed from the country simply for want of a place to accommodate them.”⁴⁸ Five years later, on leaving teaching and moving to Toronto, Boyle took this matter in his own hands, by joining the Canadian Institute in 1884. On seeing the sad state of its collections, Boyle volunteered to curate them, supplementing them with his own collections. He chose to “specialize his efforts archaeologically” since these materials seemed most vulnerable and in need of a decent museum.⁴⁹ Through his efforts with the Canadian Institute Boyle not only became Ontario's leading museologist,

⁴⁷ Located in Emma Clarke Scrapbook, Wellington County Museum Archives Accession, A1954.17.89, MS, 454.

⁴⁸ *Elora Lightning Express*, 25 Dec 1879, cited in Killan, *David Boyle*, 87.

⁴⁹ David Boyle, “Archaeological Report,” in *Annual Report of the Canadian Institute 1892-93*, 1.

he was also able to persuade the provincial government to initiate funding the research, display, and interpretation of the province's prehistory.

Faced with a large and disorganized collection, the indefatigable Boyle lobbied the government to provide extra funding to the Canadian Institute to manage the archaeological collections and research. He argued that this project was too important and ambitious to depend solely on the resources of an individual or a society. His letters emphasized that the Ontario government was delinquent in attitude in this field, compared to other jurisdictions in the United States and Europe. He noted that their museums would gladly take these materials out of Ontario.⁵⁰ Boyle outlined his research plans and museological ideas, demonstrating their currency in the science museums of the day. His plans and ideas showed he was part of an international fraternity of archaeologists and museum experts, albeit working at a severe disadvantage for lack of funding and resources. In response, the provincial government provided \$1,000 to the Canadian Institute in 1888 to hire Boyle as curator for its museum and to write an annual archaeological report. Boyle took the work on full-time, embracing the profession of scientists working in museums.⁵¹

Boyle's archaeological output was remarkable for his day.⁵² His extensive annual archaeological reports are not only exceptional sources of information on archaeological sites in the province and on early ethnological research, but deal in detail with his museum philosophy and methods.⁵³ He immediately set to rearrange the growing archaeological collections and re-classify them. He looked to American institutions for models and methods to conduct his work. As he said in 1891, it was necessary for him to study "the different methods employed at the Smithsonian Institution and the Peabody Museum in registering, numbering, classifying and otherwise recording accessions."⁵⁴

The Place of the Artifact: International Perspectives

Boyle was not alone in his disregard for "bric a brac." This attitude had an international following: there was no intellectual placement for scientific anomalies or man-made curiosities in the museum philosophy to which Boyle subscribed. His disdain towards these curiosities was supported by leaders in science museums in both the United States and Britain. Scientific typology had no accommodation for the nonconforming object, and oddities became the assets of "dime" museums, such as P.T. Barnum's American Museum, opened in 1841 in Manhattan; it was the largest tourist attraction in the city by 1865 with over a million visitors per year.⁵⁵ George Brown Goode, assistant secretary of the

⁵⁰ David Boyle, "Memorial to the Honorable Oliver Mowat," Memorandum Boyle to George Ross, "Re the Archaeology of Ontario," ROMLA, Boyle Papers Box 1, File "D" n.d., c.1887.

⁵¹ To this point he had operated a bookstore in Toronto which supplied educational texts to the government. See Killan, *David Boyle*, 76.

⁵² See for instance, William Noble, "One-Hundred and Twenty-Five Years of Archaeology in the Canadian Provinces," *Canadian Archaeological Association Bulletin* 4, (1972), 1-18; and Douglas Cole, "The Origins of Canadian Anthropology 1850-1910," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8, (1973), 33-45; Gerald Killan, "The Canadian Institute and the Origins of the Ontario Archaeological Tradition 1851-1884," *Ontario Archaeology* 34, (1980), 3-16.

⁵³ Boyle's archaeological reports were published annually from 1886 until 1909 when he was taken ill. They were continued by his successor Rowland Orr. In 1886 the archaeological report was part of the Annual Report of the Canadian Institute, from later years it was simply published as the Archaeological Report of Ontario, or the Archaeological Report of the Canadian Institute. Here it is simply cited as the *Annual Archaeological Report of Ontario (AARO)*.

⁵⁴ Boyle, AARO, 1891, 7.

⁵⁵ Noted in *The Daily Globe*, 25 July 1865. On Barnum's museum see William T. Alderson, ed., *Mermaids*,

Smithsonian Institution, argued against this kind of “museum of bric-a-brac” as non-educational, and campaigned for exhibits to consist primarily “of instructive labels, each illustrated with a well-selected specimen.”⁵⁶ He insisted that this scientific technique was the most effective way to transform the museum into “one of the principal agencies for the enlightenment of the people.”⁵⁷

Sir Henry Flower, director of the British Natural History Museum, proposed arranging artifacts and exhibits in ways that were consistent with those of Goode. Flower, likewise, argued that museum exhibits should consist of specimens displayed as illustrative of a scientific theme or principle.⁵⁸ Flower and Goode, as well as anthropologists working in large museums at the end of the nineteenth century, informed David Boyle on the management of collections in the Canadian Institute and the Ontario Provincial Museum.

Boyle and the Provincial Museum

By 1896, Boyle’s work and the museum collections had outgrown the institutional capacity of the Canadian Institute and he was seeking more provincial funding. Boyle, who had received international acclaim for his archaeological and museum efforts, asked his colleagues to write to the Minister of Education to support his pleas for further resources.⁵⁹ The province provided space and funding for Boyle’s work to continue in Ryerson’s Normal School museum, which was renamed the Ontario Provincial Museum in 1896. As curator of the archaeological collections, Boyle reported directly to the Minister of Education.

Boyle’s approach to his archaeological collections incorporated standard scientific museological practice at the time, a classificatory-descriptive method in which archaeological objects were categorized by function.⁶⁰ Boyle assembled objects into one of four major groups: those whose function and mode of production were known; those whose production was known, but use uncertain;

Mummies, and Mastodons: The Emergence of the American Museum, (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1992); and Andrea Stulman Dennett, *Weird and Wonderful: The Dime Museum in America* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

⁵⁶ Goode, “Museum History and Museums of History,” 306. Teather attributes this notion to Huxley. Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*

⁵⁷ George Brown Goode, “Museums of the Future,” in *A Memorial for George Brown Goode, Together with a Selection of His Papers on Museums and the History of Science in America*, Smithsonian Institution, *Annual Report for 1897, Part 2; Report of the U.S. National Museum*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 53.

⁵⁸ Flower also prescribed a reserve area with study collections set aside for researchers. Flower’s ideas are presented in Sir William Flower, *Essays in Museums and Other Subjects Connected with Natural History* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1898).

⁵⁹ The 1889 meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science held in Toronto, occasioned visits to the Canadian Institute museum and positive comments from scholars such as Frederick Ward Putnam of the Peabody museum at Harvard, and historian Francis Parkman, who showed a distinct interest in the cranial collection. When George Brown Goode sent a letter of acknowledgement on the quality of the annual archaeological reports in 1891, Boyle answered with a request for employment with Goode or barring that possibility, asked that Goode write to the Minister of Education arguing for a better allotment for the museum. David Boyle to George Brown Goode, 28 July 1891, Record Unit 189, Assistant Secretary in charge of the United States National Museum, Correspondence and Memoranda, 1860-1908, Box 12, folder 6, Smithsonian Institution Archives.

⁶⁰ Gerald Killan, “The Canadian Institute and the Origins of the Ontario Archaeological Tradition 1850-1884,” *Ontario Archaeology* 34, (1980) 3-16; and Killan, “Towards a Scientific Archaeology: Daniel Wilson, David Boyle and the Canadian Institute 1852-96” in Pamela Jane Smith and Donald Mitchell eds. *Bringing Back the Past: Historic Perspectives in Canadian Archaeology, Mercury Series, Archaeological Survey of Canada*, Paper 158, (Ottawa: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1998), 15-24.

the reverse; and those about which “absolutely nothing” was known.⁶¹ Projectile points were grouped by similarity and use, as were pottery, pipes, amulets, and so on. Boyle explained the underlying evolutionary premise for this functional-comparative approach in his archaeological reports, citing at length John Fiske’s theories on this subject in *Popular Science Monthly*:⁶² “It is now generally understood that savage life is, or was, much the ‘same with a difference’ in all parts of the world and it is our duty to understand this difference.”⁶³

Once again, Boyle looked to professionals in American museums to “become acquainted with the methods of classification adopted in large museums.”⁶⁴ He sought advice from George Brown Goode of the Smithsonian, whose exhibits showed the evolutionary progress of man.⁶⁵

As visitors moved (horizontally) through the galleries they saw objects which had meaning inherent in themselves. Combined together from case to case and exhibit to exhibit, the objects formed coherent visual sentences. Almost without exception, the visual sentences that emerged from this process of combination and selection presented the metanarrative of evolutionary progress.⁶⁶

The arrangements of objects and exhibit cases in Boyle’s archaeological museum were likewise components in a subtle metanarrative of the evolutionary stages of savagery and barbarism, and described as depicting “the movements of the race from its incipient crudeness to a higher condition.”⁶⁷ Collections from other museums and locations illustrating these stages as the “same with a difference” were integrated as comparison materials, even those from the Imperial Museum of Japan.⁶⁸ All objects were put on display, and a descriptive catalogue listed these for museum visitors.⁶⁹ Frequently, the exhibits needed re-arrangement to accommodate new accessions, and consequently, a new catalogue had to be prepared.

However, not all archaeologists subscribed to this method of organizing. One of Boyle’s amateur archaeologists, George E. Laidlaw, insisted that his artifacts be arranged differently, arguing that these objects should be analyzed in the context of their original village site, rather than individually separated and regrouped with others from elsewhere by object function. Boyle accommodated Laidlaw, but maintained the functional system for the rest of the museum collections, saying both systems had merit.⁷⁰ At a minor level then, Boyle and Laidlaw played out a local version of the great international debate that raged in anthropological museums at this time — whether to

⁶¹ Boyle, *AARO*, 1886-7, 16.

⁶² John Fiske, *Popular Science Monthly*, September 1891, 585-586. Cited by Boyle in *AARO*, 1892, 7.

⁶³ Boyle, *AARO*, 1891, 54; see also *The Saturday Globe* 9 August 1890 for a discussion of the Canadian Institute’s collection as evidence of “the movements of the race from its incipient crudeness to a higher condition.”

⁶⁴ Boyle, *AARO*, 1894-1895, 6.

⁶⁵ David Boyle to George Brown Goode, 25 November 1895, Record Unit 189, Assistant Secretary in charge of the United States National Museum, Correspondence and Memoranda, 1860-1908, Box 12, folder 6, Smithsonian Institution Archives. Also noted in Killan, *David Boyle*, 179.

⁶⁶ Conn, 5. Examples of Roman Jakobson’s work include, “Language in Relation to Other Communication Systems,” in *Roman Jakobson (Ed.): Selected Writings, Vol. 2, (Mouton: The Hague, 1971), 570-79.*

⁶⁷ *The Saturday Globe*, 9 August 1890, gives this interpretation of the Canadian Institute’s collection.

⁶⁸ *The Globe*, 3 January 1906.

⁶⁹ Boyle describes in detail the exhibit cases in the Canadian Institute Museum in his *AARO* 1888, “Catalogue of Specimens,” 47-101.

⁷⁰ David Boyle, *AARO*, 1900, 1. Killan also notes Laidlaw’s concerns to have his materials arranged by village site, *David Boyle*, 193.

categorize artifacts by function or cultural context.⁷¹ Boyle preferred the functional method of Otis Mason, one of his mentors from the Smithsonian, and a man for whom he professed the utmost respect.⁷²



Main Archaeological Room—West View.

2.3 Boyle's Ontario Provincial Museum exhibits at the time of his death, 1911. AARO

⁷¹ This debate is discussed in Curtis Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910*, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981); and George W. Stocking ed., *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, History of Anthropology Series, Vol. 3, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). Mary Tivy adds a Canadian perspective in "Museums and Exhibits of First Nations: Old Paradigms and New Possibilities," Ontario Museum Association *Annual* 2, (October 1993), 6-18.

⁷² Boyle to Mason, 15 March 1902, and Boyle to Hrdlicka, 14 January 1907, Normal School Correspondence, Anthropology Department, ROM. However, Mason adopted the cultural group method advocated by Franz Boas, and used this concept to develop habitat group displays in the Smithsonian's exhibition at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Here Boyle spent several months in charge of his Ontario Archaeological Exhibit. It won an award of merit furthering Boyle's international reputation with the leading anthropologists in North America, gathered in Chicago during the exposition for the Congress of Anthropology. The practice of the contextualization of material culture as the standard for archaeological and ethnological practice in museums during the twentieth century was established during this World's Fair.

Boyle: International Museologist

One of the few Canadian members of an international culture of museum scientists, Boyle corresponded not only with Goode and Mason, but also associated with leading American museum anthropologists such as Stewart Culin, Franz Boas, W.J. McGee, and Aleš Hrdlička, leaders in museum anthropology in the United States.⁷³ Boyle's archaeological research and publications, which he supplemented with contributions from amateur archaeologists in various parts of the province, received international recognition and awards, as did his later ethnological work with the Six Nations Indians at Brantford, Ontario. As an active member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (BAAS) and the International Congress of Americanists, he exchanged museological advice during conference sessions and professional visits to museums in Britain and the United States. In 1900, he was asked to give "particular assistance" to the BAAS by instructing them in his methods of registering and preserving artifacts.⁷⁴ During the 1902 International Congress of Americanists' meetings, Boyle spent a week with other delegates visiting the principal museums in Philadelphia, Washington, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and Chicago.⁷⁵ These gatherings not only presented him with ideas for his own museum, but also increased his frustration at its shortcomings. Boyle's rise in his professional field was paralleled by a growing dissatisfaction with the poor salary and working conditions at the Ontario Provincial Museum. Much of his extant correspondence consists of petitions to the minister of education and others of influence for increased funding and better working conditions.⁷⁶

His yearly introductions to the Annual Archaeological Report of Ontario are unequivocal portrayals of the difficulties of trying to attain scientific and museological standards under restricted circumstances. He reinforced his appeals for funding sufficient to follow proper museum methods, such as labelling "next to arrangement the greatest desideratum of the curator is labelling" with quotes from George Brown Goode:

According to modern museum methods "a label is illustrated by means of a simply to intimate wolf or owl or sturgeon."⁷⁷

⁷³ Hrdlička was physical anthropologist at the Smithsonian Institution and was interested in the crania collection in the Provincial Museum.

⁷⁴ Boyle to Harcourt, 22 May 1900, RG 42-2-0-3568, Archives of Ontario.

⁷⁵ Boyle to Harcourt, 10 Nov. 1902, RG 42-2-0-3636, Ontario Department of Education, Archives of Ontario.

⁷⁶ These individuals include B.E. Walker, President of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, and an amateur paleontologist and geologist. He supported the work of the museum and strongly advised increasing government funding. In a letter to Harcourt, Minister of Education, regarding the state of the Provincial Museum, he refers to his address, "Canadian Surveys and Museums and the Need for Increased Expenditure Thereon," citing the need for "each province to have a museum belonging to it and supported by the people." Eventually he abandoned hope for the provincial museum and in his capacity as Chairman of the Board of Governors of the University promoted the establishment of a multidisciplinary museum at the University of Toronto. Based on collections in the university's various colleges and science departments, and art and archeological collections made by Charles Currelly and funded by Toronto philanthropists, the ROM opened under the auspices of the University of Toronto in 1912. On the founding of the ROM, see J. Lynne Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*; Harold G. Needham, "The Origins of the Royal Ontario Museum" M.A. Thesis, University of Toronto, 1970; Charles Trick Currelly, *I Brought the Ages Home*, (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1956); Lovat Dickson, *The Museum Makers: The Story of the Royal Ontario Museum*, (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1986).

⁷⁷ Boyle to Harcourt, 15 November 1901, RG 2-42-0-3638, Department of Education, Archives of Ontario.

Boyle used Henry Flower's maxim (which he had quoted from Goode), "A finished or stand-still museum is a dead museum, and a dead museum is a useless museum," several times in his petitions for more money and assistance.⁷⁸

Classifying Ethnology: Technology or Culture?

In the last years of the nineteenth century, Boyle took a professional turn toward ethnological study, which proved to raise the problem of museum classification again, since these materials were not archaeological. The meeting of the BAAS in Toronto in 1897 resulted in the formation of a committee to prepare an ethnological survey of Canada. Again, Boyle built on groundwork laid by American colleagues. A "Sketch of the Mythology of the North American Indians" and other essays by John Wesley Powell director of the Bureau of American Ethnology, provided a guideline for Boyle's ethnological research.⁷⁹ Boyle conducted a study of the primitive religions among the Iroquois on the Six Nations Reserve at Brantford. He had established a strong friendship with the Iroquois, and was adopted into the tribe in 1892. Boyle's interest was in Iroquois mythology and religious "survivals," those traditional activities and beliefs, which could illuminate a savage past silent in the archaeological record.⁸⁰ He recorded the myths and the ceremonies at various festivals, such as the Mohawk Burning of the White Dog, and produced a comprehensive description of these and other "pagan" activities practiced by the Iroquois.⁸¹ He continued to view these practices as evidence of the persistence of a doomed condition of "savagery" waning under the forces of civilization.

Through his studies of the religious traditions of the Six Nations, Boyle developed a close relationship with John Brant-Sero, his translator and a tribal historian. Long before the practice of integrating the study of historical records with research on ethnological groups,⁸² the ethnologist and historian worked physically together but intellectually apart. Boyle was recording the traditional folklore of the Mohawk, while Brant-Sero was researching the history of his people.

Boyle could not easily place the ethnological material he had collected during his research at the Six Nations Reserve into the taxonomic formula of his archaeological collections. He could have resorted to the style of the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford, which displayed ethnological material as Boyle did archaeological artifacts by separating them into functional groups to show the linear progression of material technology across cultures, leading to its apex with Western culture.⁸³ Boyle looked instead to his American colleagues for direction in categorizing ethnological materials,

⁷⁸ Boyle often repeated Henry Flower's admonition that an unchanging "stand-still museum is a dead museum." See Boyle to Harcourt, 15 November 1901, RG 42-2-0- 3638, Department of Education, Archives of Ontario; Boyle to Pyne, 3 September 1907, Normal School Correspondence, Anthropology Department, ROM. See also AARO 1888-9, 47. Flower was quoting from Brown Goode's essay "The Museums of the Future." George Brown Goode, "Museums of the Future" in *A Memorial for George Brown Goode, Together with a Selection of His Papers on Museums and the History of Science in America*. Smithsonian Institution, *Annual Report for 1897*, Part 2; *Report of the U.S. National Museum*. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), 53.

⁷⁹ John Wesley Powell, "Sketch of the Mythology of the North American Indians," *First Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology*, 1881, 19-56.

⁸⁰ Boyle had an interest in Canadian Folklore as well and wrote a column on this subject for the *Toronto Globe*. Noted by Killan, *Boyle*, 160.

⁸¹ AARO, 1898.

⁸² A discipline now termed "Ethnohistory."

⁸³ On the Pitt-Rivers Museum see William Ryan Chapman, "Arranging Ethnology: A. H. L. F. Pitt Rivers and the Typological Tradition," in *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, George W. Stocking, Jr. ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985).

suggesting the development of a committee to systematize nomenclature for classifying this material. W.J. McGee, head of the Bureau of American Ethnology, told Boyle that this suggestion was premature, and to keep researching his subjects: "For given definite knowledge there is little trouble finding terms for its expression."⁸⁴

In fact, there had been much trouble in the discipline to find terms to interpret ethnological material. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, those doing ethnological work in museums were seriously debating the classification and interpretation of these materials that fell neither into science nor into art. Mason, Boyle's mentor, was the strongest proponent of a functional approach, which he used with the ethnological collections at the Smithsonian Institution. Mason wrote:

About the time that Doctor Goode came to the Museum, I undertook to arrange the ethnological collections. I can remember the delight which it gave him to consider a classification in which the activities of mankind were divided into genera and species subject to the laws of natural history, of evolution and geographic surroundings. The development of the department of Arts and Industries has been the result of these early studies.⁸⁵

However, by the early 1890s, Mason had completely revised his thinking because of criticism from a colleague and of the preference the public showed at national fairs for displays of in-situ tribal groups. In 1887, Franz Boas, a contract ethnologist for the rival American Museum of Natural History in New York, publicly refuted Mason's methods, stating, "I cannot consider it justifiable to make technology, in the sense Professor Mason does, the basis of arranging ethnological collections."⁸⁶ Instead, Boas advocated an inductive method based on cultural context:

By regarding a single phenomenon outside of its surroundings, outside of other inventions of the people to whom it belongs, and outside of other phenomenon affecting that people and its productions, we cannot understand its meaning.⁸⁷

It is my opinion that the main object of ethnological collections should be the dissemination of the fact that civilization is not something absolute, but that it is relative, and that our ideas and conceptions are true only so far as our civilization goes. I believe that this object can only be accomplished by the tribal arrangement of collections... to show how far each and every civilization is the outcome of its geographical and historical surroundings.⁸⁸

Goode also considered the in-situ ethnographic approach as legitimate within the parameters of natural history science:

Just as naturalists may feel it legitimate to use a consider a considerable number of cases of animals mounted in the midst of natural surroundings to illustrate their habits or make impressive memorials of species which are rarely seen or likely to become

⁸⁴ McGee to Boyle, R.G 2-42-0-5648, Education Department, Archives of Ontario.

⁸⁵ Quoted in David Starr Jordan, "Biographical Sketch of George Brown Goode," *The Smithsonian Institution: 1846- 1896; the History of its First Half Century*, ed. George Brown Goode, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1897), 508.

⁸⁶ Franz Boas, "Museums of Ethnology and their Classification," *Science* Volume IX, No. 228, (June 17, 1887), 589.

⁸⁷ Franz Boas, "The Occurrence of Similar Inventions in Areas Widely Apart," *Science* Volume IX, No.224, (May 20,1887), 485. Cited also in Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists*, 98.

⁸⁸ Franz Boas, "Museums of Ethnology and their Classification," 589.

extinct, so will the anthropologist employ figures, not only for the education of the public but as a more sure means of preserving certain of the most precious memorials of the primitive races of mankind.⁸⁹

Mason used the cultural group method to develop habitat group displays in the Smithsonian's exhibition at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The practice of the cultural group method of viewing material culture was established as the standard for archaeological and ethnological practice in museums during the twentieth century during this world's fair. Here Boyle spent several months in charge of his Ontario Archaeological Exhibit. It won an award of merit, furthering Boyle's international reputation with the leading anthropologists in North America, who had gathered in Chicago during the exposition for the Congress of Anthropology.

From his annual reports, it appears that Boyle classified ethnological material by tribe and exhibited these items as "modern specimens."⁹⁰ Costumes were mounted on available manikins and placed in large cases, apparently with plaster heads cast and supplied by the Smithsonian Institution.⁹¹ However, by 1907, its primary advocate, Franz Boas, had given up altogether on trying to display the complexities of culture with museum objects:

The psychological as well as the historical relations of cultures, which are the only objects of anthropological inquiry, cannot be expressed by any arrangement based on so small a portion of the manifestation of ethnic life as is presented by specimens.⁹²

The scientific method of organizing museum collections dominated professional museum practice in the nineteenth century. This was the model for the work conducted by David Boyle in his first museum in Elora, at the museum of the Canadian Institute, and later the Ontario Provincial Museum. As Boyle came to realize, the model worked less well with ethnological specimens whose meaning lay in their contextual as opposed to their functional use. Ethnological museum techniques, a mixture of functionalism and in-situ contextualism would eventually inform the classification and display of historical artifacts.⁹³

⁸⁹ Cited in Lester Brown, "The American Indian: A Museum's Eye View," *Indian Historian* 9, (1976), 30.

⁹⁰ *AARO* 1888, 100-101.

⁹¹ The Smithsonian made casts for the Provincial Museum. David Boyle to George Brown Goode, 17 May 1897, Record Unit 189, Assistant Secretary in charge of the United States National Museum, Correspondence and Memoranda, 1860-1908, Box 12, folder 6, Smithsonian Institution Archives.

⁹² Franz Boas, "Some Principles of Museum Administration," *Science* Vol. XXV, 928.

⁹³ On anthropological museum methods see for instance, Curtis Hinsley, *Savages and Scientists: The*

The twentieth century would see the rise of history museums in the West. Curtis Hinsley's observation on the work at the Smithsonian Institution that, "In the twentieth century the lessons of artifacts were not at all as single or obvious as the nineteenth-century museum,"⁹⁴ pertains as well to the museums under study here. The next chapter considers Boyle and his historical compatriots in the intellectual and institutional development of historical societies and their museums.

Smithsonian Institution and the Development of American Anthropology 1846-1910, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1981); George W. Stocking ed. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture*, History of Anthropology Series, Vol. 3, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). I add a Canadian perspective on similar exhibits at the ROM in "Museums and Exhibits of First Nations: Old Paradigms and New Possibilities" Ontario Museum Association *Annual 2*, (October 1993), 6-18.

⁹⁴ Curtis Hinsley, "The Museum Origins of Harvard Anthropology" in Clark Elliott and Margaret Rossiter eds. *Science at Harvard University: Historical Perspectives*, (Bethlehem Pennsylvania: Lehigh University Press, Toronto: Associated University Press, 1992), 141-142.

Chapter 3: The Historical Paradigm and Local History Museums in Ontario

Introduction

David Boyle was also a historian. His studies in this field were in the European settlement of Ontario, and were pursued through the Ontario Historical Society (OHS). As the principal curator in the Province at the turn of the twentieth-century, and as a leading member of the OHS, Boyle advised local history museums to organize their artifacts as he did his scientific collections, using both a classificatory–descriptive, functional method as had Mason. History museums however, had no comparative disciplinary object-based epistemology, and History itself was a fledgling profession.¹ Whereas archaeological material had a universal reference to the rise of civilization out of savagery, much of the historical material had a local reference to the supremacy carved by the British Empire out of the wildness of Ontario.

This chapter explains the development of museums and historical societies in Ontario from the mid-nineteenth century up to 1912. It describes the formation of local historical societies and their museums, and the establishment of the OHS. In the absence of a central collecting agency in the province to document and preserve its material history, local historical societies pursued this role in their own communities. Their members were middle-class men and women who were motivated in their work by their collective and personal relationships to the past and were guided in their efforts to some extent by David Boyle, who was both the curator of the archaeological collections of the Ontario Provincial Museum, and for many years, secretary of the OHS. Their museum exhibits tended to highlight relics of sentimental worth and sometimes followed the systematic or taxonomic model espoused by Boyle and used by science museums: one that did not serve history collections particularly well. Occasionally, recreated figures or domestic interiors would be devised, using the same attempts at verisimilitude as anthropologists had done in their dioramas in museums and world fairs. With few exceptions, museums defined by restored architectural structures did not prevail with these local historical societies during this period. The OHS intention to form a provincial museum of history remained unfulfilled in 1912, despite efforts, especially from the Women's Canadian Historical Society (WCHS), toward this goal. It covers the period from the mid-nineteenth century to 1912, the year of the founding of the Waterloo Historical Society, whose museum provides the main case study for this thesis.

Local History Museums in Ontario

Local museums in Ontario during this period were the products of historical societies, which as Killan notes, became “the chief vehicles” for protecting and popularizing the past by the end of the nineteenth century.² Of the twenty societies formed between 1869 and 1900, most concentrated on

¹On the relative late development of history as a vocation in Canada see for instance, Donald Wright, “Gender and the Professionalization of History in English Canada before 1960,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, 1, (March 2000), 29-45. The American Historical Association was founded in 1889; the Canadian Historical Association in 1922.

²Works on the preservation of the past and its representation in local history museums in Ontario in the late

preserving and publishing early documents and local histories. After 1895, they received provincial subsidies for these efforts. As Killan so aptly describes, ambitious groups erected monuments and plaques and held historical fetes and re-enactments to honour fallen and forgotten heroes and landmarks. A number of these societies also collected relics and created museums in which to place them. Open to the public, these artifacts provided three-dimensional symbols of an important and relevant Canadian past, through an object-lesson pedagogy endorsed by Henry Scadding, David Boyle, and others.

Ontario Historical Societies 1869–1912: Pioneers and Loyalists Objectified

While Boyle applied nineteenth-century laws of human evolution to frame his Ontario prehistory work, local historical societies based their historical activities on a somewhat different foundation, using progress as their interpretive theme. They depicted progress as a civilized road that was paved by the virtues of the province's British settlers and that both explicated the foundation of the province and secured its future as a member of the British Empire. Admiration and emulation of a pioneer culture and loyalism to the British Crown became the backbone of historical activity and shaped the object lessons of museum work in this period. The main actors in this historical view were community founders: pioneers and United Empire Loyalists often configured to be the same entity by the president of the OHS in 1910:

Courage and perseverance, their helpfulness to one another, and their ungrudging zeal in work for the public benefit... we may glean encouragement to emulate their self-denial, as we enjoy the fruits of their labours... Where can we get better examples of self-denial, self-help and stirring determination than in the manly vigor of our early men?³

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are few. Dorothy Duncan's "From Mausoleums to Malls: What Next?" provides a sweeping overview of historical museum development in Ontario from inception to 1994. Dorothy Duncan, "From Mausoleums to Malls: What Next?" *Ontario History* LXXXII:2, (June 1994), 107-118. The efforts toward developing a history museum in late nineteenth century Peterborough, Ontario, are included in Ken Doherty's essay on the evolution of a museum in that city, Ken Doherty, "The Common Thread: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Museums in Peterborough," *Ontario History* 86, 2, (June 1994), 133-148. Ian Kerr-Wilson's unpublished master's thesis assesses both the museum activities of the OHS and of the Kingston Historical Society over a period of a century, Ian Kerr-Wilson, "Historical Societies and their Museums: A Survey of the Ontario Case," (M.M.St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1988). Margaret May's study of the Niagara Historical Society shows the currency of patriotic ideals at the turn of the century among history museum curators in the province, Margaret May, "The Niagara Historical Society Museum: A Study in Museum Development," (M. M.St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1982). Charlie Garrad's, "The Huron Institute and the Petun," describes the founding of the Huron Institute in Collingwood in 1904, Charles Garrad, www.wyandot.org/petun/rb27.htm. Like local historians and museum supporters, librarians and those who supported libraries shared a sense of purpose, much of it inspired by nationalist sentiment. Libraries, like museums, were provincially de-centralized and locally operated. In 1900 a provincial association of librarians was formed through which these individuals could exchange information; the OHS was created for a similar reason in 1899. Lorne Bruce insists that for librarians, this arrangement reflected a consensus about the need for provincial direction but local administration. This arrangement typified the development of museums during this period, although it was non-profit societies and not local authorities that operated these institutions. The public library movement in Ontario offers institutional parallels to this study of museum development in the province during the same period; Lorne Bruce, *Free Books for All: The Public Library Movement in Ontario, 1850-1930*, (Dundurn Press, Toronto/Niagara Falls: 1994).

³ Barlow Cumberland, President's Address, OHS Annual Report 1908, 37-38.

While Berger, Killan, and Beck stress the patriotic and imperialist motives and fear of annexation to the United States for the formation and activities of these groups, a closer examination of these societies reveals that these motivations were consistent for some, but not all, of these organizations, and are played out differently in the iconography of their historical texts and exhibits.

Filiopietism: Henry Scadding and the York Pioneers

No local historical society in Ontario reflected the quality of filiopietism more than the York Pioneers, as the members of the York Pioneer and Historical Society referred to themselves.⁴ Formed in 1869, the York Pioneer and Historical Society was the first and most influential of Ontario's early historical societies. Regarding itself as a "Friendly society, bound together with a golden thread of present recollections, early struggles and early successes ..." it stressed fraternity through shared pioneer roots.⁵ Heredity was the common bond of its membership, men (and their descendents who over forty years of age in 1869) who were natives of, or immigrants to, the County of York prior to 1834.⁶ The Society aimed "to preserve and perpetuate ... historical recollections and incidents, documents and pictorial illustrations relating to the early settlement of this country."⁷ Pioneers were commemorated by several means, such as flying the society's flag at half-mast on St. Lawrence Hall on death of a member.

Henry Scadding, the president of the York Pioneer and Historical Society, steered the direction of this society. His Upper Canadian pioneer pedigree was impeccable. He was the son of John Scadding, manager of John Graves Simcoe's estates in England and Canada. He was both a scholar and a clergyman. The first graduate of Upper Canada College, he was appointed as a master of classical studies there in 1838 and ordained an Anglican priest in the same year. An active member of the Canadian Institute, he served as both president and editor of the *Canadian Journal*.

⁴ This icon of the pioneer, or founder reverence had currency in other provinces, and in the United States. John Bodnar discusses the image of the pioneer at the turn of the century in the American Midwest, whose historical societies served as models for the OHS in the 1890s. Pictured as a sturdy ancestor who founded communities and overcame hardship, Bodnar believes this pioneer figure served as reassurance in a time of comparative economic centralization and urban development. John Bodnar, *Remaking America : Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 1991); David Lowenthal also refers to this element in an American context in his essay, "Pioneer Museums in the United States," which highlights the filiopietistic purpose of their creation. These organizations and their collections as forms of ancestor worship, he suggests, established when the descendents of the pioneers and their memories pass away David Lowenthal, "Pioneer Museums," in *History Museums in the United States*, 116-127.

⁵ OHS Annual Report 1900, 25.

⁶ The qualifying birth date of members became a sliding scale forward as the society aged. Women were not eligible to join the York Pioneers. Despite her protest that she was "not a woman suffragist" [sic], and was the granddaughter of John Montgomery of the 1837 Rebellion, about whom she delivered a paper to the York Pioneers, Mrs. O.B. Sheppard's nomination to membership was recorded as "not entertained." The members did "not approve of any lady being elected to membership." York Pioneer and Historical Society Minutes, 7 March 1911, York Pioneer and Historical Society Fonds, F 1143-2, box MU 3211, AO.

⁷ "Constitution of the York Pioneers," York Pioneer and Historical Society Fonds, F 1143-2, box 1, MU3211, AO.



3.1 Henry Scadding,
*Toronto Public
Library*

Scadding was an antiquarian.⁸ He did not confine his heritage concerns to British remains in Ontario. His eclectic interests in the preservation and protection of Ontario's past ranged from trees extant from the pre-settlement period of the city, to Native history and the archaeological remains of the old French Fort at Toronto.⁹ He had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of Toronto, having dwelt in a position of influence through much of what he recollected.¹⁰ Many of his well-researched lectures and publications on these topics appeared in the *Canadian Journal*; but several of his papers also constitute romantic reminiscences with the past. These recollections were shaped in part by his classical training and his antiquarian sensibilities, and his personal sense of his own past, catalyzed by rapid changes in Toronto during his lifetime. Mixing prose, poetry and historical reflections, he tied classical writings with primeval conditions in Ontario. In "Horace Canadianizing" for instance, Scadding links the writings of Horace to his own experiences of the Canadian wilderness as a young man.¹¹ His memorial book published for the 1884 semi-centenary of Toronto, *Toronto of*

⁸ Stephen Bann, Ch. 6 "Clio in part: on antiquarianism and the historical fragment," in *The Inventions of History: Essays on the Representation of the Past*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 100-121, argues the need to understand what he calls the "antiquarian sensibility." Although this perspective may have been disavowed long since by the professional historian, Bann states that antiquarianism should not be viewed as insufficient history, but as a distinctively material form, which historical representation acquired over the nineteenth century, and which formed the precursors of the historical museum.

⁹ Henry Scadding, "Monument to mark the exact site of the Old French Fort at Toronto" and, "Survivors of the Forest in Toronto: A Paper Read Before the Canadian Institute, Toronto," (25 November 1893). Reprinted from *Press of the Week*. He successfully lobbied to have the site of the French Fort "Rouille" marked as part of the Toronto semi-centenary celebrations. It was, he stated, the only true "ancient historic site" in Toronto, "virtually the germ of Toronto" which "linked the history of Toronto with the history of French Canada and the fates of France under the regime of Louis the Fifteenth."

¹⁰ On Scadding's death, Coyne told the OHS that Scadding was a gentleman and scholar, and had been "the living link that connected the present generation with names prominent in Canadian public life in the early part of the last century" adding that Scadding was the father of Canadian history in Ontario and "a pioneer and historian of pioneers." OHS Annual Report 1901, 50.

¹¹ Henry Scadding, *Horace Canadianizing: Early Pioneer Life in Canada recalled by Sayings of the Latin Poet Horace* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1894).

Old, formed a walking tour of the city as he and other members of the York Pioneers remembered it, starting with places and objects as orientation to historical narratives.¹²

In lectures and writings on his personal collections of coins and documents, Scadding showed an awareness of the potency of objects as memorial devices. He regarded historical autographs (signed letters, documents or their fragments) as analogous to religious relics of previous times:

In former times, we know, the shrines and sacristies of churches and monasteries were the museums of the period... Now what I say is this: that there is in historic autograph relics a degree of that virtue which was felt originally to reside in the corporal relics of eminent men and women. They satisfy in some degree, a certain human craving.¹³

For him, objects imbued the qualities of those who made or used them, and his observations of the metaphoric and synecdochic function of “remains of this kind, fragmentary and mutilated”¹⁴ presage current museological writing and reflect the thinking about history and objects in this period:

The study of a part will help to an idea of the whole... Moreover, by the contemplation of such objects, a taste for the noble study of history may here and there be awakened and fostered.¹⁵

In Scadding’s mind, relics and other examples of Canadian “primitive colonial life and manners” served a social purpose: to remind viewers of the “peculiar conditions under which were so bravely executed the many labours whereby for posterity the path onward has been made smooth.”¹⁶ Scadding no doubt influenced the choice of building for the museum of the York Pioneers. Under his direction, the Society conserved his father’s original cabin on the Don River as a museum, moving and installing it on the grounds of the Canadian National Exhibition in 1879.



3.2 York Pioneers Retrieving Scaddings Cabin.
Toronto Public Library

¹² Names of the members of the York Pioneers are in an appendix in the book. Scadding thanks them for choosing him as their historiographer.

¹³ Henry Scadding, “Leaves They Have Touched; Being a Review of Some Historical Autographs,” *Canadian Journal* n.s. 14:4, 1875, 315-316.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Henry Scadding, *Toronto of Old; Collections and Recollections Illustrative of the Early Settlement and Social Life of the Capital of Ontario*, (Toronto, Adam, Stevenson, 1873):xxx.



3.3 York Pioneers spinning outside Scadding's cabin. *Archives of Ontario*.

The York Pioneer museum was the first local historical museum open to the public in Ontario. Open during the Canadian Exhibition hours, the museum held assorted collections representing the history of Canada and York and the material life of its settlers. It featured a selection of books from Scadding's personal collections, thematically changed each year. By 1900, the York Pioneers were seeking government funding to improve their museum, expecting to "put the building in better order and have a place in which to store more relics of pioneer days" through which "the Old Log Cabin will present both inside and out, object-lessons to the youth of our country."¹⁷ On Children's Day at the exhibition in 1904, the York Pioneers were happy to report that "1066 juveniles visited us and observed the things with which our fathers and mothers made this prosperous country."¹⁸ At that time, the children would have seen a remodelled Scadding cabin, one that attempted to convey the cabin's original interior. It now had the look of pioneer habitat, although, the displays still highlighted symbolic pieces:

There are now changes at the old log cabin. Those in charge have altered the old furniture and fixed it up more like an old house of seventy-five or a hundred years ago, than a museum. The Indian relics have all disappeared except a huge stone hammer which is one of the biggest in Ontario. The first cab used in Toronto has been placed in front of the cabin and attracts considerable attention. There is an old pot for making soft soap with its chains and tripod. An old pioneer's stove has been placed before the door of the house. In the cabin there is an old dragon pistol used at the siege of Derry and handed down to the present owner through 3 generations.¹⁹

Scadding was also a historical society missionary, responsible for the founding of a province-wide history association. He worked to create a federation of local historical societies, "Having in

¹⁷ OHS Annual Report 1900, 26. The York Pioneers archaeological collections were stored with David Boyle in the Ontario Provincial Museum.

¹⁸ York Pioneer and Historical Society Minutes, 2 August 1904. York Pioneer and Historical Society Fonds, F 1143-1 box MU 3211, AO.

¹⁹ Newspaper Clipping, "Old Timer's at the Fair," (Newspaper title omitted), 30 August 1901, in OHS Scrapbook, OHS Fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5438, Public AO.

view the preservation in each locality of the province, of relics of its Past, [sic] of its records, traditions, and reminiscences,” and marketed the idea with a Pioneer and Old Settler’s Day at the Industrial Exhibition in Toronto in 1886.²⁰ Two years later the Pioneer Association of Ontario (renamed the Ontario Pioneer Historical Association in 1891 and the Ontario Historical Society in 1899) was formed under his leadership. Its mission reflected Scadding’s aspirations:

To unite the various pioneer societies of the Province in one central head or organization thereby the better to promote intercourse and union of all such societies, for the better preservation of historical and other records and memorials of the Province, for the forming of new societies for such purposes, and for the promoting and extending the influence and benefits thereof.²¹

Within three years, eight historical societies had joined the OPHA as affiliated organizations. Scadding described the primary work of these societies as memorializing founders:

What all the societies of this description aim at is that the memory and example of our brave men in the past, our pioneers and founders of communities, should not be utterly lost. Our pioneer and historical societies are to furnish the chroniclers who are not to allow the achievements and wisdom of our worthy forefathers to perish.²²

However, Scadding’s goal for historical societies to be a source of memory and materials for future historians was modest in comparison with the goals of many of the local societies themselves within this period. They aimed to commemorate and preserve the United Empire Loyalist past, sanctified in the War of 1812, as a standard to understand and ensure Canada’s future under the British flag. As James Coyne of the Elgin Historical and Scientific Institute claimed, “The pioneers among the pioneers were undoubtedly the United Empire Loyalists.”²³

This ideology of the past, which soon dominated this period of museum-making, is explored by a number of authors whose arguments are specifically derived from Carl Berger’s study, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867–1914*.²⁴ Berger lays out the premises upon which others have viewed historical societies in turn of the century Ontario as patriotic organizations.²⁵ The function of the pioneer or United Empire Loyalist myth that these historical

²⁰ Scadding to Merritt, 31 July, 1886, Merritt Papers, National Archives of Canada. cited in Killan *Preserving the Past*, 37. This “Pioneer Day” celebration at the Industrial Exhibition became an annual event hosted by the York Pioneers.

²¹ Henry Scadding, “An Address to the Pioneer and Historical Society of the County of York,” (Toronto: *The Week*, 1891), in York Pioneer and Historical Society Scrapbook, York Pioneer and Historical Society Fonds, F 1143-3, box MU3214, AO.

²² Ibid.

²³ James Coyne address, “Memorial to the United Empire Loyalists,” (Niagara, Ont., Times Book and Job Print, 1898), 8.

²⁴ Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power; Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970). This is true of Killan’s *Preserving Ontario’s Heritage* and Boyd Beck’s graduate thesis on study of the ideals of imperialism and nationalism in the formation of the museum collections, especially the ROM. Boyd Beck, “Museums and Ideology: Ontario Museums in an Age of Imperialism, 1890-1914” (M. M. St. thesis, University of Toronto, 1988).

²⁵ Cecilia Morgan’s analysis of early publications of the OHS builds from Berger’s discussion of loyalism, nationalism, and the romanticization of the United Empire Loyalists. Her literary analysis of OHS publications from 1890-1920 applies Hayden White’s models of narrative construction in historical text. White argues that historical facts become meaningful only through figurative devices which shape narrative; literary tropes such as romance, tragedy, comedy, and irony. As White’s theories hold, stories are ideologically driven and incontrovertibly constructed in one of these forms. Morgan shows that the rhetoric of the historical essays in the

societies pursued is supported by other studies on the loyalist myth in Ontario.²⁶ This myth reflects a pattern of defeat, exile, hardship and struggle followed by a future triumph in a righteous cause; a pattern standard to accounts of heroic myth. Closely aligned with these studies of mythological elements in historical interpretation by historical societies in Ontario are detailed studies of the function and expression of the pioneer myth in Ontario.²⁷

The Icon of the Pioneer Loyalist

Attachment to a heroic narrative of the province's founders provided a framework through which individuals and societies could establish personal, community, and national identities, and which served their heritage passion with social purpose. Most historical society members were educated, as well as being educators, about the past. They were clergymen, teachers, writers, and other professionals and many were women: these were people who had both time and social means to pursue these interests. Berger, Killan, and others emphasize the intense British-Canadian nationalism, Anglo-Celtic Protestant middle-class strata, and personal connections to the founders of a community that historical society members shared.²⁸ They argue that the Loyalist myth, which these societies adopted, flourished in the last part of the century in response to economic depression and political upheaval of the 1880s, especially the threat of annexation to the United States.²⁹ These fires of imperialism and nationalism were also fanned by critical anniversary celebrations such as Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, and the 400th anniversary of Cabot's arrival in 1898, and were topped off with the emotions of the Boer War that erupted in 1899.

The Loyalist Imperative Objectified

Imperialist thinking linked Canadian nationalism with imperial unity and characterized many of the historical societies in Southwestern Ontario from 1885 to 1914. What distinguished these sentiments

OHS publications in this era is overwhelmingly a romantic trope of the survival of the good colonists, through persecution, self-sacrifice, and loyalty to the British Crown. She adds that these historical narratives are marked by both moral meaning and their narrator's moral authority. Cecilia Morgan, "History, Nation, and Empire: Gender and Southern Ontario Historical Societies, 1890-1920s," *The Canadian Historical Review* 82, (3), 2001, 491-528.

²⁶ See for instance, Dennis Duffy, *Gardens, Covenants, Exiles: Loyalism in the Literature of Upper Canada/Ontario*, (Toronto: University of Toronto press, 1982); Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

²⁷ Royce MacGillivray states that the major myth in Ontario has been that of pioneer virtue. He examines the presence and purpose of this myth in local history writing in, "Local History as a Form of Popular Culture in Ontario," *New York History* 15:4, (October 1984); *The Mind of Ontario*, (Belleville: Mika Pub. Co., 1985); and *The Slopes of the Andes: Four Essays on the Rural Myth in Ontario*, (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1990).

²⁸ Norman Knowles identifies the period 1880–1914 as a specific phase in the expression of United Empire Loyalism driven by filio-pietism, the dying of Loyalists, centennial anniversaries, and British imperialism. Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts*, (Toronto : University of Toronto Press, 1997).

²⁹ Killan, in *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, suggests that "Underlying the sudden appearance of historical societies after the mid-1880s was a complex of ideological currents of nationalist aspirations and pride, doubts and apprehensions. The founders of these groups were a zealous lot who clung to the belief that history could shape a common national outlook powerful enough to heal the rents in the Canadian social fabric and to combat the deeply feared continentalist threat... In all their activities most of the historical societies sought to present a view of Canadian and Ontario history that supported the notion that imperial federation was a logical end.... a loyalist interpretation of Canadian history became a vehicle for this imperialist message," 161.

of loyalty to the British Crown in this period, suggests Berger, was the emphasis on historical antecedents, to the degree that he regards historical societies at this time as no less than branches of the Imperial Federation League.³⁰ Though not applicable to all the societies operating at this time in Ontario, these observations are certainly true of those societies and their museums situated in the southwestern parts of the province. Members of these societies; Canon Bull, James Coyne, Mrs. Fessenden, Janet Carnochan, Mary FitzGibbon, and Sara Curzon played a considerable role in shaping the rhetoric and activities of the OPHA and the OHS itself for many years between 1895 and 1912.

In areas connected to the War of 1812, preserving remains that illustrated Canada's loyalism to Britain became the focus of local historical societies, such as the Lundy's Lane Historical Society (1887), Wentworth Historical Society (1888), and Niagara Historical Society (1895).³¹ Killan comments on the hothouse effect of loyalism and preservation in the Niagara area in identifying sacred spaces:

Suddenly, the loyalist landing places, the decrepit military posts and the weed-choked battlefields of 1812–1814 took on a new significance when presented as sacred ground, symbolic of the traditions and achievements of the country's loyalist founders.³²

The constitutions, publications, meeting minutes, and activities of these groups are redolent of loyalist and pioneer purpose. The Lundy's Lane Historical Society set out to perpetuate "the memories of the brave men of 1812 and 1814."³³ Concerns for the neglected state of the battlefields of 1812–1815 and 1837–38 led to the inauguration of the Wentworth Historical Society in 1888. George Mills, its president, stated at the 1892 annual meeting that:

The inception of all Associations with objects and aspirations similar to ours has been the legitimate offspring of what may properly be designated "patriotic sentiment" aimed at protecting British-Canadian traditions as "broad and deep" foundations for the future development of the country.³⁴

The societies achieved this goal by perpetuating a close relationship with early settlers and their descendents, researching and collecting documents and relics and conveying this information to the public through publications and exhibits.³⁵

The Loyalist imperative intensified across the province with the 1892 centennial celebrations of the founding of Upper Canada. At Henry Scadding's request, the provincial government gave the Ontario Pioneer Historical Association two thousand dollars to organize centennial events. In his address that centennial year, "The Revived Significance of the Initials U.E." Scadding described the

³⁰ Berger, *Sense of Power*, 97.

³¹ Alongside but outside of these groups were individuals such as John Brant-Sero, a Mohawk tribal historian, president and founder of the Six Nations Historical Society. His interests in the historical society culture were in large part to advocate for the recognition his people deserved for their special status with the British Crown and for their role in the War of 1812.

³² Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 21.

³³ Lundy's Lane Historical Society, First Annual Report 1888, 1.

³⁴ Wentworth Historical Society, *Journal and Transactions 1892*, 77 & 79.

³⁵ To this end, a circular was printed by the Wentworth Society as a "means of collecting historical data." Its thirty questions were directed at family genealogy, recollections of the 1812 war, recollections of settlers, recollections of Indians and sources of relics, documents and traditions that could be made available to the society.

ascension of loyalist ideology, which had permeated many of the local historical societies.³⁶ To the pioneers of York, whom Scadding had initially regarded as pre-eminently suited for memorializing, he now added United Empire Loyalists. Outlining the importance of loyalism to the maintenance of the British Empire, Scadding referred to the United Empire Loyalists “as exemplars” for whom dismembering the Empire was a “kind of impiety.”³⁷ He remembered from his youth a “particular reverence to the initials U.E.” in regard for the Loyalists’ sacrifices for the Crown.³⁸ Canon Bull, who succeeded Scadding as president of the OPHA in 1895, further pursued this theme with this organization. Killan argues that it was Bull, president of the Lundy’s Lane Historical Society, who most emphatically steered the OPHA to foster “correct British-Canadian memories, sentiments and attitudes among the population at large.”³⁹ Others from the Niagara area, as fervently patriotic as himself, assisted Bull. Women proved to be Canon Bull’s biggest allies in his fight to preserve relics of Loyalism and to ensure the future of the British Empire.

Women, Historical Societies, Loyalism and the Objectification of the Past

Feminist and imperialist ideals, as well as social convention coalesced into women playing a significant part in the development of local historical societies and museums. Social convention in some cases produced gender-specific historical societies, such as the York Pioneers, who restricted their membership to men, and led to the formation of women’s auxiliaries. Thus, women had access to leadership roles that might have been denied them in male-dominated local historical societies.⁴⁰ However progressive these societies may have seemed for their members, they were nonetheless elite social organizations of women of means, many of whom were descendents of the province’s founders.⁴¹

Sarah Curzon, Mary FitzGibbon and the Women’s Wentworth Historical Society

The Wentworth Historical Society was founded in 1888. Leaders of its women’s committee, an auxiliary of the male-operated Wentworth Historical Society included Sara Curzon, its president, and Mary FitzGibbon, secretary. In her writings and heritage work, Curzon, championed the neglected role of Laura Secord in the War of 1812, saying that “to save from the sword is surely as great a deed as to save with the sword.”⁴² Curzon also edited and published the journals of her grandmother, Susanna Moodie.⁴³ Mary FitzGibbon published *A Veteran of 1812*, a biography of her heroic grandfather, Lt. James FitzGibbon.

³⁶ Scadding, “The Revived Significance of the Initials U.E.,” a paper read before the Pioneer and Historical Society of the County of York, July, 1892, (Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1892), 3-4.

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Killan, *Preserving Ontario’s Heritage*, 42.

⁴⁰ Noted by Boutilier, 66.

⁴¹ For instance, the founding membership of the WCHS constituted an influential group identified as “members or representatives by name or descent of families [sic] long resident... or whose ancestors had taken a more or less prominent part in making of Canada’s history.” “WCHS History,” File 12 n.p, WCHS Fonds, F 1180, box MU 7842, AO.

⁴² Mrs. S.A. Curzon published prose, “The Story of Laura Secord: A Heroine of 1813,” (1891) and a drama “Laura Secord,” (1887). She argued that a memorial to Laura Secord would not be complete were it to omit an appeal to Canadians, especially to the inhabitants of this Province, who in their prosperity owe much, to do their part and write her name in enduring marble upon the spot where she lies buried. Curzon, “Laura Secord,” 3-4.

⁴³ Mary Agnes FitzGibbon, *A Veteran of 1812: the Life of James FitzGibbon*, (Toronto : W. Briggs ; Montreal :

Curzon and FitzGibbon were anxious to form a memorial to commemorate the 1813 Battle of Stoney Creek. In 1895, along with Sara Calder and other members of the Ladies Committee of the Wentworth Historical Society, they put together a week-long 1812 military encampment, complete with costumed interpreters and historical exhibits as a fundraiser for a memorial. Once they had the funds, a dispute erupted with the male members of the Wentworth Historical Society over the location and extent of the project. Wanting both a museum building as well as a memorial, the Ladies Committee walked away from the parent association and restructured itself as the autonomous Women's Wentworth Historical Society (WWHS). In 1899, they independently purchased, renovated, and furnished the Gage farmhouse, the centre of the battle of Stoney Creek. It had belonged to the grandfather of the Society president, Sara Calder, who mortgaged her home to make the purchase. The WWHS described the acquisition as "17.5 acres of land made sacred by the blood of those loyal sons of King George III, who fought for and made possible this great 'dominion, beyond the sea,'"⁴⁴ and proudly reported to their (mostly male) colleagues in the OHS:

We can claim the honor of being the first in Canada to secure for permanent preservation any place connected with our early history. The ladies are having the house put in first class order and furnished with old furniture, pictures, etc. One room will be used as a museum for old relics, etc... We feel that not only our society but all Canada owes a debt of gratitude to our president, Mrs. John Calder for her energy and patriotism in acting so promptly to secure this historic property, the key to Canada's success in 1813.⁴⁵

Janet Carnochan and the Niagara Historical Society: "Ducit Amor Patriae"

Another woman in the Niagara passionately pursued preservation of the past for patriotic reasons. In 1895, Janet Carnochan was a member of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society when Canon Bull urged her to start a new historical society at Niagara-on-the-Lake. He suggested that this new Niagara Historical Society (NHS) should erect a memorial of the landing site of the United Empire Loyalists and build a museum to honour the Loyalists and pioneers of the area. Under the energetic leadership of Janet Carnochan, the NHS set out to "build up ... Canadian loyalty and patriotism" through the study, collection and preservation of Canadian historical records and relics.⁴⁶ She captured this sentiment in the motto for the organization: "Ducit Amor Patriae" ("The love of country guides"). Her integration of patriotism and historical society purpose is thoroughly expressed in her paper "A Plea for Historical Societies."⁴⁷

Janet Carnochan became a one-woman tour de force in preserving buildings and relics and in launching memorials to the memory of the War of 1812, in which the Niagara area was so historically steeped.⁴⁸ She also recorded the process of developing the museum and its collection, and published a complete catalogue of the museum collection in 1911.⁴⁹ Influenced by Boyle, she organized the museum's collection so it served as an object lesson to the public, as she stated:

C.W. Coates, 1894).

⁴⁴ OHS, Annual Report 1910, 99.

⁴⁵ OHS, Annual Report 1899, 50, 54.

⁴⁶ Janet Carnochan, "Report of the Opening of Memorial Hall," (June 4, 1907), 6.

⁴⁷ News clipping in, "Carnochan Scrapbooks," OHS fonds, F 1139-4, Series D, box 21 MU 5440.

⁴⁸ Of the monument the NHS put up to mark the U.E.L. landing site, Carnochan held "Let it tell all that Canada cherishes the memory of all that is true and noble, self-sacrificing and patriotic."

⁴⁹ Janet Carnochan, *The Evolution of an Historic Room*, (Niagara-on-the-Lake: The Times, 1899); *The Evolution of an Historic Building*, (Niagara-on-the-Lake: The Times 1907); and "Catalogue of Articles in

Mr. Boyle has said that history is best taught by object lessons and our collection may be called a series of object lessons and thus may be learned lessons of patriotism when the youth of our country have recalled to them the deeds of their forefathers in preserving the soil sacred from the foot of the invader.⁵⁰

She also concurred that relics had the power to evoke the past. She said that a certain sword, one of her museum's outstanding artifacts,

Hints a tale of the 'cold steel' encounter when the legend tells us the cry was "What is Trumps" and the answer "British Bayonets....,"[and] a pocket book gives us a pathetic reminder of the day Niagara was taken, 27th May 1813.⁵¹

In another description, she wrote of the story an array of objects could tell:

Indian pipes with beautifully worked stems, hammer stones, household utensils of other days, waffle irons, warming pans, snuffers, tell a forgotten history to the children of today. A battle axe from an Ayreshire bog and a perfect trilobite from England, with some beautifully polished flint arrowheads of early British workmanship show that not alone is this continent under tribute. *Gleaner* newspapers, old letters seals --- all speak to us of the past.⁵²

Carnochan believed that through visits to her museum, "All should come to know how precious their inheritance was and that all should care for it as an act both of PIETY AND LOVE [sic]."⁵³ The museum put all objects on display, and as the collections expanded space became an ongoing problem, as did updating the exhibit labels.

When asked by Carnochan for help to organize the Niagara Historical Society Museum collections in 1902, Boyle lamented that it was "semi-chaotic," without classification or arrangement, due in part to its limited space.⁵⁴ Carnochan agreed and set out to improve the museum. She donated the land, raised funds and organized the construction of a new building in 1906; this was the first purpose-built local history museum building in Ontario. It was called "Memorial Hall":

In memory of the United Empire loyalists, regiments, the early settlers and businessmen who helped make Niagara important and anything great or good.⁵⁵

Boyle helped Carnochan sort out the NHS collections and made suggestions to revise the exhibits, once the museum moved into Memorial Hall in 1906. The limited labelling required Carnochan to personally provide historical context of each artifact to museum visitors.⁵⁶ By 1911, visitors were offered a reference catalogue to use while touring the exhibit cases. The catalogue lists

Memorial Hall, The Historical Building of the Niagara Historical Society," (Toronto: 1911).

⁵⁰ Carnochan, OHS Annual Report 1907, 40.

⁵¹ Carnochan, *The Evolution of an Historic Room*, p. 23.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁵³ Cited in May, 9.

⁵⁴ Boyle to Harcourt, 31 July 1902, Department of Education, RG 2-42-0-3639, AO. President's Address "7th Annual Report of the Niagara Historical Society, 13 October 1902. "An important event of the year was the visit (by permission of the Minister of Education), of Mr. David Boyle, Superintendent of the Provincial Museum, who gave two days to the examination of our collection, giving many valuable hints and much help in classification."

⁵⁵ Carnochan described her intent with this project in Niagara Historical Society Annual Report 1903.

⁵⁶ Pierce, *Janet Carnochan and the Diamond Anniversary of the Niagara Historical Society*, (n.p., 1955). Cited in May, 10

more than five thousand objects and indicates that Carnochan arranged objects in thirty-three cases identified by function (e.g., military weapons); type (e.g., china, blue) or donor (e.g., Ball family collection).⁵⁷ Most of the materials were local, related to the founding of the area and War of 1812; indeed Boyle had warned her off collecting curios. Nonetheless, other exhibits were labelled as “Miscellaneous – not Canadian” and included what Boyle and Carnochan would surely have deemed as ‘curiosities’: a piece of Irish bog butter, a walrus tooth and a buffalo horn bean. Items of distant historical merit included Roman relics from Wales and military items from the East Indian mutiny. Carnochan also had an exhibit of forty mounted birds and fifty-seven birds’ eggs; natural history specimens frequently ended up in local museums when their private collectors tired of them.

At the opening of this society’s new museum building in 1906, keynote speaker Lieutenant Governor Sir Mortimer Clark, reinforced Carnochan’s patriotic sentiments. He summed up the principles of historical society museum work, now motivated by “stronger feelings of patriotism.” He emphasized the importance of these museum object lessons in teaching both youth and immigrants especially, the importance of “the work of those who had brought about the present condition of a settled country and people who were loyal subjects of the British Empire.”⁵⁸



3.4 Janet Carnochan in the Niagara Historical Society Museum, 1907. *Archives of Ontario*.

Although different historical societies reflected the concerns of their leaders and the margins of local historical context in their activities and collecting, most employed a systematic exhibit style

⁵⁷ Niagara Historical Society, *Catalogue of Articles in Memorial Hall*, (Toronto: J. Ross Robertson, 1911).

⁵⁸ Carnochan, “Report of the Opening of Memorial Hall,” June 4, 1907. (Niagara, Ont., Printed At the Advance Office, 1919)

and an implied romantic narrative. While the York Pioneers in their initial phase were more concerned with family roots than with attitudes of loyalism to the British Crown, the Huron Institute in Collingwood was modeled on the Canadian Institute.

The Simcoe County Historical Society, influenced by amateur archaeologist, Andrew Hunter, had a much stronger focus on Native archaeology. It was the individuals and historical societies located in the landscape of the United Empire Loyalists and the War of 1812 who showed most fervently the rhetoric of British imperialism in their historical outlook that Berger, Killan, and Beck describe. These local society members broadcast this ideal through their activities in the OHS. Underlying this nationalist cause was a pervasive setting of tradition and personal identity, stemming from a fertile pioneer matrix concerned with family roots and community founders.

Outside the Loyalist Landscape

Not all local historical societies demonstrated the fervent rhetoric of British imperialism in their historical outlook. A number existed outside the landscape of the Loyalist tradition or predated its zenith. As shown, the York Pioneers in their initial phase were more concerned with family roots than with attitudes of loyalism to the British Crown.

Sometimes a significant anniversary or the unexpected donation of space for a museum propelled groups to begin museum activities. For instance, the celebratory preparations for the 400th anniversary of Canada were addressed locally in Peterborough by the formation of the Town and County of Peterborough Historical Society in 1896, and featured noteworthy settlers. James Coyne congratulated this society at the 1902 OHS annual meeting held in Peterborough:

And who is there that does not consider a historical society fortunate that commences its existence with Mrs. C.P. Trail as honorary president, and a Strickland as honorary vice-president to say nothing of other men and women associated with its beginnings?⁵⁹

An old mansion, Inverlea House, had been donated to the society as a museum building in 1897. Opened in 1898, it was re-named the Victoria Museum as a fitting memorial to the Queen's Jubilee.⁶⁰ The collection was housed in the two front rooms, the large ground floor hall, the upstairs hall and two upstairs rooms. The Museum held collections not dissimilar from Boyle's original school museum in Elora: a number of cases of birds and animals, Indian curios, old documents, antique firearms, an old canoe and displays of minerals.

In 1912, the Victoria Museum moved to the new Carnegie library building. The Carnegie library program also provided designated rooms for historical societies in Carnegie libraries built in communities such as Lindsay, Belleville, Oxford, Essex County and Collingwood.⁶¹

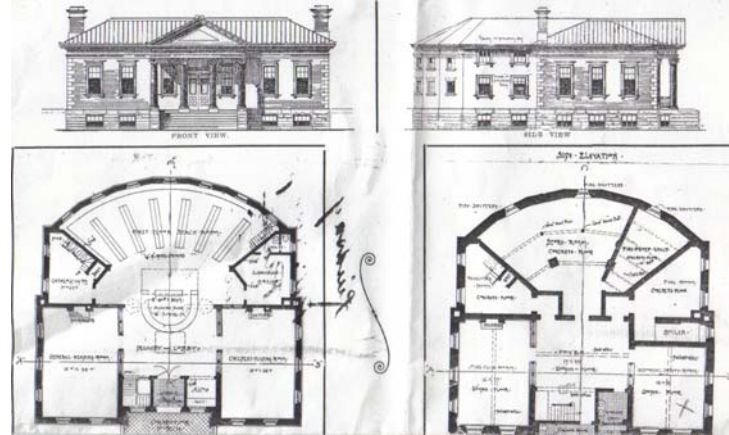
⁵⁹ James Coyne, "Presidents Address," OHS Annual Report 1902, 69.

⁶⁰ Ken Doherty, "The Common Thread: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Museums in Peterborough," *Ontario History* Vol.LXXXVI, no. 2, (June 1994), 136.

⁶¹ The plan for the Lindsay Public Library (based on a Carnegie library in Pittsburg) shows an 18 x 21 foot room in the basement as "Ontario Historical Society Scrap Album," F1139-4, OHS Scrapbooks, box MU 5438, AO.

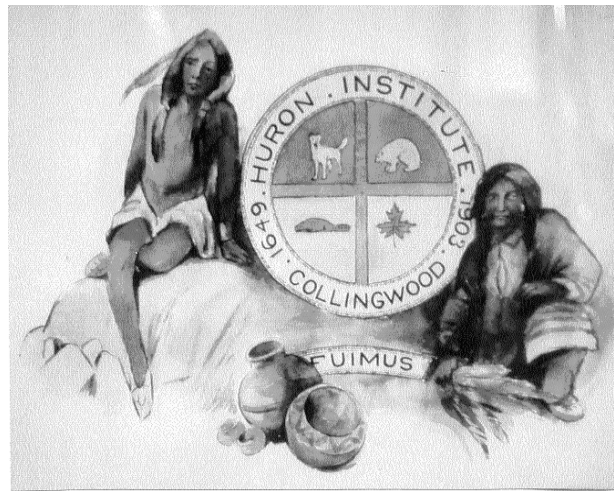
The Lindsay Public Library

The Proposed New Building.



3.5 Lindsay Public Library with historical society rooms in the lower right basement floor of the Carnegie Library in Lindsay. *Archives of Ontario*

The Huron Institute, founded in Collingwood in 1904 by local newspaperman David Williams, was modeled on the Canadian Institute, with a goal to collect, preserve, and classify specimens and records that reflected local human and animal life from the earliest times.⁶²



3.6 Logo of the Huron Institute, Collingwood, Ontario.

⁶² "One of Collingwood's necessities is an historical society, the organization of which has been talked about spasmodically for several years ... The time is now ripe." David Williams, *The Collingwood Bulletin*, 14 April 1904, cited in Garrad, www.wyandot.org/petun/rb27.htm, 10.

Its motto “Fuimus,” which in Latin means “We have been,” captured the Huron Institute’s focus on the early Huron inhabitants of the region. Indeed, the interests of the Huron Institute were also broader than most historical societies in Ontario. It had several collecting and research sections, including botanical, zoological, geological, historical, and civic improvement departments. David Williams, president of the organization, headed the historical department; like Andrew Hunter, he was a local newspaperman whose interests were directed at the native and settlement history of the area. Among its other aims, the establishment of a museum was the chief priority of the Huron Institute:

The collection of relics of the early Indians, the preparation and reading of papers of a historical archaeological nature, and the establishment of a museum: the latter probably the most important part of the work as through it the history of the past which is now buried will be brought before the public of the present day.⁶³

The history of the past was brought to life in the lower rooms of the 1904 Carnegie Public Library in Collingwood. The museum curator, C.E. Freer, viewed relics as “grand invigorators of memory.”⁶⁴ He communicated with Boyle about the native specimens, and catalogued and arranged them in cases like those of the Provincial museum.⁶⁵ By 1909 the museum, “the envy of museums in much larger places” had a collection of over 3,900 items, mostly donated: almost a third were Native materials. Very little (about thirty items) of the collection was actually pioneer relics, although separately classified coin, firearms, and archival materials collections had pioneer relevance. The remainder was biological and mineral specimens. Since all materials were exhibited, Institute reports of these years note the increasing demands on the curator to constantly re-organize the collections to accommodate new objects, re-arrange the exhibits, and label them.⁶⁶ Unfortunately, the later destruction by fire of the collections and records of the Institute left no further written or photographic evidence of these exhibits.

It was under the auspices of the local historical societies that Boyle envisioned a future for historical collections in the Province. As the only professional curator in the Province at the turn of the twentieth-century, and as a leading member of the OHS, Boyle advised local history museums to organize their artifacts as he did his scientific collections, as functional evidence of the evolution of civilization. Whereas archaeological material had a universal reference to the rise of civilization out of savagery, the historical material had a local reference to the supremacy carved by the British Empire out of the wildness of Ontario.

Boyle advised strongly against collecting curiosities, arguing that a museum must be above all an educational institution “devoted to the collection, arrangement, and preservation of works of nature, art and antiquity or to the exhibition of rare and instructive objects...”⁶⁷ In 1898 he addressed the annual meeting of the Niagara Historical Society with a lecture “History Taught by Museums.”⁶⁸ Noting that, “Account is now taken of what was once thought beneath the dignified notice of the historian,” he argued that this history of everyday life in the past should be “supplemented with objects” and that these objects had moral lessons to impart:

⁶³ *Collingwood Bulletin*, 23 June 1904, cited in Garrad, 3.

⁶⁴ OHS, Annual Report 1907, 43.

⁶⁵ Freer to Boyle, 1 June 1904, David Boyle Papers, SC1, ROMLA.

⁶⁶ Huron Institute, “Curator’s Report,” OHS, Annual Report 1906-10, in *Papers and Records*, 1909, 92-93.

⁶⁷ David Boyle, “A Museum, or a Musée?” *AARO* 1904, 101.

⁶⁸ David Boyle, “History Taught by Museums,” Niagara Historical Society Annual Report 4, (1898).

For local history purposes there is nothing superior to the local museum, provided that said museum is true to itself. It should not become a mere heterogeneous collection – a mass of bric-a-brac or a heap of curiosities. Every object should illustrate a point, enforce some statement or elucidate something obscure, and should be provided with a clear and copious label... The local museum should be the place to teach us all how much we now have to be thankful for besides giving us clear ideas as to the origin and developments of present day comforts, and it is the bounden duty of every well-wisher to his community to aid in building up such a collection as will be highly creditable to the people themselves.⁶⁹

As Boyle had advised, historical societies placed their objects in taxonomic and functional configurations, each one labelled to “illustrate, elucidate, and enforce” the historical society’s interpretation of the past. This exhibit structure verbally condensed the heroic text but visually expanded its substance. Comparing Hayden White’s analysis of historical narrative to museum exhibit structures reveals a similar structural pattern for romantic emplotment.⁷⁰ An ideographic (formist) mode of argument interprets individual historical units as self-contained, and correlates most often to a romantic mode, such as a heroic myth. Translated to the museum construction of narrative, the ideographic (also called systematic or taxonomic) mode of museum display stresses artifact singularity over historical context, categorizing objects into groups based on functional or visual similarity or extraordinary rarity.⁷¹ This style also addressed a practical need for managing the collections. Arranging items into cases defined by function allowed for permanent storage, long-term exhibition, and protection of relics in the major museum exhibit technology of the period, glass-fronted wood display cases. Exceptions to this rule were large items that could not be contained in cases, such as furniture, which was occasionally arranged in contextual groupings to resemble room settings.

This object-centred exhibit structure was supported by an adherence to object-lesson pedagogy, and the perceived vestigial qualities embodied in the relics of those who made or used them.⁷² For instance, the potency of military buttons of British garrisons in Upper Canada as synecoches to loyalist efforts was noted in the 1905 Annual Report of the OHS:

All that visibly remains of these once gallant battalions are these old battered and corroded pieces of stamped metal – relics insignificant in themselves, yet immensely suggestive of the great struggles in the political formation of this continent.⁷³

Despite the driving ideologies of these societies, their historical collections were dependent on donations of objects with little or no budget for purchases. It was Boyle’s concern, as it would be that of future museum advisors in the province, that these museums stay relevant to a subject in their collecting process, and avoid collecting curios, whose historical relevance was questionable.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 13.

⁷⁰ White, *The Content of the Form*. White shows how historical narrative is shaped by the historian’s ideology, the mode of explanation (argument) used, and the type of emplotment.

⁷¹ Various modes of display can be used, and it is understood that these arrangements impact on the identity of the object.

⁷² Derived from the Latin term for “remaining” the word “relic” is defined in *The Canadian Oxford Dictionary* as an “object interesting because of its age or association with the past,” a “surviving custom, practice, belief, thing, etc. from a past age,” a “memento or souvenir,” and that which has “survived destruction or wasting or use.” Artifact is defined as a product of human art and workmanship, *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998).

⁷³ R.W. Geary, OHS Annual Report 1905, 42.

However, assessing the relevancy of an old object to the past and present was not a scientific process; it depended much on the view of the past cogent at a certain time and place.

The OHS and the Promise of a Provincial Museum of History

Local museums also flourished because early attempts to establish province-wide history organizations failed. Mid-nineteenth century attempts to create a provincial historical society with a library, archives, and museum in Ontario, on par with the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, (founded in 1824), failed.⁷⁴ Talman, Killan and Teather sketch the short lives of the Historical Society of Upper Canada (1861–1869) and the United Canadian Association (1872–1880).⁷⁵ Ostensibly dedicated to fostering Canadian nationalism, these organizations centred on Ontario's past, addressing the need for an organization dedicated to preserve records, reminiscences and artifacts.⁷⁶ Unlike the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, and the Canadian Institute, these associations did not receive a government charter and funding for their activities. In the shadow of the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Institute they paled and eventually folded. Instead, a provincial historical society, the Ontario Pioneer Association, was formed in 1888, as a federation of existing local historical societies in the province. In 1891, the name was revised to the Ontario Pioneer Historical Association (OPHA), which revealed both its interests (pioneer) and its activities.

For years, leaders in the Ontario museum movement worked to establish a provincial historical museum. However, in spite of efforts by Ontario Pioneer Historical Society, and subsequently the OHS, and the Women's Canadian Historical Society (WCHS), and the success of the Canadian Historical Exhibition, a museum of provincial history was never created. The persons most capable of achieving this goal were David Boyle and the members of the WCHS. However, Boyle invested his curatorial interests in the past in Ontario archaeological collections and a museum for their preservation, while the WCHS efforts were sidelined by the executive of the OHS. This section looks at the planning, the exhibition, and the failure to realize the dream.

Planning for a Provincial Historical Museum

Henry Scadding's vision for historical museums in Ontario included the founding of a provincial historical museum that would be funded by the government. While he hoped that the Toronto municipal government would aid in the building and management of a museum for the York Pioneers collection, to illustrate "the past and pioneer life generally," he pictured a larger museum run by the provincial government and housed in the parliament buildings which would hold representative collections of all the historical societies in Ontario, to display fully the history of the province.⁷⁷

In 1898, Boyle and James Coyne, who had been elected president of the OPHA in 1897, devised an ambitious plan to reform the OPHA; their strategy included incorporating Scadding's vision for a provincial museum of history. They hoped to replicate the operations of the state-

⁷⁴ Reports of the meetings of the Quebec Literary and Historical Society were published in the *Canadian Journal*. The Society museum collections included Native artifacts and historical materials. Scadding notes visits to the Quebec Literary and Historical Society quarters in his diary. *Extracts from Rev. Henry Scadding's Diary, 1838-1844*, (Toronto: Canadiana House, n.d.).

⁷⁵ On these organizations, see J.J. Talman "Some Precursors of the Ontario Historical Society" in *Ontario History* Volume XL (1948):14-21; Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage* 4-15; and Teather, *The Royal Ontario Museum*, 209-212.

⁷⁶ On the goals of the Historical Society of Upper Canada see, *The Globe*, 15 November 1861.

⁷⁷ Scadding, "An Address to the Pioneer and Historical Society of York," 18 June 1891, 7.

sponsored historical societies in the United States, such as the Wisconsin Historical Society, which had a library, museum, and considerable government funding. They proposed to restructure the OPHA along these lines, anticipating a sizeable provincial government grant for their endeavour. With support from its members and the government for the plan, Boyle and Coyne reorganized the OPHA to create a stronger central provincial role for it, with a secretariat, and a museum of historical and archaeological material. The organization was renamed the OHS.⁷⁸

The Association will continue to act as heretofore to form a central head or organization for local pioneer and historical societies, but will also be expected to undertake on some systematic plan and original work in the collection, exhibition, preservation and publication of all kinds of historical material as well as the collection and preservation of archaeological remains.⁷⁹

Agreeing that the work of the OHS should “reach the masses” and both promote “domestic affections” and “national pride and our patriotic aspirations” the provincial government provided a grant of \$500. It also appointed David Boyle as paid secretary, at an annual salary of \$100.⁸⁰ Boyle assumed these responsibilities, in addition to his duties as curator of the Provincial Archaeological Museum.

During this time, the OPHA, and subsequently the OHS, enthusiastically promoted national pride and patriotic aspirations. The OHS was steeped in the faith of imperialism and social evolution, and sustained in this mindset by many of its members, who were spread across the province in affiliated local history societies. Examples of this thinking among OHS executive members are rife. Boyle wrote to the Ministry of Education in 1899 arguing that teachers should use the word “we” when referring to events in British history, “so better to make a direct association of Canada with the British Empire.”⁸¹ Revealing a nascent social Darwinism, he also later wrote Frank Oliver, the Minister of the Interior, warning him off immigrants from nations “incapable of civilization,” who were a drain on Canada’s progress as a civilized nation.⁸² Coyne saw Canada’s history as a road of progress, buttressed by the culture of the British Empire and Darwinian science. The ideals of imperialism matched with “systematized knowledge” supported both the appreciation of United Empire Loyalists, whom Coyne saw as models of principled sacrifice, and the study of archaeology and geology, which he regarded as the “creation” of the nineteenth century.⁸³ Although Boyle had promoted the idea of a provincial history museum in the new prospectus of the OHS, government funding was not forthcoming and he was neither willing nor able to carry out this project either as secretary to the OHS, or as part of his existing duties at the Provincial Museum.

Sarah Curzon and Mary FitzGibbon were asked by Canon Bull to form a women’s affiliate of the OPHA in 1895. Named the Women’s Canadian Historical Society (WCHS), its goals included the

⁷⁸ Killan, *Preserving Ontario’s Heritage*, relates the development of the OHS.

⁷⁹ James Coyne, “President’s Address,” OHS Annual Report 1898, 28.

⁸⁰ The Pioneer and Historical Association of the Province of Ontario, Hon. Dr. Ross, Minister of Education, “Report of Re-Organization Committee, 30 March 1898,” cited in Killan, *Preserving the Past*, 54.

⁸¹ Hughes to Boyle, 22 April 1898, David Boyle Papers, SC1, ROMLA.

⁸² He pointed out Poles and Sicilians as especially incompetent, and questioned if the investment necessary to make them worthy members of society, was “worth the candle?” Hindoos and Sikhs were deemed physically unsuited to Canadian climate, and therefore also undesirable. Boyle to Oliver, 24 April 1907, David Boyle Papers, SC1, ROMLA.

⁸³ James Coyne, “A Century of Achievement” a paper read before the Wentworth Historical Society, Hamilton, 14 February 1899, (Hamilton, Canada: W.T. Lancefield, 1899).

collection and preservation of Canadian historical records and relics and the building of Canadian loyalty and patriotism.

The Historical Exhibition: An Object Lesson

In 1899, the OHS sponsored the Canadian Historical Exhibition as a way of laying the groundwork for forming a provincial historical museum. This work began with the organizational failure of another national historical exhibition in celebration of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of John Cabot. Initiated by the Canadian Institute and supported by Boyle, the Minister of Education, and others, the Cabot exhibition was intended to open in 1897. The plan was to mount an exhibit with a chronological interpretation of Canada's past, beginning with objects connected to Native peoples, followed by evidence of European discoverers, and then a series of objects representing sequential periods. The exhibition would also feature Canadian natural history; however, this ambitious project failed to materialize.⁸⁴ But the idea of such an exhibit appealed to the OHS, which viewed a similar project as the initial and decisive step in developing its own museum. As resolved at the September 1898 meeting of the OHS:

That the OHS having among its objects that of forming a historical museum, and as there is now available for such purpose a considerable quantity of rare and valuable material, it is desirable that steps should at once be taken to place the various articles on exhibition.⁸⁵

The resulting 1899 Canadian Historical Exhibition provides a unique case study of the production of public history in a defined space and time. In an era of exhibitions, the Canadian Historical Exhibition was the only one dedicated specifically to showcase Ontario's history.

The exhibition is intended to be both attractive and instructive to illustrate the history of this province in particular, during the century now ending and to demonstrate the progress of our people along commercial, social and intellectual lines; the history of localities as well as the entire province, the advancement made in social and domestic comforts and in scientific and domestic economy.⁸⁶

Implementing the plan to demonstrate ideas of progress and prosperity with objects became an increasing challenge as the exhibit project proceeded. Between September 1898 and February 1899, the OHS's exhibition committee, with Mary FitzGibbon as secretary, sent out circulars describing the proposed exhibit and asking for loans of objects and documents. Requested artifacts were thematically and physically categorized: materials related to pre-contact Indians, fur traders, pioneers, transportation, military, professions, education, and so on, as well as maps, documents, illustrations and surveys. The organizers emphasized that "objects that are merely curious [sic] and without any educational value are not desired in connection with any section."⁸⁷ Boyle likely penned this reminder.

⁸⁴ See *The Globe*, 26 December 1895, OHS, "Cabotian Exposition Committee Record Book 1895-1899," OHS fonds, F1139-1, box MU 5419, AO.

⁸⁵ OHS Minutes, 2 September 1898, OHS fonds, F1139-2, MS 249 reel 1, AO. Killan, Beck and Kerr-Wilson refer briefly to the Canadian Historical Exhibition of 1899 in their studies, and Teather discusses it in much greater detail in *The Royal Ontario Museum: A Prehistory*.

⁸⁶ Circular, "Canadian Historical Exhibition Scrapbook," OHS fonds F1139-4, MU 5438, AO.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

While the response from individuals and other historical societies to loan materials was very positive, the OHS did little to further the exhibit project until the spring of 1899. As FitzGibbon explained in the secretary's report, lack of funds and the OHS's council concerns about liability for lost or damaged artifacts stalled the project, and until mid-February 1899, nothing but a resolution had been carried forth. Then the February 15, 1899, general meeting of the OHS featured Reuben Gold Thwaites, director of the influential Wisconsin State Historical Society, which was the model for the reorganized OHS. In his presentation, "The Study of Local History," he declared that a provincial historical society should have a historical and archaeological museum.⁸⁸ Perhaps this incentive and the resolution were what influenced the OHS to pass the exhibition torch to those who could perform the task: women.

Women already played an active role in the OHS. Presidents of local historical society affiliates were automatically ex-officio vice-presidents of the OHS. By 1900, women represented over one quarter of these affiliates. Although only 10 percent of elected OHS membership body was "ladies" at the time of the exhibition, their representation on OHS committees was much higher. Patriotic women such as Mrs. Fessenden, Mary FitzGibbon, Sara Calder, Janet Carnochan, Elizabeth Thompson, and Sara Mickle were industrious members of the monuments, flag and commemoration, and museum committees. Mrs. Fessenden promoted the notions of Empire and British Loyalty, and developed a successful movement to recognize "Empire Day" and to incorporate flags into every public school classroom.⁸⁹

Although the exhibition committee operated under the auspices of the OHS, the Canadian Historical Exhibition was fully the product of the WCHS.⁹⁰ Given free rein, FitzGibbon and her committees personified the WCHS motto, "Deeds Speak."⁹¹ In March, she issued a second circular, in which she requested the loan of objects that reflected a more domestic flavour than the listing in the initial circular. The committee had upgraded costume from a miscellaneous mention to a full section. It planned a "ladies department" for exhibiting fashion. It had added china, silver, fancy work, hand-weaving, and other "implements of domestic industry" to the list. In three months, fourteen working committees raised funds, secured exhibit space, borrowed, shipped, labelled, and installed hundreds of artifacts in Victoria College. A catalogue of more than one hundred and fifty pages, divided into exhibit components, listed each artifact and its donor. Special committees worked on public relations and advertising. FitzGibbon herself wrote detailed features on this exhibit for the *Canadian Home Journal*, stating that every Canadian with a "spark of patriotism" would want to see it.⁹²

⁸⁸ Unattributed newspaper Clipping, February 16 1899, OHS Scrap Album, OHS fonds F1139-4, box MU 5438, AO.

⁸⁹ The 1906 Annual Report of the OHS refers to Mrs. Fessenden as the "Mother of Empire Day," 13.

⁹⁰ As FitzGibbon stated in the catalogue, "Hearty thanks are tendered to the WCHS of Toronto, who worked so hard and devoted so much of their time to make the Exhibition not only a success but enabled it to be held at all..." *Catalogue of the Canadian Historical Exhibition*, (Toronto: Wm. Briggs, 1899), 9. The exhibition catalogue lists committee participants.

⁹¹ This motto was proposed to the WCHS at its formation, by Mary FitzGibbon. It was the motto stitched into a banner made by the women of York in 1813 for the 3rd Regiment York Militia. Mary FitzGibbon, "An Historic Banner," WCHS of Toronto, *Annual Report and Transaction*, No. 1.

⁹² "First Canadian Historical Exhibit Scrapbook," OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5438, AO.



3.7 Mary FitzGibbon beside boy and dog, with the Canadian Historical Exhibition Committee
Archives of Ontario

The proposed Cabot exhibit had been designed to unfold the history of Canada chronologically and metaphorically by displaying sequentially. Mary FitzGibbon promised a slight variation on this approach: “A noteworthy feature will be the classing of exhibits according to their character, significance, and period.”⁹³ As it turned out, the artifacts in the Canadian Historical exhibition were clustered either by collector, function, or producer/user. This classification was affected by a number of factors: the short timeline for the exhibit production, the sub-committee management of different areas, the exhibit loan form, the typological manner in which many loaning collectors and museums identified their collections, and the use of wood and glass cases as exhibit architecture.⁹⁴ The Niagara Historical Society articles were grouped together, as were documents and illustrations from collectors such as J. Ross Robertson and James Bain, chief librarian of Toronto. Rooms and halls were separated into units termed portraiture, education, military, silver, china, furniture, costume, documents and books, and miscellaneous. Attempts were made to organize the furniture into period rooms. Aboriginal items were isolated as were early Jesuit materials loaned by A.E. Jones, Society of Jesuits, St. Mary’s College, Montreal.

⁹³ Ibid, Clipping, *Montreal Gazette*, 10 July 1899.

⁹⁴ As FitzGibbon reported, “Owing to the short time before the date fixed for the Exhibition, the work thus outlined had later to be much modified, and several sections omitted.” *Catalogue of the Canadian Historical Exhibition*, (Toronto: Wm. Briggs, 1899), 4.

Mary FitzGibbon maintained that “Never in the history of the country has there been so unique a history by illustration as this Canadian Historical Exhibition... each article has its history attached and not for the beauty, size or value.... has it been accepted, but for the history that goes with it.”⁹⁵ But much of this history remained silent. Most objects were accompanied by only a brief label to identify the object and its donor. FitzGibbon apologized for this shortcoming. “Owing to the necessity of compiling the catalogue largely from entry forms, many of which were very incomplete,” she lamented, “... the intention of giving short paragraphs of history in connection with each exhibit had been found an impossible task.” However, she added, “this will be completed for the catalogue of a permanent museum.”⁹⁶

The exhibit catalogue reveals the capacity for multiple meanings and problems in identifying and categorizing the historical significance of objects. Laura Secord’s tea kettle, for instance, was classified and exhibited with furniture, although its label stated that its importance was tied to her hiding money in it during the American occupation of her house. Her butter bowl, however, was exhibited as a military object because it purportedly incurred a mark from an American sword when Secord refused to hand it over. Thus Secord’s butter bowl was exhibited in the same thematic space as items from Batoche, the Battle of Waterloo, the War of 1812, a piece of Napoleon’s coffin, a powder flask attributed to Bonny Prince Charlie, and locks of hair belonging to Brock, Macdonell, D’arcy Boulton, Chief Justice Robinson and Chief Justice Powell. Historical importance could be assigned to a person, event, or both. A fruit dish, for example, was included because it had belonged to U.S. president John Adams; likewise a sideboard, to the family of Americus Vesputius [sic]. The exhibit also featured everyday items from historic events, such as the butter bowl mentioned above. These artifacts also included a plate used during a meal given to W.L. Mackenzie when he escaped from Upper Canada, a table made from the tree cut down by John Galt who founded Guelph, and a soup tureen used during a dinner to celebrate the opening of the Welland Canal.

3.8 Canadian
Historical Exhibition
Portrait Gallery and
Entrance.
Archives of Ontario



⁹⁵ “First Canadian Historical Exhibit Scrapbook,” OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5438, OA.

⁹⁶ “Prefatory Note,” *Catalogue of the Canadian Historical Exhibition*.

For organizers, the main value of this exhibition was its function in imparting object lessons to the public. Coyne was very clear on this point:

No better object lesson could be furnished than this magnificent collection of articles of historical interest. What we gather slowly and laboriously from written and printed records is here apprehended in a moment with a glance of the eye. The concrete object teaches us without effort what columns of description would fail to communicate. What was vague and uncertain to the mind of the student is here crystallized into fixed and definite knowledge.⁹⁷



3.9 Furniture Gallery, Canadian Historical Exhibition. *Archives of Ontario*.

What was that “fixed and definite” knowledge? According to Coyne, the memorials and history of the settlement period offered lessons in heroism, and strengthened faith in the future.

In fact, the object lessons of the exhibit are somewhat more difficult to assess. The exhibit reflected the potluck nature of its organization. Each object performed independently as a vestige of its past. No introductory labels or overriding thematic narratives that typified history exhibits of a century later were evident. Artifacts had been selected largely on their availability, connections to persons and events considered important in Canadian history (mainly Ontario), or their rarity and age. By far the largest exhibit was military items and most of these were connected to the War of 1812, supporting Coyne’s idea that this exhibit was an object lesson in heroism.

While the exhibit messages were less overtly loyalist in narrative, the poster for this exhibition depicted symbolic components of loyalism, pioneer sacrifice, and the lost, but noble and loyal savage.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ James Coyne, President’s Address, OHS Annual Report 1899, 33-34.

⁹⁸ Centred is a large image of an 1812 British grenadier dress in victorious ease. He holds a musket over his right shoulder and contemplates the remains of a tomahawk in his left hand. In the upper left, a pioneer in late eighteenth-century United Empire Loyalist garb ploughs a furrow past a tree stump in front of a log cabin. In the upper right, the first legislature building of Upper Canada flies the British flag. Souvenir pins consisted of small silver shields bearing the Dominion arms, surmounted by the imperial crown and encircled by a wreath of



3.10 Poster,
Canadian
Historical
Exhibition,
*Archives of
Ontario*

The exhibit ran daily from June 14–July 1, 1899, and was open from ten in the morning to ten at night. The OHS rescheduled its annual meeting to coincide with the exhibit opening. James Coyne, president of the OHS, confirmed the goals of the exhibit in his welcoming speech:

For the purpose of interesting the people of Ontario in its history no better object lesson could be furnished than the historical exhibition this day opened under

auspices so distinguished ... The object directly aimed at it the establishment of a permanent historical museum.⁹⁹

By all accounts, the exhibit was an overwhelming success. The *Mail and Empire* editorial recognized the importance of this exhibit in establishing a permanent historical museum in Toronto. The piece emphasized the educational value of such a museum, noting that through the “realism of objects,” a “new vividness” could be applied to historical records. On the apparent increase of historical interest among the population, the paper added, that it was propelled by both a “new sense of nationality” and “confidence and hopefulness” for the future.¹⁰⁰

For reasons such as these, Mary FitzGibbon was unequivocal in her understanding that this exhibition would yield a permanent museum. A number of items from the exhibit were placed in the care of the WCHS, pending acquisition of a suitable museum building. In fact, her secretary’s report confidently goes on to give specifications for just such a museum:

Having accomplished what was undertaken, that is, to prove by practical demonstration, that there exists in Canada a large amount of historical material suitable for such an exhibition, and much that is available for the purpose of establishing a historical museum for the Province if a suitable building were erected, it will not be amiss to state here the requirements for such a building. A central site would be necessary with a plan which will admit of one wing being now erected of a fire-proof building, the remainder to be built as required or funds will permit. If such a building were put up, the nucleus of relics already possessed would soon gather a considerable increase. The lecture rooms could be rented to the literary and historical societies who now require a settled place of meeting, and the building might thus be made to some extent self-supporting. A city of the size and population of Toronto without a museum is an anomaly ... If such a building is not speedily provided; valuable historical treasures and property will be destroyed or lost beyond recall. It rests with the citizens of Toronto as well as Ontario at large, the Provincial Government, and the members of the Historical Societies to see that this reproach is soon removed.¹⁰¹

Moreover, she proposed a plan whereby local societies would actively collect “everything bearing in any way on the history of the locality” and subsequently print detailed catalogues of their collections’ historical merit.

On having been reorganized on a basis much wider and more popular than that of the Pioneer and Historical Association.... one of the principal aims of the society is the formation of an historical library and museum for the province and it consequently favours the local collection of manuscripts, pamphlets, books, maps, record and specimens of any likely to throw any light on any given district.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ James Coyne, President’s Address, OHS Annual Report 1899, 33.

¹⁰⁰ *Mail and Empire*, 15 June 1899.

¹⁰¹ She adds “The secretarians who have had the duty of preparing the Catalogue have discharged it to the best of their ability. They are sensible of the defects and incompleteness, but would ask the kind indulgence of the public, the charitable consideration of who, having never attempted the compilation of a catalogue of the kind, can have nut an indifferent conception of the difficulties amateurs at the work have to encounter.” “Secretary’s Report,” *Catalogue of the Canadian Exhibition*, 10.

¹⁰² “First Canadian Historical Exhibit Scrapbook,” OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5438, AO.

By comparing such catalogues, a provincial narrative and collection could be developed for the provincial museum of history. She argued that the collection would be protected for posterity even if the OHS did not survive, revealing the dual possibilities for this museum, and an over-confident view of the government's interests:

Incorporation provides that should the OHS go out of existence its collection will become the possession of the Provincial Department of Education and will enlarge the present collections of the provincial museum.¹⁰³

The optimistic spirit that pervaded this exhibition and its reports was premature. In the end, the OHS was never able to implement the museum project.

Failure to Found a Provincial Museum

In the end, the OHS failed to gain government sponsorship to form a provincial historical museum at this critical point. A number of factors influenced the government's decision. Kerr-Wilson points that the OHS executive rarely articulated either a complete or alternate vision of a provincial museum. Beyond Mary FitzGibbon, no one defined specific plans for the museum or its collection. In addition to an overall government malaise toward funding museums, not rectified until a change in government in 1905, the Province had an ambiguous view of the role of the OHS with the existing provincial museum, due largely to David Boyle, the OHS's link with the Provincial Museum. As of 1898, Boyle had two jobs, both funded by the government; he was curator of the provincial archaeological museum and secretary of the OHS. In 1899, in response to a request for funding for a permanent secretariat for the OHS, the government simply assigned space in the already overcrowded Provincial Museum, namely Boyle's office. He complained bitterly about the difficulties in carrying out his museum work in a space where OHS publications, correspondence, and collections (unidentified) had to be stored. Boyle's obvious preferences to attend to his archaeological museum work over OHS duties were made clear in his attempts to resign from his job as OHS secretary. He tried to do this in 1900, 1902, and finally succeeded in 1907.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the records show that Boyle showed slight enthusiasm toward adding historical items to the collections in the set up of the Provincial museum. Although Boyle had contributed to the revised constitution of the Ontario Historical Society in 1898, which proposed operating a provincial historical museum, it is clear that he envisioned a future for historical collections in the Province under the auspices of the local historical societies.

The Provincial Museum did have a small historical collection as is evident in the archival records.¹⁰⁵ Equally evident, however, is Boyle's disinterest in developing this component of the museum collections. His interests in archaeology and ethnology simply superseded his interest in historical relics, and he directed his often-limited time and resources to the former. He refused many donations and acquisitions of historical material offered to the Provincial Museum, accepting only those items that fitted into an existing collection of coins, or for political reasons, objects from influential donors.¹⁰⁶ Occasionally, he accepted odd items such as a plighting stone sent to Boyle from

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Coyne wrote to the Minister asking for an assistant for Boyle in his museum and archaeological work so he could attend better to the OHS concerns. Coyne to Harcourt, 19 November 1900, Department of Education, RG 2-42-0-3626, AO.

¹⁰⁵ Normal School register, ROMLA.

¹⁰⁶ These included Captain Van Koughnet's bequest of presentation silver and gold he had received during his career in the Royal Navy, and Ross Robertson's early printing press. Boyle to Pyne, June 24 1905, David Boyle

Scotland into the collections.¹⁰⁷ Whereas Boyle urged the purchase of archaeological collections, he often advised against the purchase of historical collections. H.A. Dean tried unsuccessfully to have the Provincial Museum purchase his collection of letters, documents, and memorabilia in 1900 (after their display at the Canadian Historical Exhibition) and again in 1904. In a letter, Charles C. James in 1904, president of the OHS, urged the Minister to procure this collection “as a very valuable addition to the Provincial Museum”; but he was circumvented by Boyle.¹⁰⁸ Although James had solicited Boyle’s advice in his letter to the Minister, Boyle sent the Minister a separate memo saying that Dean’s collection is “not only too dear, but contains many articles not desired by the Department which has no funds for such purchases.”¹⁰⁹ Other requests to the Minister from the OHS recommending acquisitions seem to have fallen short.¹¹⁰ Boyle rejected items from Chrysler’s Farm and other written offerings of historic artifacts appear without response.¹¹¹ In correspondence to the Minister, Boyle is ambivalent about accepting the extensive collection of pioneer domestic and agricultural materials and buildings, described as “illustrative of early life” in the Welland area, which was offered free to the Museum. While noting that examples of some of these materials are already represented in the museum, he impassively states, “there are others it would be advisable to have, should it be thought desirable by the Department to foster a museum of this kind.”¹¹² He notes as well that several objects, such as a loom, cider-press, and sleigh, are simply too large for accommodation in the Museum; however, at the same time he was trying to acquire a whale skeleton. He reiterates his position on historical relics and context: the buildings and contents have historical interest, but primarily only “from a local point.”¹¹³

The historical collections in the provincial museum diminished over time. The Normal School register from Boyle’s period shows that the small historical collections were eventually loaned out or deaccessioned.¹¹⁴ Today, Boyle’s archaeological and ethnological materials, which amounted to over thirty-eight thousand artifacts by his death, form the foundation of the collections in the Anthropology Department at the ROM. By comparison, only seven items of more than several hundred from the historical collections of Provincial Museum are extant in the collections of the Department of Western Art and Culture (formerly the Canadiana Department) at the ROM.¹¹⁵ In his final few years, Boyle effectively sacrificed OHS work under the pressure of his other commitments. He resigned fully from the Society in 1907, claiming too much work¹¹⁶ but also saying privately that

papers, SC1, ROMLA.

¹⁰⁷ *The Globe*, 4 February 1896, AARO, 1896.

¹⁰⁸ Dean to Harcourt, 2 March 1900, and 5 January 1904; James to Harcourt, 15 January 1904; Boyle to Harcourt, hand-written memo, n.d., Education Department Files, RG 2-42-0-3580, AO.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Boyle to Harcourt.

¹¹⁰ See for instance, Coyne to Harcourt, 13 May 1902, asking for money for the OHS to purchase a collection of “historical value” or else the government purchasing it outright. There is no record of this collection in the Museum, RG 2-42-0-3477, Department of Education Files, AO.

¹¹¹ Boyle to Jackson, 27 February 1900, Boyle Papers, SCI 1, ROMLA.

¹¹² Schroeder to Boyle, 8 January 1900, Boyle to Harcourt, 10 January 1900, Boyle Papers, SC, ROMLA; Boyle to Harcourt 15 February 1900, Education Department Files, RG 2-42-0-3605, AO.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ This register had only recently surfaced and is located in the ROM Archives. In particular a large historical collection from J.G. Spain of over three hundred items was eventually deaccessioned, with one item – a plate-remaining.

¹¹⁵ Interview, author with Carol Baum, 16 April 2004, ROM, Department of Western Art and Culture.

¹¹⁶ Killan Boyle, 205. Coyne states in the president’s address in the OHS Annual Report 1901, 50. He says of Boyle’s resignation, “His duties as provincial archaeologist have a first claim upon his time, and he has found it impossible with satisfaction to himself to perform the work of both offices.”

the OHS was “too much under the control of a pack of old women, male as well as female.”¹¹⁷ He suffered a debilitating stroke in 1909 and died in 1911.

Meanwhile, following the success of the Canadian Historical Exhibition, Mary FitzGibbon and the WCHS expected to continue to manage the establishment of a provincial museum, using the profits from the Canadian Historical Exhibition.¹¹⁸ However, the OHS refused to hand over the monies, keeping them in a dormant museum fund for more than thirty years. Year after year, the WCHS presented a deputation to the OHS council meeting asking for the funds to be turned over to the WCHS for the provision of a museum. Instead of meeting this request, the OHS executive alternately ignored it or argued that the funds would be imparted only when the WCHS had already established a museum. When questioned by Mary FitzGibbon in 1907 about the interest the funds were producing, Coyne brusquely suggested she could learn this if she read the OHS annual report.¹¹⁹ The WCHS redirected their energies to build a memorial hall commemorating those who died in the Boer War, canvassing for funds from the women of Toronto.

Col H.C. Rogers, president of the OHS from 1906 to 1907, stated in his 1907 outgoing presidential address that there was some misunderstanding of the purpose of the OHS. He argued that the organization’s original purpose (which he feared had been forgotten) was to co-coordinate and represent the affiliates. He said the OHS should collect history through its affiliates and not presume to write it. Nowhere does he mention a museum in his summary of the aims of the society. Instead, he outlined the society’s responsibility “to assist in preserving historic grounds, Forts, and Monuments” and to aid in erecting memorials to commemorate great events and great men.¹²⁰ The OHS committee to form a provincial history museum, of which Rogers had been a member, disappears from the records at this time. In 1907, it was replaced by a Site Preservation Committee. From then on, the OHS accordingly re-directed its heritage concerns to memorials and endangered historic sites. The inherent threat to Fort York posed by the proposed routing of the Toronto Street Railway galvanized the local societies and the OHS members into action after 1905, and was lead by Barlow Cumberland who became both president of the OHS in 1907, and chair of the Sites Preservation Committee.¹²¹

The next five years saw the OHS spearheading preservation movements for several endangered military sites in Ontario and Quebec.¹²² The OHS executive sustained an imperialist view of Ontario history, which reached its zenith at the 1910 annual meeting of the OHS. Outgoing President Barlow Cumberland’s stirring address left no doubt that Ontario’s history was a story of the “Heirlooms” of the British Empire.¹²³ Cumberland shaped Canadian history into a drama in which all heroic figures were posed as emissaries of the British Empire, including native peoples and early French Canadians.¹²⁴

The flames of this imperialist passion died soon after Cumberland’s retirement. Killan states that after 1911, the new OHS leaders were far less concerned with issues of loyalism and imperial unity. However, Beck argues that these nationalist passions had left a legacy in museums:

¹¹⁷ David Boyle to Jean Barr, 8 May 1908, David Boyle papers, SC1, ROMLA.

¹¹⁸ Granted, these profits were small, about \$307.00, but the WCHS saw the fund as their starting point.

¹¹⁹ OHS Minutes, 18 October 1906, OHS fonds, F 1139-2, MS 249 reel 1, AO.

¹²⁰ Rogers, “Presidential Address,” OHS, Annual Report 1907, 18-19.

¹²¹ Killan, “The First Old Fort York Preservation Movement, 1905-1909: An Episode in the History of the OHS,” *Ontario History*, LXIV, No. 3, (Sept. 1972), 162-80.

¹²² Killan, *Preserving Ontario’s Heritage*, 162-166.

¹²³ Barlow Cumberland, “The Heirlooms of the Empire,” *OHS Annual Report*, 1910, 33.

¹²⁴ The French Canadians were identified by Cumberland as having Norman blood and therefore kin to the British. Native loyalty of course was demonstrated through the American Revolution and the battles of the War of 1812.

This ideology sanctioned an existing activity – caused a spurt of museum activity not equaled until another form of nationalism caused a similar spurt in the 1960s. In the end institutions fostered by imperialism proved more durable than the ideology itself.¹²⁵

The idea of an OHS-operated provincial history museum also faded. Local historical societies continued to develop and form their own museums under the umbrella of the OHS. By 1912, twenty affiliates existed, of which fifteen had museums. One of these affiliates was new. Like the Huron Institute it had rooms in the local Carnegie library, and a desire to collect historical relics. But the members of the Waterloo Historical Society were rooted in quite a different heritage landscape; one sown by Anabaptist pacifists and continental Germans and Scots.

¹²⁵ Beck, 45.

Chapter 4: Identifying the Local Past: The Waterloo Historical Society

Introduction

While the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) lost interest in forming a provincial museum of history to centrally collect historical artifacts, it continued to serve as an umbrella organization for local historical societies to pursue this role in their own communities. This chapter focuses on one organization, the Waterloo Historical Society (WHS), its leaders and the methods they used to identify and preserve local heritage.¹ Although the WHS community was historically distinct² from that of other historical societies in the province, the society's modes of commemoration and preservation were the same.³ Through a case study, this chapter shows the extent of the activities that these young societies engaged in and the force of individual agency on their success. While marking sites and erecting memorials had support from the OHS and in some cases, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), these societies' small museums had little revenue or support from local councils. As the leader of the WHS would discover, it was easier to gather support and convince a national board of historians to memorialize a questionable site as having national historical significance, than it was to convince local authorities to provide a museum building. With the absence of a central figure such as David Boyle, the WHS museum work was modelled by the activities of other local historical societies and their leaders.

The WHS defined itself, held meetings, published papers, identified, marked and preserved sacred spaces and objects, and created a museum to preserve the historical documents and objects they collected. Under the vital leadership of its founder and president, W.H. Breithaupt, the WHS and its members formed the first county archives and museum, marked significant buildings and historical sites, and were the first local organization in Waterloo County to identify and mark heritage in situ through the erection of a memorial. The WHS also became the main producer and publisher of local history research through lectures and printed annual reports. Within seven years of its first official meeting in 1913, this organization had received accolades for its outstanding "active and energetic"

¹ The work of the WHS has been briefly reviewed in anniversary articles written by members of the association. Grace Schmidt, "Half a Century with the WHS," Waterloo Historical Society (WHS) Annual Report 1962, 12-16.

² Recent scholarly studies of Waterloo County and its communities have detailed and revised both the histories of the settlement era and subsequent urbanization periods that resulted in the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and present day Cambridge. On the history of Waterloo Township see Elizabeth Bloomfield, *Waterloo Township through Two Centuries* (Kitchener, Ontario: WHS, 1995). On Waterloo County see Geoffrey Hayes, *Waterloo County: An Illustrated History* (Kitchener, Ontario: WHS, 1997). On the history of Berlin/Kitchener see William Utley, *A History of Kitchener, Ontario* (Kitchener, Ontario: The Chronicle Press, 1937) John English and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Kitchener: an Illustrated History* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1983).

³ Geoffrey Hayes considers the role of W.H. Breithaupt, as one of several individuals seeking to legitimate and commemorate Pennsylvania-German Mennonites as primary symbols of the community's past. Geoffrey Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga: A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County's German Identity," *Ontario History* Vol.XCI:2, (Autumn 1999), 130-149.

work from Dr. James Coyne, a prestigious member of the historical community in Canada and past president of the OHS.⁴

Founding the WHS: Libraries, Historical Societies and the W.H. Breithaupt

Unlike the historical societies that developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in southern Ontario communities, the WHS was not rooted in a Loyalist milieu. The community had not been settled by United Empire Loyalists and held no battle grounds from the War of 1812. But it did hold reverence for its community founders, who formed a distinctive charter group. Beginning in 1800 and for the next quarter of a century, a religious community of ethnic German Mennonites emigrated overland from Pennsylvania to what is now Waterloo County. In 1816, a smaller group of lowland Scottish émigrés began to develop the area known as North Dumfries Township, which is in the southern part of the County and eventually included the old town of Galt. Large numbers of continental German immigrants of Catholic or Lutheran faith came to Waterloo County in the decades after 1830. Considerably fewer English and Irish immigrants also settled in the district.⁵

German ethnicity characterized Berlin, the seat of Waterloo County, at the time of the WHS's beginnings in 1912. Founded in 1806 by Pennsylvania-German Mennonites, the community expanded from a village to a town through the nineteenth century through waves of largely continental and ethnic German immigrants. By the beginning of the twentieth century, more than 75 percent of Berlin's population was of German descent.⁶

The year 1912 was an auspicious one for Berlin. The city marked not only its new status as a city, but also its economic success and the promise of a prosperous future. *Berlin: Celebration of Cityhood 1912*, a publication that commemorated Berlin's graduation to city status, credited the economic triumphs and general well-being of the community to its hard working "Anglo Saxon and Teutonic" settlers, emphasizing the outstanding German qualities of honesty, industry, and religious faith, and connection to the land.⁷

Mabel Dunham, Berlin's librarian and an ardent local historian, thought that in light of its achievement and promise, the city and county needed an official custodian of their history, and Dunham had a prominent local family legacy. She was the great-granddaughter of Waterloo County settlers Sam Bricker and Samuel Eby, and her family history added to her interest in Waterloo County settlement.⁸ She also was a promoter of children's literature, and later combined these interests in *The*

⁴ Coyne wrote to Breithaupt, 24 Jan 1920: "Your society has been doing excellent work in collecting and preserving in permanent form the local history of one of the most enterprising, progressive and interesting counties in the Province of Ontario. It is recognized as one of the most active and energetic of our historical societies." W.H. Breithaupt Correspondence. Breithaupt-Hewitson Collection, Special Collections, University of Waterloo Dana Porter Library, (hereafter Breithaupt Correspondence).

⁵ Waterloo Township and Waterloo County ethnicity and population growth are covered extensively by Bloomfield and Hayes, Waterloo County.

⁶ English and McLaughlin, Table 15, 246.

⁷ *Berlin: Celebration of Cityhood* (Berlin: The German Printing and Publishing Co., 1912). During this time the city, whose civic leaders maintained close ties with the Board of Trade, labelled itself "Busy Berlin;" in its promotional publications, with a population of 16,000 people employed in some 120 factories. Berlin's manufacturers publicized this theme of industrious excellence by flagging their goods with "Made in Berlin" labels as signs of quality.

⁸ Of her writing, a biographer states "One can tell from the loving way she paints the characters of *The Trail of the Conestoga* that they are based on fond family memories. The framework of memory is woven with historical research...It is fitting that one of pioneer ancestry should have been a pioneer in so many fields herself." Frances McIntosh, "Mabel Dunham (1881-1957): Librarian; Writer; Community Leader" in, *Women of*

Trail of the Conestoga, the first children's book chronicling the Pennsylvania-German settlement of Waterloo County.⁹ She suggested in a special report to the Berlin Library Board on March 14, 1912, "that an historical society for Berlin and the surrounding territory seemed to be a need."¹⁰

Dunham left no apparent reason for her proposal to initiate the founding of a local historical society through the public library board, however her move was likely inspired by her professional activities with the Ontario Library Association (OLA). Responding to a growing interest in gathering and preserving local history, the OLA recommended to its membership that public libraries adopt county historical societies, and provide them with lecture space and custodial services for collections.¹¹ The OLA executive officers included Janet Carnochan of the Niagara Historical Museum, Andrew Hunter of the Simcoe County Museum, and David Williams of the Collingwood Institute; each one of them also executive members of the OHS in 1912.¹² Through her membership with this association, Dunham would have learned that Carnegie Libraries in other Ontario communities, such as Collingwood, were providing space and resources for historical societies and their museums. Her appeal to the library board met with approval. Board members W.H. Breithaupt and H.W. Brown instructed her to initiate the process by contacting David Williams, president of the OHS.¹³

Six weeks later, at the Berlin library hall, Williams addressed a group of fifty people interested in forming a local historical society. He spoke about the scope of his local historical society and its museum, named the Collingwood Institute, and offered advice on matters such as membership, fees, government assistance, and affiliation with the OHS. He emphasized the importance of including a museum as an historical society activity and described some of the Huron Institute's exhibits and collection of more than four thousand artifacts, including aboriginal and natural history specimens, all housed in the Collingwood Carnegie Library. His presentation was a success; following it, the library board formed a committee to take the initial steps toward establishing the WHS.

W.H. Breithaupt and the WHS

On November 13, 1912, W.H. Breithaupt chaired the formative meeting of the WHS. He was nominated as president, but reluctantly declined, arguing that the position ought to be occupied by a native of Waterloo County, meaning most likely someone of descent from the charter Pennsylvania-German families.¹⁴ His protests were roundly suppressed; "It was pointed out to Mr. Breithaupt that no such person was available, and that it was vital to the Society that he should accept the position."¹⁵ Breithaupt was then elected; his presidential standing rooted in his real worth as a powerful

Waterloo County, ed. Ruth Russell, (Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario: Confederation of University Women, Kitchener-Waterloo, 2000), 73.

⁹ Mabel Dunham, *The Trail of the Conestoga*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1924).

¹⁰ Local History Collection, Waterloo Historical Society (WHS) Minutes 14, March 1912, Kitchener Public Library (KPL).

¹¹ The OLA: An Historical Sketch, 1900-1925, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1926), OLA.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ WHS Minutes, 14 March 1912, "Preliminary arrangements," KPL.

¹⁴ W.H. Breithaupt had arrived from the United States in 1861 at the age of four, but his pedigree included his maternal grandfather, Jacob Hailer, the first German immigrant to Berlin in 1832 and a respected local manufacturer.

¹⁵ WHS Minutes 13 November 1912, KPL.

constituent in the social, economic and political structures of the community, rather than in the symbolic capital connected to a charter family.

Breithaupt was part of a Berlin family dynasty begun by his father, Louis, a German immigrant to the United States who moved to his wife's native town of Berlin at the outset of the American Civil War. In Berlin, Louis developed a successful tannery business. Louis and his wife produced a large and prosperous family, whose members became Berlin's community leaders.¹⁶ By 1912, Walter Henry Breithaupt was a middle-aged civil engineer, a builder of bridges with a successful international portfolio. He lived and worked in New York City until returning to Berlin in 1897.¹⁷ He was a man with confidence, vision and was essentially an urban planner. He had management expertise in municipal building projects, was a director of local utility and transit companies (largely initiated and operated by his family until they were sold to the city), the designer of the local sewage system, and later, a city planner and advocate of a Grand River management scheme. Perhaps his professional direction was what focused his historical interests toward building monuments and museums and protecting built heritage. From the records, he seems to have been a man whose attitudes toward the past were motivated by a practical concern for identifying local history and heritage as a civic responsibility, rather than a nostalgic need for self-immersion in the past. Like other members of his family and of the library board, he was featured in the *Berlin: Celebration of Cityhood*, as one of the "Who's Who: Men and women making history in our city."¹⁸



4.1 W.H. Breithaupt
*Berlin, Celebration of
Cityhood, 1912.*

While Dunham remained in a supportive role, Breithaupt and his historical society colleagues such as the Reverend Theobald Spetz, a retired Catholic priest and head of St. Jerome's College, W.J. Motz, newspaper publisher, and Peter Fisher, principal of Courtland Avenue School,¹⁹ set out to assemble history through the WHS. They were joined within the decade by D.N. Panabaker, a

¹⁶ Breithaupt's father and nephew were mayors of Berlin/Kitchener, a provincial MP and provincial Lieutenant-Governor.

¹⁷ W.H. Breithaupt returned to Berlin from New York upon the accidental death of his younger brother Ezra at the family-owned Berlin Gas Works.

¹⁸ *Berlin: Celebration of Cityhood*, (no pagination).

¹⁹ Throughout the WHS publications, Peter Fisher's surname is spelled alternately Fischer and Fisher.

descendent of Pennsylvania-German settlers, who chronicled his family history and homestead in the publications and other activities of the WHS.

Before the first meeting of the WHS, which was on April 25, 1913, Breithaupt arranged affiliation for the organization with the OHS, and secured quarters in the Berlin Public Library. He published a prospectus for the society in the local newspaper that defined the society's historical focus, and its collecting interests. As in other historical societies in Ontario at this time, the topics and themes for investigation included Native people, and local settlement and development, pursued through the collection and preservation of documents and artifacts. He wrote:

The possession and occupation of the territory of Waterloo County by the Indians, its settlement by the white man extending over quite a period in the early part of the nineteenth century, and its subsequent progress and development, all have an interesting history. The compilation of such history in its details, and the preservation of all articles of historic interest are part of the work of a historical society, the formation of which for the County of Waterloo has for some time been under contemplation, and is now an established fact.

The name of the newly-formed society is the Waterloo Historical Society. Its objects are the collection and preservation of records of all kinds, such as more or less complete files of newspapers of the county, early publications of all kinds, manuscripts, family histories, old documents and so forth relating to the history of the county; also mementoes (sic) of the early settlers, old photographs and Indian objects of any sort, all to form a permanent collection. It is the ambition of the society to acquire at an early date, a substantial fireproof county building in which to preserve permanently all such records and general objects of historic interest.

Many documents and mementoes relating to the early history of the county, which could have been obtained some years ago have been dispersed or lost; many are still available, and such are particularly sought by the Historical Society. Authentic historical documents or objects relating to the history of Canada generally, will also be gladly received. The local histories of the various religious denominations or of churches are of great interest, as are the histories of schools and other institutions. Other directions of usefulness for an historical society will suggest themselves to earnest and resourceful members.²⁰

Breithaupt's constitution for the organization, published a year later in 1914, effectively covered the activities of the organization concerning local history: research, publication, and preservation through collecting and the provision of a museum. This constitution had neither the imperialist flavour of the historical societies in the Niagara region nor the genealogical prerequisites of the York Pioneers. It was also narrower in scope than that of the Collingwood Institute.

In fact, as Clarence Warner had done for constitution of the Lennox and Addington Historical Society in 1907, Breithaupt simply duplicated the constitution of the OHS drawn up by Boyle and Coyne in 1898, and then tailored it to the County of Waterloo.²¹

²⁰ WHS, Annual Report 1, 1913, 6-7.

²¹ The 1898 constitution of the OHS reads: "The society shall also engage in the collection, preservation, exhibition and publication of materials for the study of history, especially the history of Ontario and of Canada, to this end studying the archaeology of the Province, acquiring documents and manuscripts, obtaining narratives and records of the pioneers, conducting a library of historical reference, maintaining a gallery of historical portraiture and an ethnological and historical museum, publishing and otherwise diffusing information relative to the history of the Province and of the Dominion and in general encouraging and developing within this

The objects of the WHS shall be the collection, preservation, exhibition and publication of material pertaining to the history of the County of Waterloo in particular, and to Canadian Historical records generally; acquiring documents and manuscripts, and obtaining narratives and records of pioneers, maintaining a gallery of historical portraits and a historical museum, publishing and diffusing information relative to the history of the County, and in general encouraging and developing within this County the study of its history. The museum and general headquarters of the Society shall be in Berlin, the county town of Waterloo County.²²

He also applied the OHS membership and executive structure to his own organization. Presidents of each local affiliate of the OHS, such as Breithaupt, were appointed ex-officio vice-presidents to the OHS. He sought to emulate this system and have county-wide representation on the council of the WHS to ensure both a geographically broad representation of local history and a broad base of support for his organization. Local branches in each area of the county could elect a member to serve as area vice-president to the organization.²³ Breithaupt shrewdly drew up another category called ex-officio members so he could include all seated local politicians and county councillors.

In 1913, its first year, the resources available to this group included space in the Berlin library, the fraternity of the OHS and its twenty-three other affiliates, and a county grant amounting to \$250. Membership dues provided a further \$53.50, while the Provincial Government funded each historical society \$100 per annum to publish their papers. Members and invited guests contributed lectures and essays for the annual meeting and report, and artifacts for the collections.

Undoubtedly, the society's greatest asset was Breithaupt himself. He proved to be an influential and venerable leader, serving on the executive for thirty-one years until his death in 1944, constantly advocating for better museum facilities and for the protection of historic buildings at risk. He immediately lobbied the Carnegie Foundation (by travelling to their New York offices in 1915) to persuade them to reverse a decision declining additional funding for the Berlin Library; monies needed to build a fireproof space to house the historical society's collections.²⁴ He arranged for eminent guest speakers to address the annual meetings of the WHS, including past and current presidents of the OHS; James Coyne, Brigadier-General Ernest Cruikshank and Rowland Orr, Boyle's successor at the Provincial Museum, as well as Alexander Fraser, the Provincial Archivist, and A.F. Hunter, Secretary of the OHS. Breithaupt's presidential addresses each year were frequently accompanied by a prepared paper on some aspect of local history, and spanning the history of Waterloo County from Native peoples, through the Pennsylvania-German Mennonite settlement of the early 1800s, and the later continental German immigrations. He researched and wrote on topics of personal interest including early industries, municipal government, roads and railways, and published a number of essays in the journal of the OHS. He used his political connections to have the first

Province the study of history." The Lennox and Addington Historical Society constitution reads: "Its objects shall be to engage in the collection preservation, exhibition and publication of materials for the study of history, especially the history of the County of Lennox and Addington, to this end studying the archaeology of the County, acquiring documents and manuscripts, obtaining narratives and records of pioneers, conducting a library of historical reference, maintaining a gallery of historical portraiture, publishing and otherwise diffusing information relative to the history of the County and of the Dominion, and developing within this County the study of history."

²² "Constitution and By-Laws of the WHS," WHS Annual Report 2, 1914, 9.

²³ "It is the desire of the Executive that all local centers of the County be represented in the WHS by members, and as soon as possible by members on the Executive" WHS Annual Report 1, 1913, 6.

²⁴ Vertical File, "Kitchener Public Library, pre-1960." KPL. Breithaupt was Chairman of the Library Building Committee.

settlement in Waterloo County recognized as a site of national significance. Breithaupt's successes with the WHS, his leadership capabilities and social fluency propelled him to the leadership of the OHS in 1924. At that time, he resigned the presidency of the WHS, staying on the executive as chair of the museum committee until his death in 1944.

Identifying the Local Past: Provincial and Local Expertise

At the WHS's first official meeting on April 25, 1913, local history unfolded chronologically through the speaker's presentations. Dr. Alexander Fraser, the provincial archivist of Ontario, presented an illustrated lecture on the Huron Indians and the Jesuit Missions. Breithaupt gave a brief overview of the founding and settlement of the area by Pennsylvania-German and Scottish immigrants, referencing historical studies by Ezra Eby, Rev. A. B. Sherk, James Young, and Gottlieb Betschen.²⁵ While Breithaupt could say at the first annual meeting of the WHS that the history of the Pennsylvania-German settlement of the county was "well-known,"²⁶ this past had not yet been collected in material form. Nonetheless, over the next several decades individuals associated with the WHS and others expanded on these settlement narratives in their essays, papers and books and collected artifacts representing these and other aspects of the history of Waterloo County.

At the annual meeting on October 31, 1913, Breithaupt concentrated his opening presidential address on the German settlers who succeeded the Pennsylvania-Germans, "to whom the County so largely owes its trading and manufacturing development."²⁷ In his lecture, "The Importance of Local History," Reverend Spetz, argued the merit of pursuing local history as a building block in gaining a national perspective, because its detail provided "a clear knowledge of the people, their character and habits, their social and religious life and activity in various localities."²⁸ As had Dunham, Spetz viewed this activity as a sign of maturation in a community:

This fact became evident to many in more recent years and brought forth a host of investigations, especially in the older and more civilized communities where men turn with eager minds and keen attention to the study of single villages, towns or cities, or a single point in the social condition and circumstances of a community. The particulars, thus laboriously gathered by innumerable workers, furnish a wealth

²⁵ Histories of Waterloo County had been published in various forms since the mid-nineteenth century. The earliest was printed in 1866 in the Waterloo Chronicle newspaper by P.E.W. Moyer (lost but re-printed later) and according to Elizabeth Bloomfield, appears to have served as a basis for later narratives of the Pennsylvania-German Mennonite settlement of the area. Bloomfield, fn 20, p.423. By 1913 these accounts included the historical sketch printed in the 1881 *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Waterloo*, Ezra Eby's 1895 historical preface accompanying his genealogical compendium, *A Biographical history of Waterloo Township and other townships of the County: being a history of the early settlers and their descendants, mostly all of Pennsylvania Dutch origin*, as also much other unpublished historical information chiefly of a local character, (Berlin, Ont., 1895); George Tilt's 'Sketch of the early settlement of the Township of Waterloo and the Reverend A.B. Sherk's, "The Pennsylvania Germans of Waterloo County, Ontario" OHS Papers and Records 7, 1906, 98-109. James Young, "Reminiscences of the Early History of Galt and the Settlement of Dumfries, in the Province of Ontario" (Toronto: Hunter Rose, 1880), published by the OHS in its Papers and Records in 1906

²⁶ Breithaupt, WHS Annual Report 1, 1913, 11.

²⁷ WHS Annual Report 1, 1913, 11. Breithaupt was the grandson of one of the early German settlers he profiles, Jacob Hailer, who established a chair and spinning wheel workshop in Berlin in the 1830s.

²⁸ Ibid., 16.

of important material for the history of a community, country or nation, on which the writer of universal history must base his work if it is to be thorough and true to life.²⁹

Spetz argued that without deep inquiry into the character and conditions of the people and circumstances,” political history was “imperfect if not entirely false.” This deep inquiry was receptive to different sources of historical data:

For the historian, authentic facts, events and documents are of course of prime necessity. But he must also study and weigh carefully many other important data. Least of all is he allowed to brush aside as useless, traditions whether they be national, local or concerning single groups of people and families.³⁰

In his advocacy of the importance of studying tradition, Spetz acknowledged that few people locally had the leisure to pursue such an in-depth study, but he hoped that like Perth and Bruce counties, Waterloo “would soon find its historian.” In many ways, Breithaupt adopted this role, although for almost fourteen years Waterloo County had been home to a professional archaeologist and folklorist unsuccessfully seeking a post to conduct this work.

W.J. Wintemberg, a Waterloo County native, was an enthusiastic archaeologist and collector of Waterloo County archaeology and folklore. In 1912, at the age of thirty-six he was still seeking a career position in which he could conduct this work. He had written David Boyle in 1898 saying that he was “anxious to see this locality [Waterloo County] have a museum of its own, especially in connection with an historical society.”³¹ Because he received no obvious support for his historical and archaeological pursuits in Waterloo County at this date, he moved back and forth to Toronto to work with Boyle.³² Using Boyle’s archaeological publications as a guideline, he conducted archaeological surveys of Waterloo and Oxford Counties, which were published in Boyle’s 1899 and 1900 *Annual Archaeological Report for Ontario*.³³ Like Boyle, Wintemberg also conducted folklore research in addition to his archaeological interests, and by the turn of the century had essays published on German-Canadian folklore of Waterloo County.³⁴ As did Spetz, Wintemberg considered this research as important as the collection of historical records for better understanding the “beliefs and imaginings, hopes and fears of our own Aryan forefathers.”³⁵ He became one of Canada’s leading archaeologists and folklorists and continued to publish on Waterloo County traditions, with no formal relationship to the WHS.³⁶ With no museum in Waterloo County in 1900 to receive his archaeological

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Wintemberg to Boyle, 27 February 1898, Normal School Correspondence, Anthropology Department, ROM.

³² Boyle became Wintemberg’s mentor, and Wintemberg his favoured assistant. Killan considers Wintemberg as the “stellar performer” on Boyle’s team of amateur archaeologists. Boyle clearly agreed. In one of many letters requesting funding for a museum assistant he states “I know of only one man whom I would care to trust in this way ... I refer to Mr. W.J. Wintemberg of Washington, Ontario.” Boyle to H.M. Wilkinson, Ministry of Education, 20 May 1903, Education Department, RG 2-42-0-3570, OA. D. Boyle temporarily employed him on several of his projects, and had Wintemberg assist him in preparing and supervising the province’s archaeological exhibit at the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, for which they won a silver medal.³²

³³ W. J. Wintemberg, “Indian Village Sites in the Counties of Oxford and Waterloo,” AARO 1899, 83-92 and AARO 1900, 37-40.

³⁴ W.J. Wintemberg, “Items of German-Canadian Folk-lore,” *Journal of American Folklore* 12, 1899, 45-50. Boyle advocated for the study of Canadian folklore in his essay, “Philosophy of Folklore,” AARO 1901, 131.

³⁵ Wintemberg, Ibid.

³⁶ Wintemberg eventually found work at the Victoria Museum in Ottawa in 1912, a year after Boyle died, and the year the WHS was conceived. He was hired as an assistant to anthropologist Harlan I. Smith, and in time became one of Canada’s leading archaeologists and folklorists. Killan also sees Wintemberg’s joining up with

and historical collections, which exceeded six hundred pieces, Wintemberg gave the bulk of his collection to the neighbouring Oxford County Museum, and donated a few historical artifacts to the Provincial Museum.³⁷

The WHS: Beginning a Museum Collection

Fortunately, the museum void in Waterloo County that Wintemberg identified was filled by the WHS in 1913. Breithaupt and the WHS began the collection by targeting pioneer families as a potential source of historical materials. In the WHS's first year, they were able to persuade the descents of Pennsylvania-German settlers to the transfer of two key artifacts of Pennsylvania-German settlement, a Conestoga wagon and a side-saddle, to the society's museum.³⁸ Artifact value is commonly derived from special provenance, virtues of rarity, or connection to elemental narratives, and the Conestoga wagon, driven by Abraham Weber from Lancaster County Pennsylvania to Waterloo County in 1807, met all these requirements.³⁹ The wagon filled the frontispiece to the Society's first annual report.⁴⁰ It would remain the focal point of the museum's collection, becoming a touchstone for stories of heroism by the founding families of Pennsylvania-German Mennonites in their voyage from Pennsylvania to Waterloo County. Another founding family donated a side saddle belonging to Nancy Erb, who came in 1805 with her father John Erb, the founder of Preston.⁴¹

Smith, himself active in the nascent area of museology, as the beginning of the shift in Canadian anthropological research from Toronto to Ottawa, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 231.

³⁷ OHS Annual Report 1900, 35. Wintemberg also donated Waterloo County historical artifacts such as iron lamps and candlesticks to the Provincial Museum during Boyle's tenure. See AARO 1903, 7 "Accessions to the Museum."

³⁸ "We hope to enlist the active interest of the pioneers of the county and their descendents in the work of collecting and placing in the society's care for preservation records of all kinds, newspaper files, old documents, family histories, old photographs, Indian objects, etc." WHS Minutes, 31 Oct. 1913, KPL.

³⁹ These items were retrieved by Allan Huber, a colourful local politician and member of the WHS. On the symbolic value of objects in museums see Edward L. Hawes, "The Axe and the Pot: A Workshop on Hidden Messages in Museums" at www.alhfam.org/whitepapers/alhfam.axes.html.

⁴⁰ Donated by G. L. Musselman. Mrs. George Musselman is a descendent of Abraham Weber. 31 Oct 1913, Minutes read, "That the thanks of the society be tendered Mr. Allan Huber for his interest and assistance in securing the "Weber Waggon" from George Musselman of Conestogo."

⁴¹ Elizabeth Bloomfield says about the Mennonite history in Waterloo County, "Early accounts, oral traditions and imaginative re-enactments have been fused into a powerful mythology. Elements include the heroic but homespun qualities of the early Mennonite pioneers, the far inland location of their settlement; and their achievements in clearing the lands, establishing prosperous farms and creating social order. Virtuous Mennonites are seen in contrast to fraudulent speculators, profligate Indians or unreliable government officials," Bloomfield, Elizabeth, Linda Foster and Jane Forgay. *Waterloo Historical Society Bibliography*. (Guelph: Waterloo Regional Project),1991, 31.



4.2 Conestoga Wagon, prior to donation to WHS Museum
Berlin, Celebration of Cityhood, 1912

The WHS acquired two other important relics from this pilgrimage of the Pennsylvania-Germans. This journey, later recounted famously by Mabel Dunham in her 1924 book, *The Trail of the Conestoga*, featured a critical episode; the immigrants brought with them a gift of 20,000 silver dollars to disburse an unexpected and disputed mortgage for the Mennonite lands in Waterloo County. The gift was from relatives in Pennsylvania who purchased land shares to make the money available. In 1804, Samuel Bricker carried this money from Pennsylvania to Waterloo in a wagon provided by the Pennsylvanian shareholders. Mrs. Herman Hertel, great granddaughter of Samuel Bricker, presented one wheel of this same wagon to the WHS in 1913, providing physical evidence of this triumph of faith and group solidarity over deceit by an outsider.⁴² Two years later, a second wheel of the same wagon was donated.

Within two years, the collection of the society had expanded to include items consistent with the museums of other local history societies in the province: pioneer relics, local Native archaeological artifacts such as arrowheads, stone axes and pottery, and an assortment of natural history items including mounted specimens of lynx, wolf, raccoon, and birds.⁴³ The collection included ceremonial items such as the spade used by Duke of Connaught at a tree planting service in Victoria Park in May 1914. The bulk of the collections remained archival consisting of early newspapers, maps and deeds. Reflecting on the success of the nascent museum, the 1914 secretary-treasurer's report expressed the hope that:

The members of the Society will continue to take a deep interest in collecting material for our museum. Let this be anything pertaining to the early settlement of

⁴² The attribution of this artifact reads: "In this vehicle in May of the same year and in care of Samuel Bricker and David Erb, were brought from Pennsylvania to Canada, a distance of 500 miles, twenty thousand silver dollars to pay Richard Beasley for a free title to 60,000 acres known as the Beasley Tract and later as the German Company tract. Presented by Allen Huber on behalf of Mrs. Herman Hertel of Freeport, a great granddaughter of Samuel Bricker." WHS Minutes, 6 June 1913, KPL.

⁴³ WHS Minutes, 20 May 1914, KPL. Collections of this nature could be found in the Collingwood Institute, the Brant Historical Society Museum and the Peterborough Historical Society's Victoria Museum.

this county, e.g., Old documents, deeds, family histories, photographs, Indian objects, etc.⁴⁴

The WHS and the First World War: Collecting and Commemorating Local Patriotism

Although, the WHS was not founded to celebrate British imperialism, in 1914 it redirected its activities, as did other local historical societies, toward chronicling the contributions made by local men and women supporting the British cause in the war raging in Europe. Events in the city of Berlin would prove to make this collecting an important sign of loyalty to the British crown.

The OHS advised its affiliates to collect as many letters from the Front and as much other war material as possible, and to use registry offices for the safe-keeping of museum collections.⁴⁵ The Huron Institute embarked on compiling a war scrapbook “in which every name, every movement of a Collingwood soldier” was recorded.⁴⁶ The Institute also collected photographs of members of local battalions.⁴⁷ The Brant Historical Society reported in 1918 that it was compiling a complete biography of all Brant County soldiers who died in the war and had added several specimens of war material to its museum.⁴⁸

Breithaupt regarded this work as “collecting present-day history” for Waterloo County, and his historical society members ardently took up the cause.⁴⁹ He wrote, “To keep record of the County’s part in assisting the Mother Country in this time of severe trial is a current undertaking of this Society.”⁵⁰ Breithaupt’s resolve to record the war efforts of Waterloo County was intensified by his own battles on the home front. Anti-German sentiment placed the loyalty of Berlin citizens in doubt, and fuelled attacks by local battalion soldiers on German clubs and prominent families of German descent, including the Breithaupts. Through the WHS, Breithaupt sought to properly place on record “the patriotism evinced by the County of Waterloo in the present hour of need,”⁵¹ and later maintained this position at the 1915 annual meeting. “Notwithstanding descent of many of us from a country and people now hostile, we refuse to stand second, in loyalty and sacrifice, to any part of the British Dominions.”⁵²

Breithaupt put out requests for military objects, asking A.R. Goldie of Galt for standard shells to commemorate the European War in “our county historical museum.”⁵³ Between 1915 and 1919, WHS Annual Reports included lists of local military contingents and their location in Europe, an honour roll of the dead, the size of contributions from local aid organizations, and the progress of military hospitals. The 1918 WHS annual meeting took place November 29, two weeks after the armistice.⁵⁴ As discussed at the OHS annual general meeting, the WHS efforts for the following year would concentrate on collecting all data:

⁴⁴ WHS Minutes, 13 Nov. 1914, KPL.

⁴⁵ OHS Minutes, 13 November 1915.

⁴⁶ OHS Annual Report 1916, 47.

⁴⁷ OHS Annual Report 1917, 42.

⁴⁸ OHS Annual Report 1918, 37.

⁴⁹ This is the term Breithaupt uses; WHS Annual Report 4, 1916, 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Breithaupt was comparing the loyalist efforts of Waterloo County to those commemorated at the Battle of Lundy’s Lane Memorial in this comment. WHS Annual Report 1914, 16.

⁵² WHS Annual Report 1915, 7.

⁵³ W.H. Breithaupt to A.R. Goldie, 22 November 1915. Breithaupt Correspondence

⁵⁴ The regular October AGM was postponed by a ban against public meetings due to the Spanish influenza.

Pertaining to the relation of this County to the Great War ...so that the share in the struggle of the men and women of the County may be placed on record and the memory of the heroes who fell in the conflict may be kept green in the annals of the County.⁵⁵

By 1919 Mabel Dunham and other library staff had collected and card-indexed biographical data and photos on more than three thousand of County's enlisted men. This index was kept in a "handsome cabinet" on the main floor of the library.⁵⁶ The end of the war allowed the society to refocus the scope of its work.

Marking the Past: Memorials and Plaques

In the period after the First World War, the WHS also engaged in marking historical places and structures. Like the museum collections these efforts focussed on the settlement period of Waterloo County, establishing a Pennsylvania-German precedent for the unfolding of history in the area. Geoffrey Hayes interprets Breithaupt's historical activities during wartime, and his later involvement in erecting a monument to the first settlers in the area, as strategic moves to neutralize Waterloo County's continental German legacy and promote instead the pastoral heritage of the Pennsylvania-German Mennonites.⁵⁷ But, more than anyone else in the WHS, it was Breithaupt who advanced the historical and cultural contributions of continental Germans in Waterloo County.⁵⁸ His efforts to mark the county's first Pennsylvania-German settlement with a monument must be viewed in the context of other heritage organizations at this time. The OHS and its affiliates provided a framework for commemorative activities for Breithaupt and the WHS, while the stipulations of the HSMBC shaped the interpretation of this site. The twists in fortune in Breithaupt's success in having the HSMBC grant an historical plaque for the Waterloo County Pioneer Memorial Tower, illustrate the confluence of philosophy and practice by heritage organizations at this time, with the effect of personal influence and the resultant shaping of historical narrative for commemorative purpose. The contrast between Breithaupt's success in this venture and his frustrations gaining support for the historical society museum underscore the personal effect in marking the past, as it does the lack of government support for local museum projects, as opposed to historic sites during this period in Ontario.

Consecrating a Heritage Place: Breithaupt and the Waterloo County Pioneer Memorial Tower

The placing of markers and building memorials had been embraced by the OHS and its members at both the affiliate and provincial level as worthy projects and presentations of plaques, sod-turning ceremonies and monument unveilings were highlights of the OHS annual meetings throughout the first half of the century. Each year, an affiliate had the opportunity to feature local heritage at the OHS annual conference, since the OHS rotated its location of annual meetings through the communities of its affiliates. Usually a minimum of one day was set aside for delegates to tour a local museum, visit local sites of historical significance and attend ceremonies designating historical places.

⁵⁵ WHS Minutes, 29 November 1918, KPL.

⁵⁶ Vertical file, "Kitchener Public Library, pre-1960," KPL.

⁵⁷ Geoffrey Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga: A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County's German Identity," *Ontario History* Vol. XCI: 2, (Autumn 1999), 130-149.

⁵⁸ Breithaupt launched a failed campaign to oppose the renaming of Berlin, since the name was in his words "venerable.," *Kitchener News Record*, 26 February 1916.

After 1905, the OHS replaced the museums committee with a monuments committee, which began to make recommendations on the placement of memorials of provincial and national significance and received information from local societies on their own monument activities. Over the next two decades, this committee grew to be the largest and most active in the organization. During this time, historic places and spaces were generally commemorated rather than preserved, and least of all, reconstructed. The exception was some military buildings from the War of 1812, and a few other structures such as the Battlefield house or Scadding's cabin. The placement of a memorial as a means of recognizing historical importance was a feasible and fitting activity for volunteer groups with relatively few resources. In turn, these monuments and plaques provided a locus for other historical commemorative acts, such as the centenary celebrations of the battle of Lundy's Lane in 1914 held at the Battle of Lundy's Lane Memorial. Breithaupt described this auspicious event at length to the members of the WHS in his presidential address that year.⁵⁹

At the national level, the National Landmarks Association designated sites across Canada considered of national historical significance. In 1919, the federal government's new Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada subsumed this volunteer association.⁶⁰ Brigadier-General E.A. Cruikshank and Dr. James Coyne, who had served on the National Landmarks Association and were leading members of the OHS, were appointed as Ontario representatives to the HSMBC at its inception. They worked with OHS members to prepare a list of historic spots in Ontario worthy of a national marker.⁶¹ Coyne, who became president of the OHS in 1920, shared Cruikshank's views that designated sites should first and foremost serve as symbolic references for the present and future.⁶²

Canada, even today, can only draw the full depth of inspiration for her future from the glories of the past. We do need the exalting touch of every landmark that has a living message, and that we keep either in substance or souvenir; lest finding the whole world of riches, we lose our own soul.⁶³

Charged to oversee selection of sites of merit in central and eastern Ontario, Cruikshank favoured those with United Empire Loyalist associations, while Coyne, whose regional focus was southwestern Ontario, promoted his interests in sites connected with Aboriginal settlement or with French exploration.⁶⁴

In 1919, when the HSMBC invited Breithaupt to recommend local sites, he proposed the first farm in Waterloo County, which had been settled in 1800 by Samuel Betzner, a Pennsylvania-German Mennonite immigrant. Descendants of Betzner, and of Betzner's son-in-law Joseph Schoerg who settled nearby, were interested in purchasing an acre of this farmstead and commemorating the settlement with an impressive memorial. Other descendants of early Pennsylvania-German settlers, including Panabaker, supported their cause. Breithaupt saw the marking of this site as a timely opportunity to establish a recognized presence for Waterloo County within a national framework of

⁵⁹ WHS Annual Report 1914, 14. The ceremony featured an international delegation of Canadian and American veteran associations, historical societies, Six Nations Chiefs and politicians who marched with bands and banners from the local armoury to the monument and grave site. Commemorative and patriotic addresses were delivered and interspersed with songs and recitations. Displayed in a nearby tent were relics of the battle.

⁶⁰ On this history of this commission, see C. James Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

⁶¹ OHS Minutes, 6 July 1922, F1139-2, MS 249 reel 1, AO.

⁶² Taylor 40-42, discusses the philosophies of Coyne and Cruikshank.

⁶³ Wilfred Laurier Papers, "Address of the Historical Landmarks Association of Canada to Wilfred Laurier," cited in Beck, 31.

⁶⁴ Taylor, *Ibid.*

Canadian history. It would bring attention to his community's unique legacy and to the work of his society. With planning, the designation might be arranged to coincide with an OHS function in Kitchener.

In 1920, he wrote to the Commission to arrange a designation and funding for a memorial. To his surprise, the response was negative: the site was not considered of such national significance to warrant the expense of a plaque, much less a memorial structure, for which the HSMBC had no funding. The conviction of this verdict was somewhat more ambiguous than its communication. At this time, the HSMBC members could not agree amongst themselves on a definition of national historical significance. This indecision was protracted by their infrequent meetings and a minimal budget forced them to winnow applicants. Waffling under fears of setting a precedent that they could not fulfill because of their limited resources, the board decided as a general policy to refuse all requests for designations for first settlements, on the assumption that they were of local significance only.⁶⁵

Breithaupt was unrelenting in his pursuit of having this memorial installed and used all the resources available to him to do so. He responded immediately to the board's objection, suggesting that the site was actually the first settlement in the interior of Upper Canada and the largest settlement of Mennonites "who in their unobtrusive way, have borne a considerable part in the settlement and development of Canada."⁶⁶ He wooed Coyne by making him an honorary member of the WHS in the fall of 1920, and took him to see the pioneer memorial site the next summer. Coyne wrote to the board in the fall of 1921, supporting Breithaupt's application, and suggesting that the board revise its policy regarding first settlements so that certain settlements, such as the Betzner-Schoerg site, could be interpreted within a national framework of places of significant immigration movements to Canada.⁶⁷ Breithaupt also withdrew his request to have the Board fund a memorial structure, and asked simply that they provide an official designation and a plaque.

In August 1922, he learned that the board had denied his appeal.⁶⁸ The HSMBC maintained its position that the site lacked national significance and did not warrant a plaque. Undeterred, Breithaupt redoubled his efforts to have this decision reversed. His strategy was twofold: make a convincing case for the site's national historical significance and solicit more people in positions of power to support his argument. Funding for the memorial structure would have to be raised locally. At its February 20, 1922, meeting the WHS struck an independent committee to pursue the monument project and this seems to be the genesis of the organization called the Waterloo County Pioneers' Memorial Association (WCPMA).⁶⁹ The WCPMA was headed by D.N. Panabaker, the WHS vice-president and mayor of Hespeler, while Breithaupt served as honorary president. Breithaupt pursued a government designation, while Panabaker helped solicit subscriptions from other descendents of charter families to fund the building of the memorial.

⁶⁵ F.H.H. Williamson, NHSMB to W.H. Breithaupt, 13 Sept. 1920, "WHB Letters received," W.H. Breithaupt Correspondence, outlining that designated sites for markers must be of national importance.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Breithaupt to Williamson, 21 Sept. 1920. He added that the site had an aesthetic appeal "the site for such a monument on a bold bluff overlooking a far stretch of the valley of the beautiful Grand River is particularly fine."

⁶⁷ Coyne to Harkin, 7 November 1921, RG 84, Vol. 1354, File HS-7-22, Vol.1, (1920-1925), pt.2. National Archives of Canada, (NAC).

⁶⁸ J.B. Harkin commissioner of Canadian National Parks, 3 August 1922 to Breithaupt restates that Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada sees the site as of local rather than national historical significance, W.H. Breithaupt Correspondence, "WHB Letters received," University of Waterloo Porter Library.

⁶⁹ The records show a committee in place at this time, although the Waterloo County Pioneers' Memorial Association was not formally organized until 1923, when it began negotiating for the land for the memorial.

Breithaupt carefully prepared his defence for having the site recognized as nationally important. He emphasized two features connected to the site that would appeal to the HSMBC's logic of national historical significance: the primacy of the settlement to inland development in Ontario, and the identification of Mennonites as United Empire Loyalists. Drawing on the emotional remnants of United Empire loyalism alive in individuals such as Cruikshank, he expanded on the notion that the Pennsylvania German Mennonites had emigrated to Canada expressly to live under the British flag and its tenets. In September 1922 he presented his situation and argument in an appeal to Prime Minister Mackenzie King, (a Kitchener native and old friend of the Breithaupt family), asking for his assistance in having the Board "recognize the merit" of the proposal.⁷⁰ Even with this avenue of influence seeming ineffective, Breithaupt continued his campaign in 1923.⁷¹ Locally, he wrote to the Warden and Council of Waterloo County telling them of the WHS movement to erect a suitable memorial as a prelude to ask for funds. He said the memorial, would "commemorate the earliest larger interior settlement in Upper Canada by a body of settlers who throughout the history of Canada have born an important and widely successful part."⁷²

The WCPMA secured the purchase of the "memorial acre" on the Betzner homestead later in the year, and Breithaupt repeated his case for having the site recognized in a paper published in the 1923 WHS annual report.⁷³

Coyne continued to support Breithaupt's application to the Commission, although he considered Breithaupt "over sanguine" in expecting a designation in time for the OHS annual meeting scheduled for late June 1924.⁷⁴ For the first time, this conference was to be held in Kitchener, and the WHS and local heritage features would be centre stage. With this meeting fast approaching and board approval still unattained, Breithaupt met with his liberal Member of Parliament (MP) W.D. Euler, in early May of 1924 in a last-ditch effort to get his assistance in influencing the HSMBC due to meet in early June. Euler was a former mayor of Berlin and co-owned the local daily paper *The Daily Telegraph* with W.J. Motz, a member of the council of the WHS. He had also been a member of the WHS in its founding year, and as the local MP was an ex-officio member.⁷⁵ Euler immediately referred the matter to the Acting Deputy Minister of the Interior to whom J.B. Harkin, head of the Commission reported. At the next board meeting on June 4, the HSMBC reversed its decision, barely in time for the OHS annual meeting.

Having considered the application of the WHS and correspondence with it, the Board is now prepared to offer a tablet for the monument which they propose to erect, provided the scheme as described in Mr. W.H. Breithaupt's letter of May 5, 1924 to Mr. W.D. Euler, be carried out to the satisfaction of the Chairman.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Breithaupt to Right Honourable W.L. Mackenzie King, 30 September 1923. National Archives of Canada, RG 84, Volume 1354, file HS-9-22, vol. 1, (1920-25), pt. 2.

⁷¹ In response to the Prime Minister's subsequent inquiries, A.A. Pinard, the HSMBC secretary, was ambiguous; he wrote back that the board was being reorganized, that the standard "tablet" was still in design, and that the board had considered Breithaupt's application at two previous meetings. Pinard to MacKenzie King, 24 October 1922, National Archives of Canada, RG 84, Volume 1354, file HS-9-22, vol 1, (1920-25), pt. 2.

⁷² W.H. Breithaupt to Warden and Council of Waterloo, 14 June 1923, W.H. Breithaupt Correspondence.

⁷³ WHS Annual Report, 1923, 17.

⁷⁴ Coyne to Harkin, 25 January 1924, RG 84, Volume 1354, File HS-9-22, Vol. 1, (1920-25), pt.2. NAC

⁷⁵ Euler and Breithaupt had shared negative views on the changing of the city's name from Berlin to Kitchener during the war.

⁷⁶ J.B. Harkin to Roy Gibson, 9 June 1924, , RG 84, Volume 1354, File HS-9-22, Vol. 1, (1920-25), pt. 2. National Archives of Canada.

The chairman in question was Brigadier-General E. A. Cruikshank. Both he and Coyne were planning to attend the OHS annual meeting in Kitchener and in their capacity as members of the HSMBC would perform the site designation. Breithaupt's diligence was rewarded, just.

This HSMBC policy reversal was singular; the board continued to refuse other communities seeking plaques for founding settlements (and to this day paradoxically cites this case as evidence of its maintenance of this long-term policy).⁷⁷ It led, as Breithaupt had planned, to a ceremony at the Schoerg-Betzner "memorial acre" site on June 24, 1924. All the OHS delegates were present plus local officials, descendants of the Schoerg-Betzner families, some of the latter in period costume, and local and national newspaper reporters. A short distance away from the gravestones of Schoerg and other settlers, Rowland B. Orr, president of the OHS, and Brig-General Cruikshank, symbolically turned the sod for another memorial to Schoerg and his fellow pioneers using the spade made for the Duke of Connaught's visit to Berlin in May 1914. The speakers delivered tributes to the ideas and activities of both the ancestor pioneers and their commemorating descendants. The centrality of moral purpose to these activities is reflected in their oratories to the living and dead.

True to form, Cruikshank's speech identified the site and memorial as an important symbol of the pioneer values that had served as the foundation of the successful development of Canada. Of these settlers, he declared, "courage they certainly had and the staunch qualities of energy, undaunted industry, determination, patience and sobriety, which lay such sure foundations for social progress and national prosperity."⁷⁸

For bringing these virtues into the fore, Cruikshank applauded Breithaupt and his associates: Sincere congratulations to Mr. W.H. Breithaupt and his worthy colleagues... on their notable success in the discovery, publication, and preservation of so much valuable historical material and the public spirit, energy and perseverance they have so finely displayed in the acquisition of this noble site and in making plans for the due commemoration of the labours and virtues of the Pioneers of this good County by an appropriate monument.⁷⁹

Panabaker spoke on the memorial's social purpose as a shrine to convey ancestral values of manliness and stability and to protect the community from degeneration:

The presence in the community of a memorial such as we aim to provide, we believe will foster a sentiment of reverence for the great and good men of our ancestry, which is perhaps, the best safeguard against degeneration which any country can possess... Our most active imagination is enkindled when we permit ourselves to reflect on the wonderful inspiration to purposeful endeavour on the part of those generations who will succeed us which will be the undoubted result of our present determination to show proper respect to the memory of our fore fathers whose traits of genuine manliness and inestimable stability of character we perhaps too dimly reflect in our own day and generation... Anything less than such monument established by this generation to which it is our privilege to belong would reflect discredit to ourselves and unworthiness which we should never outlive and which would indeed descend upon our children.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Ironically, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada website at this time (2004) uses an extract of a June 30, 1923 letter to Breithaupt refusing his application, as the example of the continuation of their current, long-term policy not to memorialize origins of settlements. See www.pc.gc.ca/clmhc-hsmbc/crit/crit5_E.asp. Accessed 3 March 2005.

⁷⁸ E.A. Cruikshank, "An Address on Turning the First Sod of the Pioneer Monument," *OHS Papers and Records* XXII, 89-91.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 89.

⁸⁰ D.N. Panabaker, "Address of the President, Waterloo County Pioneers' Memorial Association, Turning—the-Sod Exercises," *OHS Papers and Records*, XXII, 182-185.

The local and national newspapers that covered the sod-turning ceremony applauded this saintly work. Motz's *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* carried an editorial on the civic faith of historical societies in Ontario in preserving and commemorating the past:

It is the privilege as well as the duty of historical societies to keep alive such traditions and preserve for future generations a record of noble achievement... The preservation of historic homes and other objects, the commemoration of early happenings, will help to keep fresh incidents that are of national value.⁸¹

Breithaupt's conference presentation, "The First Settler's Farm Site in the Interior of Ontario" underlined again the significance of the site just honoured. His paper, "The Settlement of Waterloo County," illustrated by a photograph of the Conestoga wagon in the WHS collection, was published alongside Cruikshank's and Panabaker's presentations in the OHS' *Papers and Records* the following year.⁸²

Pennsylvania-German Mennonite settlement in Waterloo County was now officially established as a primary act of British loyalism with consequences of national importance, an idea Mabel Dunham reinforced in *The Trail of the Conestoga*. Two years later, with the fieldstone memorial finally complete, a ceremony that almost rivalled the Lundy's Lane centenary was held at the "memorial acre."⁸³ Here, keynote speaker A.G. Seyfert of Lancaster, Pennsylvania confirmed in his speech "What Mean These Stones" that this memorial would convey to unborn generations, a powerful narrative of pioneer heroism. Once again, the image of a Conestoga wagon, in the form of a large weather vane surmounting the memorial, held a primary position as it had in the first WHS Annual Report.

The 1924 OHS annual conference brought wider recognition to Breithaupt. His nephew, L.O. Breithaupt, mayor of Kitchener, was the local dignitary who welcomed the delegates to his "hard-working and thrifty community."⁸⁴ W.H. Breithaupt gave the OHS delegates a tour of the society's museum as another highlight of his society's activities. Having shown the moral worth of both the local past and present, Breithaupt was subsequently elected president of the OHS at its 1924 annual business meeting.

WHS: Identifying Built Heritage in Waterloo County

Following his election, Breithaupt resigned the presidency of the WHS. Having secured the designation for the Pioneer Memorial, he turned his efforts toward marking historic buildings to identify their historical significance, and on managing the WHS museum, in addition to researching and publishing the WHS annual reports.

In 1925, Breithaupt began to name buildings and sites of local significance and in 1928, formed a committee of the WHS to carry out this work.⁸⁵ The committee selected churches, schools and mills in various parts the County and affixed "tablets" to convey their historical meaning. Filiopietism supported Breithaupt in this work; descendents of those associated with these structures frequently initiated or participated in its designation. For instance, Anson Groh "on whose instigation the tablet was placed on an early meeting house and who generously contributed toward its cost" was the grandson of John Groh, trustee of the "first general meeting house, school and burial ground in

⁸¹ Kitchener Daily Record, 25 June 1924.

⁸² W.H. Breithaupt, "The Settlement of Waterloo County," OHS *Papers and Records*, XXII, 14-17.

⁸³ See Geoffrey Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga: A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County's German Identity," for a full description of this ceremony.

⁸⁴ "Historical Society Meets at Kitchener" *Guelph Evening Mercury* 26 June 1924.

⁸⁵ WHS Minutes, 8 May 1928, KPL.

this vicinity." Groh was assisted by descendents of two other trustees, Samuel Bechtel and Abraham Witmer.⁸⁶

The identification and designation of local built and material heritage increased in the following decades, and several annual reports either detailed or illustrated early buildings in the County, including the Joseph Schneider House, the oldest extant house in Kitchener. But Breithaupt's efforts to protect buildings from demolition were frustrated by the limited capabilities of the WHS and the lack of alternative agencies to conduct this work. In his 1931 museum committee report, Breithaupt noted the threat posed to the oldest extant building in Waterloo County:

The oldest building in Waterloo County is a stately log house at Doon, built by Christian Schneider, great-grandfather of E.W.B. Snider, in 1807 ... the present owner is considering taking it down. It would be a great pity to see this fine, historic old house taken down, and I trust it may be possible to avert this.⁸⁷

Breithaupt was not able to save this house, which was demolished three years later, neither could he turn to any other local heritage organization to protect the structure, since none existed. The provincial and federal authorities did not offer protection for domestic buildings of local interest.

Means and Methods for Preserving the Past

In addition to these other roles, Breithaupt was responsible for the society's museum, serving as head of the museum committee and issuing museum updates with the annual reports. He looked to other societies for direction in this work. He had the assistance of secretary-treasurer Peter Fisher, who eventually took over Breithaupt's role in the early 1940s. Breithaupt hired staff, arranged artifacts and exhibit cases and, in 1918, Breithaupt arranged for the museum's first paid curator (a museum guide) to work two hours a week during the museum's open hours of 4 to 6 pm on Saturdays.⁸⁸ From that time forward, museum curators/assistants supervised the museum during open hours and shepherded visitors through the displays.⁸⁹ The WHS budget remained fairly constant over the thirty-two years from 1913 to 1945, and yearly expenditures on the museum were frequently no more than the Society's postage costs, about \$20. Capital expenses were incurred occasionally to cover the costs of building museum cases, while the curator's salary costs averaged between \$10 and \$30 per annum. These bare expenditures on the museum were not due to a shortage of funds; the Society carried forward a significant balance each year. Rather, the small budget suggests the comparatively minimal way in which the museum functioned, relying largely on volunteer labour. With the exception of exhibit cases, there were no expenditures for exhibition, conservation, or interpretation materials. This was standard practice in the local history museum field in Ontario that Breithaupt occupied. Many societies simply did not have budgets to improve their museum conditions, and there were no

⁸⁶ For instance, the 1929 Annual Report states that the "Third bronze tablet placed by Society to mark a historic site" placed on site of "first general meeting house, school and burial ground in this vicinity." Anson Groh "on whose instigation the tablet was placed and who generously contributed toward its cost gave a history of the site etc." Descendent of John Groh first trustees of site." Associated with the WHS are three men appointed by the ratepayers of S.S. No.19 as a parks board, the culmination of whose work is the placing of this tablet today - Jesse Bechtel, grandson of Samuel Bechtel, Anson Groh, grandson of John Groh, and Leslie Witmer, great-grandson of Abraham Witmer.

⁸⁷ WHS, Annual Report 1931, 286.

⁸⁸ WHS Minutes, 3 October 1918, KPL.

⁸⁹ When visitors wanted to see the museum outside of opening hours, library staff was asked to chaperone them through the exhibits.

funding agencies for this purpose. Others were unaware of professional museum methods, in part because there was no one in a position to advise them in this work.

Organizing the Past

By the time that Breithaupt and the WHS joined the OHS in 1913, David Boyle was dead and so local societies no longer had professional guidance from a central source. To fill in the gap, Breithaupt and his colleagues in other societies with museums referred to each other's work. Breithaupt set up a system of exchanging annual reports with ten other affiliates of the OHS, including the Huron Institute, the Brant Historical Society museum, the Niagara Historical Society (NHS) (whose museum was operated by the prodigious Janet Carnochan until her death in 1926), and the York Pioneers.⁹⁰ Local historical society members visited each other's museums during OHS annual meetings and through these venues and the annual reports, Breithaupt could assess the comparative development of his organization and its museum. Like those of the WHS, the historical activities of many of these societies were extensive, going far beyond the limits of publishing annual reports. For instance, in her report to the OHS in 1917, Carnochan summed up the work of the Niagara Historical Society since its creation in 1895: the placement of 11 historical markers, publication of twenty-nine pamphlets, construction of a museum building, and the collection, arrangement and classification of more than six thousand artifacts, plus annual summer events centred on War of 1812 battle sites which attracted hundreds of visitors.⁹¹

According to their yearly reports and newspaper reports, the Huron Institute's collections and exhibits expanded annually. The Brant Historical Society announced in 1917 that it had organized a museum committee to re-arrange and re-classify their collections of archival documents, war materials, pioneer relics and natural history items.⁹² The Peterborough Victoria Museum set up new displays and flourished under the curatorship of T.A. Hay until his death in 1917.⁹³ In that same year, the York Pioneers purchased the abandoned Children of Peace Temple in Sharon to operate as a local history museum with York Pioneers historical collections on exhibit. As at the WHS museum, attendance at these museums was restricted by limited opening hours. The museum with the longest opening hours was York Pioneers Society's Scadding Cabin at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) grounds. It also had the highest attendance, receiving thousands of visitors during the Canadian National Exhibition, the only time it was open. During the exhibition, the society's members demonstrated traditional spinning and other artisan skills in period costume outside this cabin; this is the first evidence of this kind of historical interpretation at a local historical building museum in Ontario.

Based in part on this success, the York Pioneers lobbied CNE officials for many years to provide a large museum building on the CNE grounds to hold not only their exhibits, but also materials from other historical societies in the province, to showplace the history of the province. However, at the 1923 OHS annual meeting, representatives of other local societies refused to support

⁹⁰ The 1917 WHS Annual Report lists exchanges as well between the WHS and the OHS, the WCHS, Thunder Bay Historical Society, Elgin Historical Society and Scientific Institute, York Pioneer and Historical Society, Essex Historical Society, Wentworth Historical Society, London and Middlesex Historical Society, Commission of Conservation, and Library of Congress.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 49.

⁹² OHS Annual Report, 1917, 37.

⁹³ On the Peterborough Museum, see Ken Doherty, "The Common Thread: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Museums in Peterborough," *Ontario History* Vol. LXXXVI: 2, (June 1994), 133-148.

this initiative to develop a museum of Ontario history that would be operated not by the OHS, but by the York Pioneers. They were unwilling to relinquish their collections to another affiliate.⁹⁴

As these museums grew, they shared a common dilemma: a continual growth of collections in a fixed space. This problem lay in the inordinate amount of material potentially eligible to fit into the collections of institutions eager to rescue a progressively disappearing past. The limited requirements for admitting material contributed to the problem.⁹⁵

Practically all of the materials received in the Society's Museum pertains (sic) to Waterloo County or to general, Canadian history. This is the criterion set for what is given house room in the collection.⁹⁶

The only other means used to assess material for selection to the museum was spatial restrictions. Across the OHS affiliates, the local museum was viewed as a reservoir rather than a filter of the local material past. In 1937, Ben Uttley, a veteran member of the WHS described the collections of the WHS museum their use and the need for a place to put them:

The purpose of the society is the collection and preservation of archives and historical objects pertaining to the primal days of Waterloo County. With rare perseverance the officers and members have traced and acquired a store of ancient books, family histories, maps, photographs, newspapers, pieces of furniture and devices made by the pioneers. Many of these are irreplaceable. The articles and historical lore are housed in the basement of the public library. Yearly hundreds of persons from near and far visit the museum and gaze at the treasures, while for school children the exhibits are as magnetic as a travelling menagerie. A wealth of material there awaits the student, the biographer and the future novelist. ... The time has come when the historical society should have a commodious building of its own.⁹⁷

The Kingston Historical Society viewed its collections in terms that were consistent with, if more grandiloquent, than Uttley's description.

Our museum must become of real value as a storehouse of relics of the early settlers of this district. ... All such things would be welcomed with open arms, as also the primitive weapons of the aborigines, and heirlooms brought from the land of their nativity by early colonists ... Let us endeavour to make the Murney Redoubt a unique treasury of relics, valuable in themselves and from association with the men and women who braved danger and suffering in the wilds to make it the cradle of a mighty nation yet to be" ... so that in the days to come the antiquarian and the historian may come to it as a shrine where they many drink deep of the waters of knowledge stored therein by us, who are the heirs of the ages.⁹⁸

Rescued from normal circulation, these objects were put into the museum storehouse for future reference. "Relics, valuable in themselves" was the premise underlying the extensive collection of the past by the WHS and its cohorts.

⁹⁴ OHS Annual Report 1923, 18-19.

⁹⁵ OHS Annual Report 1923, 71.

⁹⁶ WHS Annual Report 8, 1920, 108.

⁹⁷ W.V. (Ben) Uttley, *A History of Kitchener, Ontario*, (Waterloo, Ont.: Chronicle Press, 1937), 391.

⁹⁸ Kingston Historical Society, Annual Report 1926, 121, cited in Kerr-Wilson, 122.

In keeping with a reservoir paradigm, the value of the artifact collections in historical research lay largely in their potential. Breithaupt and Uttley saw the WHS collections as evidence waiting for research. Breithaupt invited the public “to avail itself of whatever our collection contains of value for reference purpose.”⁹⁹ While it was clear from the beginning that Breithaupt, Motz and Fisher regarded the newspaper collection as the most useful for historical research,¹⁰⁰ Breithaupt was also to isolate the WHS native materials as credible research sources, because they resembled those in the Ontario Provincial Museum. Boyle’s work there had provided the only real blueprint for museum collections research in the province.

There are many things in the scope of inquiry of the WHS which will well repay research and study. The study, for instance, of the Indian life of this region, before its settlement and utilization for agriculture is of great interest. In this connection we have in our collection specimens of Indian utensils and weapons, found in Waterloo County rivalling the best in noted provincial museums. There are various private collections of excellent specimens of this kind in the County and we want once more to make appeal to the friends of the society to have such collections placed in our museum, either as donation or as loan for safe keeping.¹⁰¹

This connection between the museum and research was otherwise seldom articulated and largely assumed. Fisher stated in 1939 that:

From the date of its organization the Society has endeavoured to build up a permanent record of the pioneer settlement of the County, and while our Museum collection is of interest, our printed reports set forth more fully the pioneer experiences and the conditions which then prevailed.¹⁰²

There were no interpretive models for historical artifacts other than Aboriginal materials, nor were there consistent ways of cataloguing this material for reference purposes. Several historical societies’ annual reports spoke of cataloguing the museum collections. While the Kingston Historical Society set up a card cataloguing system,¹⁰³ this activity was usually limited to a general inventory list that followed the layout of the objects on exhibit at the time that it was made. Museum catalogues had to be updated regularly when new artifacts were accepted into the museum and put on exhibit. In 1911 Carnochan made the most extensive catalogue, it comprised a listing of more than five thousand artifacts in the NHS museum, numbered sequentially by display case and their arrangement in it. There is no indication that Breithaupt or anyone else classified the WHS collections. Today, using categories of period and type, six main groupings of objects can be recognized from the descriptions in the museum catalogues published in the WHS annual reports between 1917 and 1945. Objects were collected due to their connection with the earliest days of local and Canadian pioneer settlement; material collected by Breithaupt as significant in the local history of transportation, industry and technology; World War I materials; Native archaeological and ethnographic materials; natural history specimen; and items of unique manufacture or use.

⁹⁹ OHS Annual Report 1922, 55.

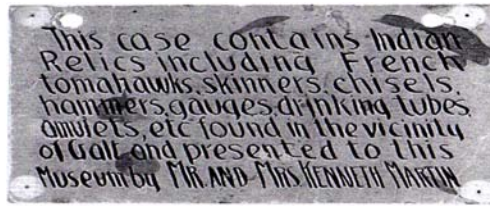
¹⁰⁰ “The collection of newspapers exceeds over 500 bound volumes, beginning in 1835 with the Canada Museum, covers 3 walls of main museum room. It is easily the largest and most important collection of county newspapers in the Dominion of Canada. WHS Annual Report 26, 1938, 41.

¹⁰¹ “President’s Address,” WHS Annual Report 6, 1918, 11.

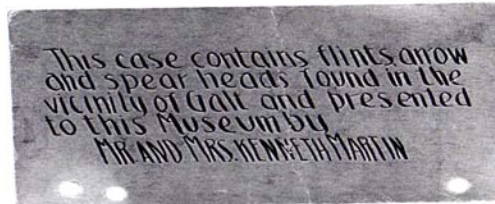
¹⁰² WHS Annual Report, 1939, 53.

¹⁰³ KWS Minutes, 23 Feb. 1928, cited in Kerr-Wilson, 121.

4.3 Exhibit Labels from the Waterloo Historical Society Museum cases of archaeological material
Doon Heritage Crossroads



This case contains Indian Relics including French tomahawks, skinners, chisels, hammers, gauges, drinking tubes, amulets, etc found in the vicinity of Galt and presented to this Museum by MR AND MRS KENNETH MARTIN



This case contains flints, arrow and spear heads found in the vicinity of Galt and presented to this Museum by MR AND MRS KENNETH MARTIN

Exhibiting the Past

These collection types were common in the historical society museums in Ontario. In its coverage of the re-opening of the Peterborough Museum in 1912, the *Peterborough Examiner* notes, “Most people were surprised to find such an extensive array of curios and objects of interest.”¹⁰⁴ Objects were exhibited in cases according to type: historical, geological, military, birds, and mammals of Canada. As noted above, common museum practice in Ontario prior to the end of the Second World War was to exhibit every artifact in the museum collection. Items were rarely placed out of view, and museum plans did not include reserve collections or storage rooms.¹⁰⁵ Most, if not all, objects were displayed like the Peterborough exhibits described in 1912: “The entire collection has been systematically arranged in attractive cases.”¹⁰⁶ Since everything was on display, individual artifacts were also referred to as exhibits, thus David Williams could refer accurately to the Huron Institute as having more than four thousand exhibits.¹⁰⁷

In the WHS museum, artifacts were individually but briefly identified with handwritten or typed labels recording the object’s name and donor, another practice customary for most history museums at this time. This brevity created generic views of these objects as exemplars of a past way of life, while few had any specific historical significance; all were apparently museum-worthy. To D.N. Panabaker, WHS president (1927–1937), the Waterloo County Pioneer Memorial and the objects in museums served largely as symbols of the superior character of the pioneer. Objects he had viewed in historical museums, he said:

Present to the eye evidences of struggles and the experiences of those who preceded us of this generation in the process of evolution, which not a few in our day would

¹⁰⁴ *Peterborough Examiner*, 24 April 1912, cited in Doherty, 140.

¹⁰⁵ This was the case in the building of the Niagara Historical Museum in 1906. See May, “The Niagara Historical Society Museum: A Study in Museum Development.”

¹⁰⁶ *Peterborough Examiner*, 24 April 1912, cited in Doherty, 140.

¹⁰⁷ WHS Minutes, 26 April 1912, KPL.

violently endeavour to discard for a process of greater speed but with probably less stability.¹⁰⁸



4.4 Shoemaker's peg exhibit,
Waterloo Historical Society Museum
Doon Heritage Crossroads

Exceptions to this pattern were objects whose direct connections to historical events grounded them in a narrative. In the Peterborough museum, this type of material included an invitation to a ball celebrating the Congress of Vienna and a bloodstained flag from the Boer war.¹⁰⁹ In the WHS museum, the Conestoga wagon was endowed with a narrative of pioneer pilgrimage. A cannon ball from Quebec fell under the umbrella of items of national significance, despite its ambiguous provenance. A label dated 1926 for this object is copied verbatim from the donor's information:

This cannon ball was found on the site of Mr. Polley's factory, St. Valier Street, St. Roch's, Quebec City. It is very difficult to assign it to any particular date, except to say that it dates from before the conquest. They may have been fired from the French camp at Ringfield, across Bickell's Bridge at the English soldiers pursuing the flying French, after the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, or they may have been fired from the city at them or long previously during some of the Indian assaults. Nor is it impossible that they may have been part of the French war material, which fell into the hands of the English at the capture of Quebec in 1759, and which may have been used up in firing upon Arnold's troops 16 years afterwards during the American invasion of 1775.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Panabaker, WHS Annual Report 26, 1938, 39.

¹⁰⁹ Doherty, 140.

¹¹⁰ W.H. Breithaupt Correspondence, May 1926, University of Waterloo Porter Library. The cannonball had been sent to L.J. Breithaupt in 1896 from Polley.

Locally, a piece of a tree, considered significant because Jacob Hailer had carved his initials into it, was cut and placed in the WHS museum. Like the shoe pegs illustrated above, the label was written directly on the artifact.



4.5 WHS Museum "Exhibit No.1." "Cut from a beech tree in the grove, behind the barn at the Breithaupt Homestead. "Bleached, initialed, dated by Jacob Hailer, owner and first German born settler." *Doon Heritage Crossroads*.



4.6 Exhibit in WHS Museum "Exhibit No.1." Reverse. "J.H." initials. *Doon Heritage Crossroads*.

These objects and others were placed in wood and glass exhibit cases, similar to those used in the Provincial Museum to hold artifacts. Breithaupt had five rectangular glass-topped wooden table cases built, ten feet by two feet wide in 1929. These cases served to isolate certain objects, and Breithaupt hoped to impress potential donors. He described them as

Affording space for its interesting collection of smaller objects of historical interest. All the more valuable items are in those locked cases, giving additional safeguard, and confidence to those having their family heirlooms valuable as illustrating county history, that they may with assurance place them here for safe preservation, in a locked case in a fireproof room.¹¹¹

Thus, visitors to the museum saw smaller, valuable items protected under glass and larger objects, such as the Conestoga wagon, spinning wheels and cradles placed where possible in different locations in the room. Eventually they were placed on top of each other as space diminished progressively over the years because of the growing collections. The experience was, as Uttley noted, of gazing at a unique treasury of ever-expanding contents.

From the founding of the WHS and for the rest of his life, Breithaupt lobbied for more space or a separate building for the museum. His goal in securing the initial funding in 1915 for an addition to the Berlin Carnegie Library was to properly house the society's collections. At that time, he announced that with this new space, "large and commodious ... damp proof and fireproof ... our great desideratum is now attained."¹¹² While its attributes now permitted the society to "ask with confidence for old family heirlooms and family papers pertaining to the history of Waterloo and give assurance that they will be imperishable, secure against destruction."¹¹³ Breithaupt forecasted that:

Some day sooner or later, this great and important County of Waterloo, historically venerable and materially great, will require better County buildings. When that time comes we expect to see provided larger and more commodious quarters for this Society, let us say a dignified and properly equipped building by itself.¹¹⁴

Regrettably, for Breithaupt and the WHS, this expansion did not happen in his lifetime, despite his frequent requests to local authorities for better housing for the society's museum collections in a separate and more purpose-built County space. In his 1927 museum report, he argued the urgency of the space crisis in the museum:

The feature about our collections is the fact that it is growing too large for the premises we occupy. ... For twelve years we have occupied this room which was considered ample, but which has become too small. It is becoming more urgent with every year that the county authorities provide new quarters for the County Historical Society's Museum collection. We strongly hope that such a place will be available in a new Court House building in the future.¹¹⁵

In the following year, he used the Conestoga wagon as an example of heritage being at risk from fire because of inadequate museum facilities, when he added, "with every year it is becoming more imperative that the Society should have more space for its museum collections and this should necessarily be a fire-proof room."¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ WHS Annual Report, 1929, 136.

¹¹² "President's Address," WHS Annual Report, 1915, 7

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 8.

¹¹⁵ WHS Annual Report, 1927, 381. WHS Minutes, 2 Jan 1929, KPL. Breithaupt and others form a committee to investigate better quarters for WHS.

¹¹⁶ WHS Annual Report, 1928, 81-82.

By 1929, the museum was so full that WHS could no longer hold meetings there. About this time Breithaupt began to refer to the museum as the “County Museum” in his requests for funding and space, arguing that the County should assume responsibility for protecting the collections.

The Puslinch dug-out is now in dry shelter, safeguarded against further deterioration. With the roller mill set and its frame, at New Dundee, it awaits a room in an adequate Waterloo County Museum.¹¹⁷

By the end of the 1930s Breithaupt wrote:

We again respectfully submit that the old county registry office, when no longer required for its present use, be given over to the WHS for a County Museum. This might in reason be considered as only a temporary use. A high basement under a new County Courthouse would most suitably and permanently serve.¹¹⁸

Despite his campaign for new facilities, Breithaupt managed to get funding of only one hundred dollars in 1936 to renovate the existing facilities in the library. Nonetheless, this was during the 1930s, when some local history museums, such as Brant County, closed for want of funding and direction. Breithaupt personally subsidized this renovation and the curator’s salary.

By the early 1930s, Breithaupt had been able to achieve what he regarded as the three main goals of a local historical society: “Get a habitation [meaning a museum space] ... with a great many local mementos ... be the repository of all papers published in the county continuously ... [and] mark historical places within the confines of the society’s activities.”¹¹⁹ In 1933, he reported that in meeting these goals, the WHS and its museum appeared “favourably comparable” to other societies in the province:

The WHS has become an institution well known throughout the County, known throughout the Province and beyond. ... We can look back with justifiable pride on 21 years of work, on an accumulation of recorded County and Provincial history favourably comparable to other older local societies and on a constantly growing County Museum.¹²⁰

While they might be able to look favourable on their collection in comparison with those of other local historical societies in Ontario, within a wider perspective on museums and the interpretation of history, the WHS museum and its cohorts were not considered successful at all.

“These Museums Have the Greatest Need for Help”

Despite Breithaupt’s efforts and those of Carnochan, Williams and others to further the preservation and study of local history, the museums they created were regarded as inadequate by outside experts. The condition of these museums was brought to light in 1932 in a study of these institutions and other museums in Canada, which the Carnegie Foundation funded.¹²¹ *The Report on the Museums of Canada*, written by the president of the British Museums Association, Sir Henry Miers, and his

¹¹⁷ WHS Annual Report, 1931, 287

¹¹⁸ WHS Annual Report, 1939, 42.

¹¹⁹ OHS Annual Report 1926, 10. Here he cited the example of the Niagara Historical Society’s museum.

¹²⁰ Breithaupt “Notes on the Museum,” WHS Annual Report, 1933, 57.

¹²¹ Sir Henry Miers and S.F. Markham, *A Report on the Museums of Canada* (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1932). Funded by the Carnegie Foundation, this is the first study of museum conditions in Canada.

colleague S.F. Markham, praised the societies in the province for their foresight and volunteer efforts to save important materials. The report also considered that the collections in these society museums were at serious risk because of a lack of professional museological expertise to care for or interpret them and inadequate facilities to house them. The report also said the collections were intellectually encumbered by artifacts whose historical worth was uncertain.

Miers and Markham specifically addressed the “interesting feature” of the relatively large number of museums operated by local historical societies in Ontario. They summed up the paradoxical circumstance of these museums, in which volunteer enthusiasm was coupled with restricted operations, in a sentence: “These museums have the greatest need for help, and the greatest willingness to receive it.”¹²² By the standards of these British museologists, Ontario local historical society museums fell short in almost every aspect of their operations: collecting was indiscriminate; housing and facilities inadequate; staff untrained; and with the exception of the WHS museum, financial resources desperate. The Niagara Historical Society Museum and Williams’ Huron Institute were singled out for having items of great historical importance, but along with the WHS and their other local historical museum cohorts they had placed such “valuable exhibits” “cheek by jowl with much that is sheer rubbish.”¹²³

The local associations, with justification, fear to do their own weeding out, and the result is an amazing conglomeration of German prints, old newspapers, faded photographs of grim-faced pioneers, early agricultural implements, and often as not, a moth-eaten uniform worn by General Brock or a local colonel.¹²⁴

The problematic relationship between historical significance and collections (which Miers and Markham never entirely addressed) was compounded by the inability of the museum viewer to gain access to the collection, both physically and intellectually. Most museums across the country had this problem:

Few objects are exhibited with a definite purpose behind them; overcrowding and reduplication are common, direction notices, instructive labels, guides and handbooks are conspicuous by their absence; and last but not least, it is made as difficult as possible for anyone to find the museum, and when found, to be able to see it as it should be seen. Paralytic modesty is a common museum disease¹²⁵

There is no evidence that Breithaupt or anyone else in the WHS read this report, although a member of the local affiliates brought it to the attention of the OHS executive in 1934.¹²⁶ They asked that the Society assist affiliates in their museum work, noting Miers and Markham’s recommendation that: “It appears that some new organization is required that would supply advice and assistance to the smaller museums.”¹²⁷ The OHS executive was told that local societies not only faced difficulties “securing proper housing for the accumulated material” but “lacked knowledge or understanding of what could be done.”¹²⁸ The OHS council did nothing to alleviate this situation at this time. In fact,

¹²² Ibid., 15.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 39.

¹²⁶ OHS Annual Report 1934, 299.

¹²⁷ Report on the Museums of Canada, 9.

¹²⁸ OHS Annual Report 1934, 299.

the problem that local historical societies faced in their museum operations stemmed largely from the lack of leadership for this kind of work in Ontario.

The Ontario Local History Museum Community 1912-1945: Leadership Deficit

With the death of Boyle, the OHS affiliates had lost a central source of museological advice. From 1912 until after World War II, the OHS affiliates with museums conducted their museum work without direction from either the Ontario Provincial Museum or the OHS secretariat. Boyle's successor was a political appointee, Dr. Roland B. Orr, a Toronto physician and amateur archaeologist. While Orr shared Boyle's interests in archaeology he did not share Boyle's museological enthusiasms, nor did he advise affiliates on operating their museums as Boyle had done.¹²⁹ Instead, Orr recommended that the small museums divest themselves of their archaeological collections and give them to the Provincial Museum for better care and study.¹³⁰ As Killan observes, with Boyle's death, archaeological and museological expertise in Ontario shifted from Toronto's Provincial Museum to Ottawa's federal Victoria Museum, where Boasian-trained anthropologist Harlan Smith and his assistant, W.J., Wintemberg worked.¹³¹ Like Boyle, Smith had a strong interest in promoting museum methods to others, and tried, but failed to engage Orr in this pursuit. Smith lobbied him to join the American Association of Museums to increase his expertise in museum work, arguing that museum training would far out-weigh other benefits to the Provincial Museum, such as increased funding, unique collections, or a new building.¹³² Smith produced several essays on museum techniques, but this work was published in scientific journals or American museological publications and does not seem to have disseminated to Ontario's local museums.¹³³

By the 1920s, the Provincial Museum was falling into disrepair, and no longer served as a model institution. Space restrictions and budget cut-backs during the First World War were never restored, and the museum's increasing disorder and decay came to public attention in newspaper editorials.¹³⁴ In contrast, Toronto philanthropists and University of Toronto officials had opened a magnificent museum on land at the north end of Queen's Park in 1914. Conceived at the same time as the WHS, the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) was international in scope.¹³⁵ By the economic depression of the 1930s the neglected collections of the Provincial Museum were ripe for the picking. C.T. Currelly, director of the ROM, suggested to the R.A. Pyne, the minister of education in 1932 that the Provincial Museum's archaeological and historical collections be transferred to the ROM for safekeeping. Having learned of this proposal, the executive of OHS contested the move of these artifacts (in which they once had proprietary interests), even further from OHS jurisdiction. Currelly

¹²⁹ Orr still maintained a medical practice while serving as superintendent of the provincial museum.

¹³⁰ Orr to Osborne, 12 April 1911, Normal School Correspondence, Anthropology Department, ROM.

¹³¹ Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 231.

¹³² Harlan Smith to Rowland Orr, 12 February 1912, 21 October 1912, 12 February 1913, Normal School Correspondence, Anthropology Department, ROM.

¹³³ See for instance, Harlan I. Smith, "Museum Work at the Capital of Canada" in *Proceedings of the American Association of Museums*, Vol. VII, (1913), 28-35; Harlan I. Smith, "A Cheap Case for Small Museums," *The Ottawa Naturalist*, Vol. XXIX, (May-July, 1915), 33-50; Harlan I. Smith, "The Work of Museums in War Time," *Scientific Monthly*, (April 1917), 362-430; Harlan I. Smith, "The Development of Museums and Their Relation to Education," *Scientific Monthly*, (August 1917), 97-119. Smith's work is never referenced in any of the OHS affiliate museums reports.

¹³⁴ See for instance, "A Badly Housed Museum," *Mail and Empire*, 10 October 1921.

¹³⁵ See Teather, *The ROM: A Prehistory*; Needham, "The Origins of the ROM," Currelly, *I Brought the Ages Home*, Dickson, *The Museum Makers*.

was neither part of the OHS establishment nor did he show any interest in Canadian history. As he explained in a letter to Pyne, about the scope of the ROM:

History as such does not come within our sphere. For example, Montcalm's flag is interesting to us as a piece of weaving, but it is of no interest from the sentimental side, i.e., as a historical object.¹³⁶

Fearing that these collections would be overlooked in a large institution with archaeological and historical interests centred on Europe, the Middle East and the Far East, the OHS formed a delegation to present their case to Pyne, asking him to reconsider options for the future of the Provincial Museum.¹³⁷ They were unsuccessful. The Ontario government could not support both institutions, and the OHS could not offer to assume these collections, having jettisoned its early goal of operating a provincial museum of history.¹³⁸ In 1933, the Ontario Provincial Museum ceased to exist, and its archaeological and historical materials were transferred to the ROM, where they were catalogued as the Normal School collections. Without a department of Canadian history, Boyle's Ontario historical collections, although meagre, became further diminished at the ROM. Moreover, the OHS executive moved to scuttle permanently the museum fund that initiated with the Ontario Historical Exhibition in 1900, and to use the accrued balance toward publication costs. Its divestment of all museum activities seemed absolute; as Secretary Murray advised, "The possibility of the OHS ever having a museum is too remote for practical consideration and I regard the account as a nuisance."¹³⁹

Neither was there any one else in Toronto or among the affiliates to fill Boyle's museum shoes. With the OHS history museum project forgotten, OHS resources and interests were consolidated into the society's publications and efforts to save sites of provincial significance such as Old Fort York. Local societies, whose affiliation many years before had created the Ontario Pioneer and Historical Association, were now set somewhat adrift in their museum work. Although the OHS secretary, Andrew Hunter, appreciated the work of these local groups, he was kept busy managing the OHS secretariat and its publications, while his successor J. McE. Murray (1931–945) saw the local affiliates as dead weights. Killan comments on this situation as it affected the local societies with museums:

This was unfortunate for there were obvious ways the OHS could have aided the local societies. For instance, the 15 affiliates that operated a small historical museum desperately needed help. None had professional curators, all had to rely on inexperienced, voluntary, and part-time staff.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶ Currelly to Pyne, 30 May 1913, Normal School Correspondence, Anthropology Department, ROM Archives, cited in Needham, "The Origins of the ROM," 153.

¹³⁷ OHS Minutes 16 June 1932, 7 July 1932, 8 November 1932, KPL.

¹³⁸ The demise of the Ontario Provincial Museum is chronicled in James Hunter, "The Ontario Provincial Museum 1896-1933," Ian Kerr-Wilson, "Historical Societies and their Museums: A Survey of the Ontario Case," Harold G. Needham, "The Origins of the ROM," Robyn Gilliam, *Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public*.

¹³⁹ OHS Correspondence, J. McMurray to Mrs. Corley [WCHS], 22 December 1941, F1139, MS 259 OA. Cited in Kerr-Wilson, 64.

¹⁴⁰ Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 210.

Using Museum Collections to Narrate the Past and Present

If the situation of local history museums in the Province seemed desperate, it matched the condition of local museums elsewhere, including the United States. *The Museum in America: A Critical Study*, published seven years after the *Report on the Museums of Canada* identified similar common failings in local history museums run by American historical societies. Stating that “the trouble, really, is with people,” Laurence Vail Coleman, director of the American Association of Museums, cited these local societies’ biggest faults in operating their museums as “meddling with natural history, collecting souvenirs, taking everything offered and showing everything.”¹⁴¹ He would have found the WHS guilty on every count.

In the pre-World War 1 and interwar period, the leadership of the American Association of Museums lobbied its members to pursue a progressive role for museums in community development. Influenced by the works of George Brown Goode, museum advocates such as John Cotton Dana of the Newark Museum, A.E. Parker of the Rochester Museum, and Coleman believed that the history museum’s civic and social responsibilities were best met by effective interpretation of historical narrative through well-designed exhibits and educational programmes.¹⁴² Parker’s articles in the 1920s on interpreting history in history museums and his 1935 *Manual for History Museums* provided clear instructions to curators to dispense with displaying masses of objects without context, and instead to construct exhibits using objects and texts selected to convey a simple narrative in a visually stimulating manner.¹⁴³ In the first issue of the American Association for State and Local History *Bulletin* in 1941, Edward P. Alexander also maintained the argument that local historical society museums should “never be allowed to become a mere hodgepodge of assorted items without connection or meaning,” and that narrative should be the goal of the museum exhibit.¹⁴⁴ He advised the use of period rooms and dioramas as exhibit vehicles whenever possible. Realizing the problems inherent in broad collecting, British museologists also argued early on that narrative had to be the basis for collecting and that historical objects had to be displayed, not systematically by type, but in a visual arrangement for the purpose of telling a story.¹⁴⁵ In this regard American and British museologists were aligned in their rethinking of the role and use of artifacts in the local history museum, but there seems to have been little Canadian input or reception to these ideas.

Nor did Canadians yet have open-air museums, such as Ford’s Greenfield village in Dearborn, Michigan to tell their stories.¹⁴⁶ Northern European agricultural and folk museums served as the models of this form of museum. In these recreated community settings from the past, everyday

¹⁴¹ Laurence Vail Coleman, *The Museum in America: A Critical Study*, Vol. 1, (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1939), 64-65.

¹⁴² On Dana, see E.P. Alexander, “John Cotton Dana and the Newark Museum: The Museum of Community Service” in his *Museum Masters*, (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History 1983), 377-411. On Parker see Joy Porter, *To Be Indian: The Life of Iroquois-Seneca Arthur Caswell Parker* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001).

¹⁴³ See for instance Parker’s essays, “Unhistorical Museums,” *Museum Work* 6:5, (January-February 1924), 155-58; “Unhistorical Museums or Museums of History, Which?,” *Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association* 5, (July 1924), 256-63; and “An Approach to a Plan for Historical Society Museums,” *Museum Work* 8:2, (July-August 1926), 47-56. His thoughts are presented fully in A.C. Parker, *A Manual for History Museums* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1935).

¹⁴⁴ Edward P. Alexander, “What Should Our Historical Societies Do?,” *Bulletin of the AASLH* 1,(1), 1941, 20.

¹⁴⁵ See for instance, F.A. Bather, “Local Museums: General and Particular,” *Museums Journal* 16:12, (June 1917). 262. Cited in Jolliffe, 11.

¹⁴⁶ On Henry Ford’s museum see, *Stephen Conn, Museums and American Intellectual Life (1876-1926)*, 151-158.

domestic and agricultural materials took on the function of illustrating cultural history through their use and placement in historical sets. Miers and Markham noted:

There is little corresponding to the excellent open-air folk museums familiar all over Sweden and in Denmark at Aarhus and Lingby, or in Holland at Arnhem. The great advantage of such open-air collections is that the by-gones contained in them are presented in appropriate houses or other early buildings to reproduce the conditions of a period, instead of being exhibited in glass cases in museums where they are generally crowded together and arranged for a totally different purpose.¹⁴⁷

Prospects for the Future of the WHS Museum: An Open-Air Museum?

The advantages of this type of museum impressed Breithaupt and Panabaker when they visited Greenfield Village in 1938 during the joint OHS–Michigan State Historical Society annual conference held in Windsor and Detroit. Panabaker remarked on the collection of “old-time buildings and their contents, reminders of early days in the United States and Canada” to the WHS upon his return.¹⁴⁸ Perhaps with this model in mind, Breithaupt suggested in his museum report for that year that the Waterloo Historical Museum might become, in the process of finding better quarters, “a unique agricultural museum ... Many exhibits for such a one have been offered the society only to be refused for want of room.”¹⁴⁹

Certainly pioneer furniture, clothing, and farm equipment were increasing topics of discussion at WHS meetings.¹⁵⁰ The agricultural theme had been pursued and well received when the WHS presented its first ‘living history’ activity in 1933. Panabaker, who arranged the activity, described this “old-time” harvesting and threshing demonstration at an area farm as an “outstanding contribution of historical interest” attracting hundreds of spectators.¹⁵¹

Although the WHS museum had yet to develop recommended museum exhibition techniques by the early 1940s, it had begun offering education programmes to schools. Peter Fisher, former teacher and school principal who served as the WHS secretary-treasurer, embarked on using museum artifacts to teach history to school classes. Fisher sent out a circular in 1941 to teachers to “avail themselves of the facilities in the Museum and to bring classes to view the collection.”¹⁵² In the president’s address for that year, H.W. Brown reported that:

As all of the schools in the county have been advised of the existence of our museum, and of the freedom with which the exhibits may be examined and studied, we are glad to report that our visitors are increasing in number, and are showing a greater interest in our efforts to make this a popular and valuable feature of our Society.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ *Report on the Museums of Canada*, 51.

¹⁴⁸ “Ontario and Michigan Historical Societies” WHS Annual Report, 1938, 39.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ In addition to reports on various pioneer structures in the county, a 1933 meeting of the WHS in Ayr was accompanied by an special exhibit of over 700 local ‘pioneer things’ organized by the Ayr local vice-president of the WHS, Elizabeth Dolman Watson. She explained the rationale for organizing the displayed material: objected were accepted and arranged by object-type; tools, clothing, jewellery, textiles, guns and so on. Just as at the museum building itself, limited space and lack of lockable cases was a key factor in object selection and organization. These artifacts were not added to the WHS museum collection. WHS Annual Report 21, 1933, 5.

¹⁵¹ WHS Minutes 21 Oct 1933, KPL; WHS Annual Report 21, 1933, 5.

¹⁵² WHS Minutes, 18 Sept. 1941, KPL.

¹⁵³ WHS Annual Report, 1941, 151.

Fisher took over curatorial responsibility for the museum as Breithaupt neared the end of his life. When Breithaupt died in 1944 at the age of eighty-seven, his museum looked much as it does in the photo below.



4.7 Waterloo Historical Society Museum, c. 1945 *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library*

A year later, Grace Schmidt started work at the Kitchener Public Library and was asked to help rearrange the museum collections. She remembered that, “everybody thought they needed to do something with these things, but they didn’t know what they had, or what to do with them.”¹⁵⁴ The question of “what to do with these things” began to resolve over the next decade, as the model for the WHS museum and its collections changed dramatically. New ideas about presenting the past, and new resources for doing so became available. As Miers and Markham concluded, “For two generations, collectors and curators have devoted much labour to the making of museums ... the time has now come for a new generation to consider how to use them.”¹⁵⁵

Their development and the subsequent effects on how the WHS, and its sister organization the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation, collected and presented the past until 1960 are discussed in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁴ Author interview with Grace Schmidt, 30 January 2005.

¹⁵⁵ *Report on the Museums of Canada*, p.63.

Chapter 5: Community Pioneers and Pioneer Museologists

Introduction

In the 1950s, the story of history museums in Ontario, and especially of the Waterloo Historical Society (WHS) and its methods of re-contextualizing the past through its museum collections, shows signs of a shift. During this period, North American museologists began to redefine museum collections and operations, moving away from identifying them as research depositories, as Breithaupt had the collections of the WHS, and toward viewing them as public education centres. These museologists, most of them American, espoused a “modern” method for history museums, shaped around constructing clear historical narratives through discriminating artifact collecting and strategic configuring of objects as textual components of a visual storyline or through the exact re-creation of an historical architectural space. The largest and most contrived of these three-dimensional historical texts in museums was the re-created pioneer village, which used rescued, restored, and recreated buildings and their contents to depict a past community; each building and its contents and interpreters served as one chapter in a text about the pioneer past.

As Hayden White argues, historical texts by nature incorporate a moral imperative, and as this chapter illustrates, the moral imperative that dominated much of the museum-making and museum-text in Ontario in the post-war period was the preservation of the values implicit in the pioneer experience. The passion to rescue evidence of the pioneer rarely had the benefit of sophisticated “modern” museum methods.

This chapter follows the changes that shaped the local museum in Ontario from 1945–1960 as their numbers grew and the attempts to organize them began in earnest. It does so primarily through the window of the WHS and its daughter organization the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation, as they determined the future of the WHS collections and worked to make their vision of a pioneer village museum a reality.

Shift in Pioneer Museum Methodologies

This renewed interest in pioneers was accompanied by new guidelines for their interpretation in museums. As noted in Chapter 1, the move to redefine history museum collections and operations to become public education centres can be traced to the influence of Arthur C. Parker’s innovative approach to history exhibits in the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences in the 1930s. By discouraging the display of local relics in categories defined by type and instead inserting objects into narratives, Parker shifted the source of historical meaning away from the object and into text. The goal of this method was to make museum exhibits more educational. In the 1950s and 1960s, folklorist Louis C. Jones at Cooperstown built on Parker’s work and fostered the idea of organizing thematic exhibits based on commonplace objects of ordinary people.¹ Jones was a considerable figure in the North American museum field. He was the Director of the New York State Historical Society and the Cooperstown Farmers Museum and had initiated seminars in American material culture in 1948 through these organizations.² He had a PhD. in Folklore and brought a humanist and cross-

¹ His influence on exhibit development in history museums is discussed by also Kulik, 21-24.

² These seminars incorporated several sessions on historical museum work. “We are proud of the fact that the [New York State] Historical Association has evolved from a merely academic show case into a national center

disciplinary approach to his work, arguing that studying folk culture was essential as a context for local history studies.³

In Canada, while the federal government sponsored the erection of historic monuments during the depression and make-work projects directed at shoring up heritage sites at risk, it did not engage in full-scale historic site preservation and reconstruction until after the Second World War.⁴ The Government of Ontario preserved in situ some military fortifications in Ontario, most dating from the War of 1812.⁵ Although by the Second World War historical society efforts to preserve built structures were growing, it was after the war that these activities flourished.⁶

The Pioneer Mentality of Museum Pioneers

During the late 1940s and early 1950s, the WHS mainly directed its museum efforts toward resolving the problem of accommodating the increasing collections in its quarters of the library. Like Breithaupt before her, Mabel Dunham turned to the County to resolve this problem, when she became president of the organization in 1946, after thirty-three years of service on the board's executive. The society's concerns for its collections in the library's cramped space were matched by the library board's increasing annoyance with the drain on their resources to provide space and, at times, staff, to accommodate the museum and its visitors. The library board, along with the WHS, claimed it was the County's responsibility to house the museum elsewhere.⁷ From 1945 to 1953, the museum lived in limbo, as neither of these lobbies gained any ground with the County council.

Although W.H. Breithaupt and W.J. Motz, co-founders of the WHS had died, the WHS had a number of newer members with energy to pursue a future for the museum.⁸ Among the new members were Jennie Cowan, who was elected president in 1950, and Frank Page, the WHS local vice-president for New Dundee. Peter Fisher, another founding member of the society, had continued on in his capacity as museum curator. Their interests were supported by people like Jean Waldie, president of both the Ontario Historical Society (OHS) and the Brant County Museum, and keynote speaker at the 1950s WHS annual general meeting. Her lecture, "The Pioneer and His Goods and Chattels," "linked up her belief in the necessity of preservation of relics of pioneer life with the society's

of learning and teaching." Cited in Mary E. Cunningham, "Seminars in American Culture," *American Heritage*, Volume 1:1, (Fall 1950), 48-49. Jones was able to have some of these seminars accredited as college and university courses.

³ Louis C. Jones, "The Cooperstown Idea: History for Everyman," *American Heritage*, New Series 1:3, (Spring 1951), 32.

⁴ See James C. Taylor's study of the Canadian Federal government's historic parks and sites program, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of National Historic Parks and Sites*, (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990).

⁵ See for instance, R.L. Way, *Ontario's Niagara Parks: A History*, (Niagara: Niagara Parks Commission, 1960); and Ann Martin, "Sugar-Coated History."

⁶ Among these structures preserved by historical societies before the Second World War: the York Pioneers' Scadding cabin and the Sharon Temple, the Women's Wentworth Historical Society's Battlefield House, the Bell Memorial Association's efforts in Brantford, the Kingston Historical Society's Murney Tower, Canadian Women's Historical Society operation of Colborne Lodge, and the OHS attempts to preserve Fort York. On the latter see Gerald Killan, "The First Old Fort York Preservation Movement 1905 - 1909: An Episode in the History of the OHS," *Ontario History*, Vol. LXIV: 3, (Sept. 1972), 162-80.

⁷ "County Historical Building Mooted," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 14 October 1949.

⁸ "Work of the WHS Assists the Community," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 30 April 1951.

concern over its museum.”⁹ Waldie represented an increasing interest among OHS affiliates, and the population in general, in the preservation of pioneer materials for protecting community identity.

The Function of the Pioneer Past in Post-War Ontario: The Moral Imperative

While museum growth in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries in Ontario was motivated by scientific enquiry, filiopietism, and imperialist fervour, the stimulus for the renewed interest in local museum-making was a need for a shelter for community identity in a sea of post-war change. Fear of the loss of local character, combined with nostalgia for the idea of past values and past communities, produced a potent force for the creation of museums.¹⁰

Several observers at the time, and since, have viewed this growth in museums and heritage activities as a social response to rapid change in the physical, social, and economic landscape of local communities.¹¹ Louis C. Jones of the Cooperstown Museum expressed this opinion in his lecture “Trends in the Small Museum” to curators of OHS museum affiliates in 1954.¹² In her essay “History at the Grass Roots” published in the 1954 bulletin of the Canadian Museums Association, Blodwen Davies attributed this growth to the shock of war and post-war developments and the turn of Canadians inward in a search for identity that led to, “an examination of our history, our resources, our qualities, and our aspirations.”¹³ In the same year, Dorothy Drever of the OHS explained that the growth of local museums was vital for community identity; to assist both “native citizens” to cope with a community changing with “appalling rapidity” and to provide immigrants with an accurate reflection of their new community.¹⁴ Lillian Benson echoed this attitude when, as president of the OHS in 1957 she remarked:

The economic expansion of Ontario is erasing many historic landmarks, the large influx of immigrants is diluting our Anglo-Saxon heritage and our pattern of life is of necessity changing. The study of local history provides not only an invaluable means of keeping alive the best traditions of the past, but also an excellent method of explaining our way of life to new Canadians.¹⁵

Xenophobia, resistance to change, and local patriotism seemed to fit hand in glove. At risk was the perception of community character embodied in the history writ large in many of the landscapes and buildings of the period that were facing obsolescence and destruction. Norman High described the situation to the WHS in 1960:

⁹ “Historical Group Names Executive, Plans Activities,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 4 November 1950.

¹⁰ Ann Faulkner in the preface to, *Without Our Past?: A Handbook for the Preservation of Canada's Architectural Heritage*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977) cites fear of the loss of architectural local character as the basis for her work.

¹¹ Killan argues that OHS members were also motivated by a form of nationalism that corresponded to the museum movement at the end of the nineteenth century; however, the major evidence for this conclusion is in the submissions to the Massey Commission, which looked at the national context of Canadian culture. *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 268.

¹² Louis C. Jones, “Trends in the Small Museum” in OHS Museum Section 1954, Workshop Report, Alice Davidson Scrapbook no.1, OHS Papers, F1139-4, MU 5444, Box 23a, OA.

¹³ Blodwen Davies, “History at the Grass Roots” Canadian Museums Association, Bulletin, 7:4 (December 1954), 8-12. NAC.

¹⁴ Dorothy Drever, Pamphlet, “Local Museums in Ontario,” OHS Museum Section 1955, OHS Papers, F1139-6, MU 5453, Box 32, OA.

¹⁵ Lillian Benson, OHS Minutes AGM, 1957. OHS fonds, F 1139, microfilm MS 249 2, OA.

Hwy 401 is being built through this area. Although this is not my home territory, I look at the route and say: Oh, look at the good land the road is taking over. Isn't it too bad that that old homestead must go? Many people have lived and died here, experienced joys and sorrows. Now all is submerged in this ribbon of pavement. ... It would surprise me if some of you did not feel very strongly about this development. These feelings are very real because they are reactions to what is happening to us right now.¹⁶

The demolition of old farms and early homes, streetscapes and long-established institutions spurred the formation of local history museums to save what remained.¹⁷ Of the fifteen local history museums that opened in Ontario between 1945 and 1960, only two, the Dundas Historical Museum and the museum at Doon Pioneer Village that eventually housed the WHS collection, were new purpose-built structures. The rest were located in or consisted of historic buildings that had become obsolete, such as schools, town halls, and historic houses.¹⁸ In some areas, several such buildings were moved in juxtaposition to each other to form an historical complex.

This post-war period of heritage interest was dominated by what Paul Litt terms a "genesis complex."¹⁹ Heritage proponents in museums focussed on the earliest settlers of a community and their remnants, a seemingly logical starting point to identify and preserve the otherwise uncollected material past. As in the earlier period of museum development, community founders and their families were generically referred to as pioneers. This term became as ubiquitous in the 1950s as the moral qualities associated with them: self-reliance, hard work, thrift, and perseverance.²⁰ The pioneers were regarded as the civic pillars to which communities owed their well-being.²¹

The myth of the pioneer is a narrative of victory over adversity and functions on the central conviction of the ethical superiority of the pioneer. It is potent with moral meaning and Freudian purpose. Freud believed that only by struggling courageously against what seems like overwhelming odds, can one succeed in "wringing meaning out of existence."²² This pioneer myth is considered by historian Royce MacGillivray to be the most powerful motif in local history writing in Ontario.²³ Linda Ambrose speaks of its resonance in the Tweedsmuir histories compiled by the curators of the Women's Institutes during this period, who were instructed to assemble histories that illustrated hardships overcome, and accomplishments made by the area's first citizens.²⁴ Women's Institutes

¹⁶ Norman High, "A Point of View of History," WHS Annual Report 1960, 33.

¹⁷ Many museums are in fact, located in these now obsolete institutions - small schools which have been replaced through bussing and consolidation, town halls which have lost their initial function, abandoned post offices and so on.

¹⁸ This trend continued through the 1960s, as Peter Styrmo, Ontario Museums Advisor noted. Correspondence, Peter Styrmo to Reverend Kennedy, 28 June 1968, File "Hastings County," RG 47-51, Accession 20752, Box 11, OA.

¹⁹ Paul Litt, "Pliant Clio and Immutable Texts: The Historiography of a Historical Marking Program," *Public Historian* 19:4, (Fall 1997), 7-28.

²⁰ On the ubiquitous nature of the term pioneer with museums see Joanne Lea, "Defining Terms: The Pioneers and other Myths," *Museum Quarterly* 18:1, (February 1990), 25-35.

²¹ Litt, "Pliant Clio and Immutable Texts" discussed the allegorical properties of the pioneers.

²² Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989 edition), 8.

²³ Royce MacGillivray, "Local History as a Form of Popular Culture in Ontario," *New York History* 15:4, (October 1984), 371. See also his *The Slopes of the Andes: Four Essays on the Rural Myth in Ontario* (Belleville: Mika Publishing, 1990).

²⁴ Linda Ambrose, "Ontario Women's Institutes and the Work of Local History," in Beverly Boutillier and Alison Prentice eds., *Creating Historical Memory: English-Canadian Women and the Work of History*,

were also active in the development of community museums.²⁵ This same myth also propelled the moral imperative of heritage preservation and local museum development in the post-second world war in Ontario, where many local museums became known simply as pioneer museums.²⁶ By manifesting the pioneer presence through the preservation of material remains, thereby making the community's past evident and meaningful, heritage enthusiasts secured their community's present. This work was heightened by a growing anti-modern sensibility that increased the potency of pioneer lifestyles and artifacts.

For Blodwen Davies and others, the important pioneer qualities of "decision, effort, and cooperation" were captured in material form in the objects collected by museums.

Folklore, local history and the local museum, the cherry pitter and the apple corer, the coffee roaster, [and] the wooden barley fork recall graphically a pioneer tradition we need to cherish and enjoy. The pioneer qualities which are disclosed in this kind of research are important to us in an age of standardization, mass production, mechanical entertainment and propaganda...the whole trend of North American gadgetry is to make life easy and soft with as little work and as many possessions as possible.²⁷

That same year, 1954, Dr. Louis Blake Duff, a past-president of the OHS, described his vision to local history museum curators of a succession of local museums rising from Montreal to Windsor and from Hamilton to Fort William. To Duff, the chief importance of these museums was to hold fast and communicate the ethics of the pioneer period, a time he described as being when "Men and women had purpose, perseverance, thrift and sincerity, qualities not as prevalent in our own age."²⁸

The moral lessons of the historical museum were made urgent in the uncertainties of a cold-war climate. In his 1954 speech on the need for a pioneer village museum in Ontario, John Root, MPP for Wellington North, expressed both the widespread enthusiasm for such a project at this time, and its social purpose:

The people of Ontario are becoming history-conscious. Organizations such as the Women's Institute, the Federation of Agriculture, the Junior Farmers, historical societies and others, would like to see a museum or pioneer village established to preserve the story of the development of rural Ontario. We have those in our midst who would try to tell the rising generation that our system of free enterprise has failed the people. I suggest that a pioneer village would be a yardstick by which to measure our progress. A pioneer village would be a memorial for all to see, a place where we could realize that people with faith in God, with vision, courage and initiative can lay the foundations for great developments.²⁹

(Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 75-98.

²⁵ Among these, The Bruce County Museum, the Wellington County Museum and to a lesser extent Doon Pioneer Village were institutional outcomes of Women's Institutes preservation activities.

²⁶ Mary Tivy, "Museums, Visitors and the Reconstruction of the Past in Ontario," *Material History Review* 37, (Spring 1993), 35-51.

²⁷ Blodwen Davies, 11.

²⁸ Dr Louis Blake Duff, as reported in, "Need Museums, Historian Says," *Globe and Mail* Friday May 21, 1954. Clipping in Alice Davidson Scrapbook Number 1, 1954-1956, "1954 Museum Section Workshop," OHS fonds, F 1139-4, MU 5443, Box 23a, OA.

²⁹ *Debates*, Legislative Assembly of Ontario, 24 March 1954.

Collecting the Pioneer: Motives and Models; Collecting Passions and Personal Identities

The post-war nationalist sentiment and pioneer memorialising melded with collecting passions, leading to the creation of new local museums and museum villages such as those at Wellington county, Huron county and Fanshawe Pioneer Village in London.

The Wellington County Historical Research Society (WCHRS) was a off-shoot of the local Women's Institute. A large donation to the WCHRS in 1953 of pioneer artifacts from a founding family catalyzed the establishment of a permanent museum in 1954.³⁰ Under the curatorship of the society's president Ada Currie, the museum opened that same year.



5.1 Nicholas Keith and his collection c. 1950, which formed the nucleus of the Wellington County Museum. Wellington County Museum and Archives, ph 9608.

In 1951, a collector's passion for old things and an accompanying need for a place to house them synchronized to create the Huron County Pioneer Museum. Its founder, Herb Neill, was an uneducated machinist, blacksmith, and harness-maker, a solitary individual who immersed himself in the material detritus of his region. He carted his extensive collection to local fall fairs for over a decade until, on Neill's suggestion the County Council bought it in 1948, when it became too big for Neill to manage.³¹ The County placed the collection in the old central school in Goderich, which had become obsolete.

³⁰ Bev Dietrich, "The Wellington County Museum," (1990), 9-10.

³¹ On Neill and his museum see, "One Man Museum Perpetuates Huron Pioneers," *Globe and Mail*, 21 November 1953, *Goderich Signal-Star*, 25 October 1956. Neill's correspondence reveals his lack of formal

I brought here the one thousand articles which started the museum. Now I believe we have the most pioneer type of museum that there is in this country. Not the best, not the largest, but the most pioneer.³²

Neill served as curator from the opening of the museum in 1951, until his retirement in 1965. He lived on-site in a log cabin he had moved there. Many of his exhibits centred on the folk-art models he built to demonstrate pioneer activities. With gear and pulley mechanisms that visitors could turn, the models ground grain, ploughed fields, and drew water. Of his motivation to collect artifacts and build these interactive exhibits, he wrote, “My only profit has been the realization that I was making others happy, some of my happiest moments was to hear the children scream with delight(sic).”³³



5.2 Huron County Museum Postcard, c. 1967

education. His letter to Jim Gooding, Ontario Museums Advisor, states that he can't fill out the requisite (likely grant information) papers for him because he doesn't understand the words. Correspondence Neill to Gooding, 18 January 1962, "Museums Section Correspondence," File "Huron County Museum Goderich" 1959-1968, RG 47-51, Accession 20752, Box 11, OA; See also Keith Roulston, "Huron's antiquities get a modern showplace," *Museum Quarterly* 17:4, (November 1989), 24-31.

³² J.H. Neill, "Huron County Museum," Typescript, 1. One of the most enduring and comprehensive records of museums in this period is the transcript of Neill's oral description of every exhibit in his museum, as he viewed them. Recorded and transcribed by the Women's Institutes of Huron County in 1954, it constitutes a booklet of 29 single-spaced typed pages. Booklet, "Huron County Museum by J.H. Neill," Alice Davidson Scrapbook Number 1, OHS fonds, F 1139-4, MU 5443, Box 23A, OA.

³³ Cited in, *Huron County Pioneer Museum* (Goderich, Ontario: Huron County Pioneer Museum, 1980).

Similarly, Wilfred Jury of the University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario, formed a collection of both native and pioneer materials that he eventually placed in museums he developed during the 1950s. An archaeologist with a penchant for public education, Jury offered archaeological summer school programs in Midland, Ontario, site of Sainte-Marie among the Hurons. The Huron village at Sainte-Marie was re-built from Kenneth Kidd's and Jury's archaeological research under Jury's instruction, while Jury's historical collections were incorporated into a pioneer settlement he re-created using obsolete buildings from the London area.³⁴ Named Fanshawe Pioneer Village, and built as a living museum in commemoration of the early settlers of Western Ontario, it opened in 1959.³⁵

The beginnings of local government support of society- and collector-created local history museums can be seen with these museums. Within two years of opening Wellington County Museum, the WCHRS asked the County to assume responsibility for the museum, and its operational costs, which it did. The local council adopted and funded the Huron County Museum, while the Thames Valley Conservation Authority took on Fanshawe Pioneer Village.

Factors that acted as catalysts of museum making during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as filiopietism and civic-boosterism, continued their role during the post-war period. Litt maintains that those who participated in heritage ventures in the 1950s and 1960s were primarily propelled by a desire to memorialize their family legacies in their communities.³⁶ This observation is supported by the description of the founding of the Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty in 1953:

The character of the area began to change rapidly after the two world wars. The older families, fearful for the future, and nostalgic for the past were eager to preserve their pioneer heritage.³⁷

The opening ceremonies of the Jordan Museum featured the presentation of descendents of founding families to the Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario, Louis O. Breithaupt (W.H. Breithaupt's nephew and self-described fifth-generation Pennsylvania "Dutch").³⁸

Identification with the past is evident with the members of the WHS executive during this period; it consisted of descendents of early Scottish settlers to North Dumfries Township in Waterloo County, and of Pennsylvania-German settlers to Waterloo Township. Andrew Taylor, Will Barrie, and Jennie Cowan still lived in their original family farmsteads built in the early 1800s. Their great-grandparents were the lowland Scot counterparts in Waterloo County to the Pennsylvania-German Mennonite pioneers recognized by Breithaupt and his colleagues in the 1920s. Taylor and Barrie were

³⁴ A recent essay discusses the differing views of the importance and of the historical reconstruction of Ste. Marie. See Alan Gordon, "Heritage and Authenticity: The Case of Ontario's Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons," *Canadian Historical Review*, (September 2004).

³⁵ Wilfred Jury description of the village. Jury to McOuat, 14 August 1962, File "Fanshawe Pioneer Village and Museum 1959-1963," RG 47-51, Accession 20752, box 12, OA.

³⁶ Paul Litt, "Pliant Clio and Immutable Texts: The Historiography of a Historical Marking Program." *Public Historian* 19, no. 4 (Fall 1997): 7-28.

³⁷ Cited in a special anniversary newsletter of the Jordan Historical Museum, "The 20th of the Twenty: Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty 1953-1973," Alice Davidson Scrapbook Number 7, OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 4446, OA.

³⁸ Such acts of personal and community self-identification are also apparent in American versions of these organizations and their collections. David Lowenthal says these museums constitute forms of ancestor worship, and were created when the living memories they portray pass away from the descendents of the actual pioneers themselves. David Lowenthal, "Pioneer Museums" in, *History Museums in the United States*, 116-127.

active in provincial and national traditional farm organizations as was Cowan in her local Women's Institute. In 1952, Taylor published several local histories, including *Our Yesterdays*, a history of North Dumfries Township.³⁹ Both Page, a WHS vice-president, and Barrie were known for their extensive personal collections of objects from this settlement period, items that Barrie regarded as "evidences of pioneer history."⁴⁰ Emily Seibert, a teacher and long-serving secretary-treasurer of the society, was, like Mabel Dunham, a direct descendent of Samuel Eby one of the original Pennsylvania-German settlers in Waterloo County. Seibert also lived in her ancestral home in Kitchener. Also active in the leadership of the WHS, was W.H.E. Schmalz, a prominent local architect and builder of the neo-classic Kitchener City Hall in 1924, and son of W.H. Schmalz, the mayor of Kitchener in 1912, when the WHS was founded. In their oral histories, these individuals speak much of their family connections and the stories they heard as youngsters about the history of the area, as contributing to their later interests in the local past.⁴¹

The OHS, Local Museums and the Province: Forming a New Relationship toward Heritage Management

While individuals with a passion for collecting or with personal attachments to the past played an important role in developing local museums in the post-war period, the provincial government also played a key role in promoting their growth. Thanks in part to the efforts of OHS-affiliated museums, the provincial government introduced subsidies and eventually an advisory service for local museums. The Department of Education and the Department of Travel and Publicity each eventually administered museum programs. Increasingly, the functions and responsibilities of the OHS and of various departments within the Government of Ontario in supporting local museum development and operation, overlapped in the creation and upgrading of local museums, and directly influenced the WHS, its collections, and their eventual relocation to Doon Pioneer Village.

Renewed OHS Involvement

The renewed involvement of the OHS represented a major change in its direction. Nineteen forty-five can be regarded as the year in which the relationship between the OHS and its affiliates began to shift, with the OHS becoming more supportive of its local affiliates. Killan attributes the reversal of attitude in the OHS executive toward the resignation of Secretary Murray in 1945, and to the revival efforts of its new secretary, J.J. Talman, and of two executive members, C.W. Jeffreys and Fred Landon. They responded to the needs and interests of the local affiliates by launching a separate newsletter in July 1944. This bi-monthly pamphlet served as an informal exchange and update through which local affiliates could discuss on-going activities and challenges in their local history work. At the annual conference of the OHS held in Kitchener in 1945, the keynote speaker focused on the important work of local affiliates; delegates were told that post-war community planning needed to be based on an understanding of local history preservation. The efforts of the Women's Institutes in preserving local history and forming history museums in Ontario were also applauded at this meeting, including their

³⁹ Andrew Taylor, *Our Yesterdays: A History of the Township of North Dumfries, 1816-1952* (Galt, Ontario: Galt Printers, 1952).

⁴⁰ WHS Annual Report, 1960, 7.

⁴¹ Oral histories by these individuals are located in the Grace Schmidt Local History Room, Kitchener Public Library (KPL) W.C. Barrie OHT:004; Andrew Taylor, OHT:014-015; Jennie Cowan OHT 017; W.H.E. Schmalz OHT 036-037, Emily Seibert OHT 168-169.

operation of the Simcoe County Museum, which housed Andrew Hunter's archaeological collections.⁴²

Following a tour of the WHS museum, Wilfred Jury, and Effie Milner, founder of the Chatham Museum, called an impromptu meeting of all conference delegates interested in museum operations. This group convened immediately to share ideas and techniques for museum display, cataloguing and classification.⁴³ This gathering constituted the beginning of a separate sector of the OHS, one whose meetings, workshops and seminars were aimed at assisting local museum workers in their preservation and portrayal of the past.

While the local affiliates with museums developed a lobbying position within the OHS, the OHS itself attempted once again to establish a new relationship with the government to oversee historical activities in the province. The last time the OHS had attempted something of this nature it was to press the government to fund a provincial archives under the aegis of the OHS. The province decided instead to operate the archives itself. In 1945, the OHS submitted a proposal to the Royal Commission on Education, calling upon the provincial government to fund a central agency for historical activities, in the form of a "provincial history centre."⁴⁴ Ontario still had no provincial history museum, nor did it have a department or agency to coordinate the preservation activities of the provincial archives, local historical societies, and other heritage groups. The OHS envisioned that the centre would, among other activities, "promote the collection and preservation of museum material which illustrates the history of the province" and "stimulate the activities of the several good local museums already established and to assist in setting up new ones."⁴⁵ It would also have its own exhibition area. Envisioning a role for itself similar to that of the New York State Historical Association, with its headquarters in the Fenimore Mansion at Cooperstown, New York, and its rural Cooperstown Farmer's Museum across the street, the OHS proposal was targeted at broadening and supporting its own mandate through the developing educational, leisure and tourist concerns of the provincial government.⁴⁶

The OHS repeated the argument in the fall of 1946 at a small meeting of museum workers, organized by E.G. Cross, chief of the Extension Department of the Royal Ontario Museum. Arranging a meeting ostensibly to organize a professional association "to embrace all Ontario museums," he invited Peter Fisher of the WHS and others to attend. George Brown, author of the brief the OHS had presented to the Royal Commission on Education, elaborated on the need for historical societies to capitalize on a growing public interest in local history and to work co-operatively, operating under a central plan administered by a provincial headquarters.⁴⁷

⁴² Minutes, OHS Annual Conference 1945.

⁴³ OHS Newsletter, volume 2:1, (July 1945). See also Killan, *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 234, and Kerr-Wilson, 79.

⁴⁴ "Brief and Supporting Material Requesting the Establishment of an Historical Centre," Presented by the OHS to the Royal Commission on Education, Toronto, December 5, 1945.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁴⁶ Although the NYSHA was the recipient of funding from Stephen Clark, a philanthropist seeking to protect the economy of Cooperstown during the Depression by establishing the Baseball Hall of Fame, and by underwriting the NYSHA costs to move its headquarters to Cooperstown. He financed the Farmer's Museum project. See Kulik, "Designing the Past," 21.

⁴⁷ OHS Newsletter 3:2, (October 1946), 8.

An OHS Committee of Museum Workers

Neither a centralized provincial history centre nor an association of Ontario museums emerged from these initial efforts. However, in 1948, OHS affiliate members with museums formed a subcommittee called the Museum Section to advance discussions with the province to provide grants to local history museums in their role as educational institutions. T.P. Grubbe, president of the York Pioneers, astutely assessed the funding rubric of the newly formed Community Programmes Branch of the Department of Education. It offered matching grants to municipalities to fund adult education and recreation programmes. Few of these programmes were municipally initiated; rather their genesis lay as “incidental by-products” of voluntary associations.⁴⁸ The Department policy regarding the provision of such programmes was to keep them decentralized at the municipal level, with the province’s role limited to offering grants-in-aid and advisory assistance.⁴⁹ Acting on behalf of the newly formed Museum Section, Grubbe lobbied the province to include local museums in these community-funded programs. Despite the initial resentment of the OHS secretary toward this autonomous action, the OHS executive and membership supported this initiative at the organization’s 1948 annual general meeting.⁵⁰ They passed a resolution drawn up by Grubbe, asking that the provincial government make matching funds available to local museums “to ensure the preservation, enlargement and improvements of these adjuncts to our educational system.”⁵¹

Whereas there are located in the province of Ontario about 25 county historical societies and a number of these societies have established small museums for the collection and display of historical relics depicting the development of the counties from pioneer days;

These local historical museums have been providing a service to this province which has not been undertaken in the past by the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto; Through the unselfish devotion of a comparatively few persons in each locality these museums of pioneer relics provide free educational facilities to many thousands of school children and tourists each year;

Lack of funds to provide for housing and display of relics is a great handicap, and has prevented some societies from displaying the material they already have, which has had to be kept in storage and has prevented or hindered others in the desired expansion of this local educational service;

The source of funds of these societies has been a small fee from members plus in a few cases a most inadequate municipal grant ranging from \$50 to \$800; It is appreciated that no government could be expected to make general and indiscriminate grants to purely local societies or organizations and that definite qualification and eligibility standards and regulations would have to be established;

Be it therefore resolved at this annual meeting of the OHS that this information be laid before the provincial government, and that the government be respectfully requested to re-establish a plan of financial grants to supplement the funds raised locally by the various historical societies, associations and museums, and that the

⁴⁸ *Report of the Royal Commission on Education in Ontario*, (Toronto: Baptists Johnston, 1950), 651.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 652.

⁵⁰ OHS Executive Committee Minutes 31 January 1948, *Ontario History*, 40, 1948, 106.

⁵¹ *Ibid*.

government be requested to consider within certain maximum limits, making grants equal in amount to those raised locally.

Be it further resolved that the government . . . confer with this society on the best means of furthering and assisting the study of, and research in, the local history of Ontario.⁵²

This resolution mapped the future relationship of the province with Ontario's community museums, identifying it as being based on the concept of these small, local museums as municipal educational and recreational services, not static collections of private societies. It implicitly endorsed the object-lesson philosophy of the museum and the importance of local history for community edification. Paired with the province's policy on supporting local education and recreation programs,⁵³ the proposal laid the foundation for future provincial operational grants to be made to local history museums based on a formula of matching local funds, contingent on applicant museums meeting standards of operation set by the province. It also suggested an advisory role for both the province and the OHS for local museums.

However, the government remained undecided about supporting the resolution. Ultimately, the lobbying of the founder of Huronia House Museum in Midland, turned the province's will toward small museums. William Cranston, who was also a successful businessman, and civic-booster, was a personal friend of Leslie Frost, Ontario's premier at the time. Cranston had been getting money for his museum through the Ontario Education Department's Community Programmes grants to Midland for recreation programs, by having the museum curator's position labelled as an assistant director of recreation. In 1950, he appealed to Frost for more money for the museum, and Frost questioned his ministerial staff about this arrangement.⁵⁴

John Tett, director of the Community Programmes Branch, was enthusiastic about developing a policy to issue grants to museums. He recommended that an order-in-council be introduced to amend the regulations governing programs of recreation so that grants to a maximum of \$300 could be made available to municipalities operating museums. He advised that these grants be tied to standards of operation established by the Department of Education and that eligibility be assessed by a museum professional such as Gerald Brett of the Royal Ontario Museum. Tett argued, prophetically, that the grant might serve as an incentive to establish local museums and raise the standards of existing ones. Because so few museums would be likely to qualify, he thought these grants would not exceed annual appropriations of \$2,000 to \$3,000 from the Department's annual budget of \$43 million.⁵⁵

However, his superior, Dana Porter, Minister of Education, stepped in and warned Frost against taking a path of funding commitment to local museums, which he argued would be wrong for the province and its pocketbook. Porter questioned initiating any kind of provincial commitment to local museums.

This proposal is a new policy in the manner of paying grants under the Community Programmes Branch. It would also involve a new commitment. Our experience is

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Recreation was defined as encompassing cultural, historical, physical, and social activities and services, Ontario Regulations 321/51, "Interpretation."

⁵⁴ Cranston to Frost, 28 July 1950, Frost to Cranston 28 July 1950, Premier Leslie Frost General Correspondence, File "Frost – General Correspondence, Museum Grant Transfers," RG 3-23, box 115, OA.

⁵⁵ Memo J.G. Althouse, Chief Director, Department of Education to Dana Porter, Minister of Education, 31 August 1950, Museum Grant Transfers, Premier Leslie Frost General Correspondence, File "Frost – General Correspondence," RG 3-23, box 115, OA.

that once a commitment of this kind is made for grants, the demand rapidly rises. I am not at all satisfied that our expenditures would be limited to the \$2000 or \$3000 mentioned. By the encouragement of this sort of activity, we would be whetting appetites and the \$300 grant that may look good at present time would seem worth little more as the municipalities found that they had to spend more and more money to maintain local museums. Personally, I am against getting into new grant commitments of this kind if it can possibly be avoided. Also, I do not know why we should have any responsibility towards local museums, as such.⁵⁶

Porter would eventually be proven correct in his forecast that the province's expenditures on local museums would increase. When he left the portfolio in 1951, the major opponent to the grants to museums was gone.

In the same year, the Community Programmes Branch provided the province's first advisory service to local museums in the form of a technical leaflet on the rudiments of starting a local museum. No advice of this kind had been written for small museums in Ontario for thirty years, when Harlan Smith had published material titled "Museums - Do's and Don'ts: Suggestions for Persons Interested in Starting a Local Museum" the leaflet was written by Cranston for the province's *Community Courier*.⁵⁷ Cranston addressed the increasing interest in creating local museums in the province. Stressing the "do's," Cranston presented ideas that were central in the nascent museum field: that collecting was vital in a period of rapid material change, that widespread community support was fundamental to establish a local museum, and that museums could be made cost-effective through admission fees. Cranston suggested possible resources for museums, and proposed free sources of collections and even museum buildings, such as old houses like the one that had been donated to the town of Midland and used as a museum. He outlined opportunities for affiliation with schools and community groups. Beyond collecting material history, he also recommended recording of local history narratives. With quality exhibits and programs for the visiting public, Cranston's museum combined admission revenues of \$1200 with donations to meet the museum's annual operating budget of \$2000.

At the same time, the Department of Travel and Publicity was eyeing the potential resources of local community museums. Because it regarded these museums as tourist destinations with revenue potential, it responded to the OHS brief to the Department of Education to co-ordinate historical efforts across Ontario. Heritage and tourism had been twinned at the first Ontario Tourist Conference in Niagara Falls in 1949, which the province had organized. A suitable site for a discussion on marketing the past to tourists, this city also had the oldest museum in Ontario and was a self-supporting and major attraction.⁵⁸ The concept of the past as commodity was presented to the 1949 annual meeting of the OHS by Louis P. Cecile, the minister of Travel and Publicity. Provincial history, he stated, was an important and marketable asset. "Necessary local work" in this area would be made possible with the help of his Department.⁵⁹

Cecile was responding to a resolution passed at the tourist conference that called for the province to arrange a conference of historical groups to co-ordinate historical development in the province. The first Ontario Historical Conference was held in January of 1950, and the province agreed to create a Provincial Historical Advisory Council, with representatives from the OHS, to help

⁵⁶ Memo Dana Porter to Leslie Frost, 1 September 1950, Museum Grant Transfers, Premier Leslie Frost General Correspondence, File "Frost – General Correspondence," RG 3-23, box 115, OA.

⁵⁷ *Community Courier* Information Supplement MS-1, "Museums – Do's and Don'ts," (October 1950).

⁵⁸ A commercial museum, the Niagara Falls Museum is discussed earlier in the thesis.

⁵⁹ Cited in Kerr-Wilson, 75.

preserve, develop and publicize Ontario's historical resources.⁶⁰ Previously the responsibility of the OHS, these functions shifted into the government purview as heritage interest grew in the province.

In November of 1950, an Ontario Provincial Historical Advisory Board held its first meeting and identified the problems of historical societies and their small museums as one of their four areas of interest.⁶¹ In March of 1951, the Board urged the government to provide cooperative aid to municipalities or other bodies to improve these institutions.⁶² Later that year, Tett reported back to this committee that the province was prepared to introduce grants to local history museums under the Community Programmes Branch.⁶³ Ontario regulation 321/51 "Grants to Museums," specified that qualifying museums had to be open a minimum of 3 hours per day, 120 days of the year, had to have a paid curator, and to the distress of many local societies, had to be under municipal management, in a building owned by a municipal government.⁶⁴ For the WHS, and others, this last condition would require it to transfer the title of the museum and collection to a local authority to qualify for funding. Historical societies in Ontario had mixed feelings about placing ownership of their collections and future local heritage preservation in the hands of potentially capricious councils who had shown few efforts at protecting it in the past.⁶⁵ For several years, the OHS argued the case to the province for extending grants to society-owned museums.⁶⁶

The tenuous management and funding dynamic between society museums and various levels of government was also considered within the national *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951*,⁶⁷ published concurrently with the provincial government's decision to fund small museums. Commonly known as the "Massey Report," the crux of the study was the role of government funding in protecting and developing cultural and heritage initiatives. Local museums, the report observed, were desperate for government funding assistance to preserve threatened material heritage and to interpret it to the public. Referring to the Miers-Markham Report of 1932 on the state of museums in Canada, the Massey Report maintained that the museums in the nation continued to suffer for many of the same reasons outlined in that earlier document: lack of funding, accommodation and professional training.

In Canada, with a very few notable exceptions, local museums maintain a courageous but precarious existence, giving to their communities such services as their unsuitable quarters, inadequate budgets and the volunteer help of a few enthusiasts can maintain. It is probably true that most Canadian citizens remain throughout their lives quite unaware of the pleasure and enlightenment which an adequately planned and equipped museum could give them. The sorry plight of museums in Canada is appropriately matched by a widespread public indifference to their inadequacy.⁶⁸

⁶⁰ Summary of Proceedings, First Annual Ontario Historical Conference, 11 January 1950, Premier Leslie Frost, General Correspondence, File "Historical Sites," RG 3-23, box 69, OA.

⁶¹ Minutes of Proceedings of the Provincial Historical Advisory Board, 4 November 1950, Premier Leslie Frost General Correspondence, File "Historical Sites," RG 3-23, box 69, OA.

⁶² Minutes of Proceedings of the Provincial Historical Advisory Board, 16 March 1951, in Premier Leslie Frost General Correspondence, File "Historical Sites," RG 3-23, box 69, OA.

⁶³ Steve Otto, "History of the Grants Programme," Unpublished paper, 14 August 1978; Ministry of Culture and Recreation Minister's Papers, RG 47-48, Accession 19909, box 7 "Discussion Paper," 1-2, OA.

⁶⁴ Regulations of Ontario, 321/51.

⁶⁵ OHS Council Minutes, 28 June 1951.

⁶⁶ See for instance, OHS Executive Committee Minutes, 17 October 1953; OHS Council Minutes, 10 June 1954, cited also in Kerr-Wilson, 75. In 1973 historical societies were added to the group of governing bodies eligible to apply for museum grants.

⁶⁷ *Report of the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1949-1951*, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1951).

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 92.

By this time, there were approximately twenty-three local historical museums in Ontario, most operated by local historical societies.⁶⁹ As noted by Massey, their overall condition had not improved since the Miers-Markham Report; few had paid curators or sufficient resources. The Community Programmes Branch of the province conducted a survey of its potential clients in 1953 and reached the same conclusions.⁷⁰

The WHS and the Idea of Living History

The WHS's museum was an exemplar of the museum condition described in the Massey Report. By the middle of 1952, Peter Fisher had retired. For some months the museum had no curator at all. The Society was short of cash, and a collection of stuffed birds was distributed to schools early in the year because the Society could not afford to have an exhibit case built to display them.⁷¹ Cowan, like Dunham and Breithaupt before her, was desperate to improve the museum's situation and sought advice from the province. Thomas Leishman of the Community Programmes Branch spoke to the WHS council in the fall of 1952, outlining the conditions that would enable the WHS museum to qualify for provincial funding assistance: a location in a municipally-owned building, overseen by a committee appointed by a municipal council that would provide operating funding to a minimum stated in the provincial regulation. Cowan's fears that these restrictions would prove a stumbling block for the WHS museum were confirmed when she turned to the councils of the County of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener to see if either of these authorities could participate as municipal partners. She was informed that neither could provide the minimum matching funds necessary for grant qualification, and certainly not a building.⁷²

Just when it appeared that there were few options left for supporting the WHS museum in any but the most minimal manner, a local physician suggested a remedy to preserve the rural past of Waterloo County and revitalize the museum. Dr. A.E. (Dusty) Broome was a Kitchener radiologist whose 1951 visit to the Rijksmuseum voor Volkskunde in Arnhem, Holland, left an indelible impression.⁷³ Founded in the same year as the WHS, 1912, this open air museum portrayed the traditional rural folk life of Holland through the re-creation of an historical milieu of rescued, restored, and recreated landscapes, buildings, artifacts, and performances. Thousands of visitors

⁶⁹ Some historical societies had collections which were not yet in museum space, so these numbers are approximate. The Massey Commission report listed as historical society museums, the WHS museum, Brant County Museum, Kingston Murney Tower Museum, Niagara Historical Society Museum, Huron Institute, Scadding Cabin, Colborne Lodge (operated by the Women's Canadian Historical Society), Simcoe County Museum (Women's Institute), WCHRS Museum, Haldimand County Historical Society, Norwich and District Museum and Archives, Eva Brook Donly Museum, Huron County Museum, Joseph Brant Museum, Woodstock Museum, Huronia Museum, Bytown Museum, Gage House, and Lundy's Lane Historical Museum. The Oxford County Museum and the Chatham-Kent museum were operated by respective municipalities. The Peterborough Historical Society Museum collections had been mothballed and dispersed during the 1930s and 1940s, and it was not resurrected until later in the 1950s.

⁷⁰ Of the 15 museum curators who responded, only four reported that public response to their museums was enthusiastic, the other eleven circled "apathetic." Most rated their exhibits as adequate to poor. "Survey Museums 1953," Department of Education, Community Programmes Branch, "Main Office Files," RG S-1, box 1, OA.

⁷¹ WHS Minutes, 1 March 1952.

⁷² WHS Minutes, 12 September 1952, 11 October 1952, 7 November 1952, *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 8 November 1952.

⁷³ Rijksmuseum voor Volkskunde translates as the State Museum of Folk Culture. This museum is also called the Openluchtmuseum.

annually joined the performers in re-visiting the folk past of Holland. For Broome, this total immersion into a recreated and animated setting from another time was both novel and deeply satisfying, especially when compared to the static and stilted atmosphere of most Canadian museums. Referring to this visit, he later said, "I realized that the Museum in Arnhem, Holland gave more information on Dutch cultural history than could be obtained by any other method, independent of the time involved."⁷⁴

Stimulated by fears of the loss of traditional lifestyles and landscapes, the founders of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkskunde intended it to be a museum of the daily life of ordinary people. Its founders had used Arthur Hazelius' Skansen museum as a prototype.⁷⁵ On his return from Europe, Dr. Broome pursued his interest in open-air museums by visiting American models that offered similar experiences: Williamsburg, the Cooperstown Farmer's Museum and Old Sturbridge Village. Like their European antecedents, American open-air museums focused on pre-industrial community life and traditional activities.⁷⁶

Inspired by the potential of a similar museum in a Waterloo County setting, Broome prepared a proposal to the cities of Kitchener and Waterloo in April of 1953 and later visited Jennie Cowan to present his idea of an Ontario pioneer village museum to her and the WHS.⁷⁷

As Miers and Markham had noted in 1932, so it remained in 1953; there were no restored or recreated historic village museums in Canada, despite their popularity elsewhere. Their ascent in the United States was partially an outcome of philanthropists with existing collections: (Shelburne and Old Sturbridge Village), and particular ideals they wished to promote: the patrician past of Colonial Williamsburg (Rockefeller), or American democracy, industry and ingenuity (Ford). Cooperstown, which interpreted the rural past of Upper New York State, was also financed by philanthropy, but its donor, Edward Clark, built it in conjunction with the New York State Historical Association (NYSHA), an organization he moved wholesale into his adjacent Fenimore Museum building. Clark worked with the NYSHA and hired historians and folklorists to guide the development and interpretation at this site. Louis C. Jones, the curator and a director of the NYSHA, described it as a

⁷⁴ Dr. A.E. Broome, "Address at the opening of the Ontario Pioneer Community Museum," WHS Annual Report 48, (1960), 51.

⁷⁵ Consensus rests that Hazelius and Skansen were the progenitors of this form of historic presentation. Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History*, (Nashville, Tennessee: The American Association for State and Local History); Charles B. Hosmer Jr., *Presence of the Past* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1965); and *Preservation Comes of Age*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981); Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States," *Radical History Review* 25, (1981), 63-96. Elizabeth Mosby Adler states that eighteenth century romanticism, nineteenth century European nationalism, and the venue of world expositions in London and Paris coalesced into the idea of preserving and acting out the past at historical villages in Europe; Adler, "Problems in the Development of an Outdoor Museum of Folklife: A Case Study," (M.A. thesis, State University of New York, 1974.) The history of Hazelius' work and the Skansen museum is laid out by Alexander, in *Museum Masters*, Hudson in *Museums of Influence*, Perrin, *Outdoor Museums*, and Jay Anderson, *Time Machines: The World of Living History*, while Michael Wallace and Gaynor Kavanagh maintain that Skansen and similar enterprises that followed in other European countries were motivated by a fusion of romantic nostalgia and dismay at the social products of the industrial revolution. Skansen is compared to Williamsburg and Fortress Louisbourg by Terry Maclean in, "The Making of Public History: A Comparative Study of Skansen Open Air Museum, Sweden; Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia; and the Fortress of Louisbourg National historic site, Nova Scotia." *Material History Review* 47, (Spring 1998). On the Rijksmuseum voor Volkskunde see www.openluchtmuseum.nl; accessed 10 June 2006.

⁷⁶ Henry Ford had modelled Greenfield Village in Michigan on Skansen, but chose to include the industrial period in his village. Stephen Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876-1926*, 151-158 discusses Ford and his museum.

⁷⁷ WHS Minutes, 30 July 1953, KPL.

museum whose purpose was to preserve and interpret the history of everyman for everyman; those who “worked in the field and shop and kitchen.”⁷⁸ Jones’ assistant director, Frederick Rath Jr. argued that museums like his were one of the fastest growing businesses in the country due to a rising education level, a shorter work week, and longer paid vacation, and the increased accessibility to their sites lent by the automobile. Like Jones and others in the American museum field, he viewed museums as educational institutions.⁷⁹

With the Rijksmuseum voor Volkskunde and these other models in mind, Broome fashioned his proposal for an Ontario Museum of Pioneer Life. His initial mission statement and museum goals embodied the ethnographic and folkloric orientation of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkskunde: “The development should be an evolution and might be patterned on that now in existence at Arnhem, Holland as a National Historic Shrine and a repository of historic buildings, furniture, equipment, clothing, documents, and books.”⁸⁰ Dr. Broome’s proposal emphasized the preservation of both the natural and built environment of the pioneer period in Ontario. The museum would “maintain woods, unspoiled” and an arboretum, wild bird sanctuary, fish and other wildlife exhibits, such as an inhabited beaver dam. The museum village portion would contain:

By removal, from their original sites, buildings, now in existence and threatened with early disappearance, illustrating early pioneer history. Buildings suggested should include Indian Habitations, A Pioneer Log House, Early Grist Mill, and Oil Press Mill, a Blacksmith Shop, a Maple Sugar Camp, a Cooper’s Shop, a Mennonite Home and even a covered bridge.⁸¹

The objectives in his museum plan stressed the collection and preservation of “objects, clothing and documents of pioneer culture and crafts and their housing in original quarters” and “the spread and demonstration of Canadian folk-lore in scientific and popular circles,” as well as the provision of “a teaching centre in Canadian Pioneer History.” A museum curator would be “available for talks at all educational levels on the subject of Canadiana.”⁸² While the subject of the proposed museum may now appear ambitious, the geographic focus was no less. The museum would be a national historic shrine about rural Ontario pioneer life concentrating on Western Ontario and “accenting the history of the Grand River Valley.”⁸³

The members of the WHS council heartily received Broome’s proposal when he addressed them in September of 1953, and Frank Page and Will Barrie immediately passed a motion offering the village any articles in the WHS collection deemed suitable, and their assistance with the project.⁸⁴ The idea also fit with previous suggestions calling for the Society to preserve the history and way of life of the small villages disappearing in the county due to a shift in population.⁸⁵ The WHS allied with Broome to muster support across several political and organizational levels to mobilize this promising idea, inviting local politicians and provincial and county associations to participate in this

⁷⁸ Louis C. Jones, “The Cooperstown Idea: History for Everyman,” *American Heritage*, New Series Volume 1:3, (Spring 1951), 32.

⁷⁹ “1959 Museum Section Workshop Report”, in OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5444, OA.

⁸⁰ Memo: Broome to “The Mayor and Council City of Kitchener,” April 27, 1953, File “Correspondence” Dr. Broome materials, OPCF papers, 996.163 box 38. DHC,

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² It is quite likely that Broome modelled this idea after the NYSHA/Cooperstown’s seminars in American History series.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ WHS Minutes, 21 September 1953, KPL.

⁸⁵ WHS Minutes, 25 Oct 1945, KPL.

venture. Broome had spread his vision for a pioneer village on fertile ground; with unprecedented enthusiasm, the cities of Waterloo, Kitchener and Galt, and the County of Waterloo lined up behind the village concept, possibly encouraged by the widespread and successful parades and pageants held in 1952 to celebrate the centennial of Waterloo County.⁸⁶

A Museum of Rural Life is Proposed



5.3 Dr. Broome speaking to Women's Institute, members, 1953, holding his plan for an Ontario Rural Life Museum. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

Remarkably, no less than two months after Broome first voiced his idea to Cowan, a group of local representatives of a diverse group of heritage and educational associations in the province met at the Doon School of Fine Arts, south of Kitchener to promote Broome's plan. Representatives of the WHS, municipal councils, provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA's) and local members of the OHS, Federated Women's Institutes, United Empire Loyalists, Ontario Junior Farmers Association, and Pennsylvania-German Folklore Association, among others, subscribed to the idea of a village museum in Waterloo County. For WHS members, the Ontario Pioneer Community was an exciting groundbreaking heritage project with provincial significance, and one that suggested a solution to their museum crisis. For the local politicians and councils who supported the project, the village idea promised provincial funding and tourist revenues. For the other heritage and historical associations in the province that were ready to participate in the project, the Ontario

⁸⁶ See Geoffrey Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga: A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County's German Identity," *Ontario History* Vol. XCI:2, (Autumn 1999), 130-149.

Pioneer Community was a singular, if not overdue, opportunity for research and for demonstrating to a wide audience their interests in the province's rural heritage. No previous heritage venture of provincial significance had gained such widespread grassroots support so quickly. From this October 1953 meeting, a local action group was appointed to prepare a brief to the Provincial Government to support the development of an Ontario Rural Life Museum.

The brief reiterated much that was in Broome's original concept, adding details such as a Mohawk Longhouse, a fur trading post, and the components of a crossroads community, plus a wheelwright's shop, carpentry shop, potter's workshop, school, church, tollgate, coaching inn, community hall for demonstrations of pioneer crafts, and a Women's Institute building. While the village was intended to be laid out chronologically, from the earliest historical structures to those most recent, its final design depended on a "master plan," which would "be made at the outset."⁸⁷ The brief was delivered personally to the Minister of Agriculture in early November 1953.

The Ontario Pioneer Community believed that the project, once conceived, would be "sponsored by a department or departments of the Ontario Government."⁸⁸ As the brief to F.S. Thomas, the Minister of Agriculture stated:

The plans suggested above would entail considerable expenditure. ... We know, however, that Ontario would not consider a Provincial Pioneer Museum unless it could, eventually, compare favourably with similar State Institutions across the border or small Federal Museums in Europe. Nor would we desire any lesser institution in our County. The cost to any one department should not be excessive as appropriations should come from the departments of Agriculture, Education, Wild Life, and Planning and Development.⁸⁹

Citing Cooperstown as its working model, the brief proposed that revenues from gate receipts could offset most operating expenses, but development costs were implied as being the responsibility of the province. Thus, the brief asked the Minister "to recommend that the Government of Ontario proceed with the construction of an all-Ontario Pioneer Museum at an early date."⁹⁰ It argued that the museum, wherever located, must be representative of pioneer life everywhere in Ontario and of all ethnic groups. "Items from every county should be sought."⁹¹

Selling the Model to the Government

In theory, the proposed village was to be a province-wide museum; in reality, the six-member committee elected to prepare and present the project proposal to the Minister of Agriculture, represented the political and heritage concerns of Waterloo County. The two MLA's, and four members of the WHS executive who comprised this committee, Cowan, Taylor, Barrie and Broome, signed themselves as the "Waterloo County Pioneer Museum Committee."⁹² They had a dual mission:

⁸⁷ "Brief to the Honourable S.F. Thomas," reprinted in the WHS Annual Report, 1953, 31-39; "Pioneer Village Plan Gets Support: Agriculture Minister 'Eager'; Request \$10,000 from Ontario," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 4 November 1953.

⁸⁸ Undated circular, "Museum of Rural Pioneer Life," signed by H. Lefty Weichel, Warden, Corporation of Waterloo, A.E. Broome, Chairman, Pioneer Museum Committee, W.H.E. Schmalz, President WHS. OPCF fonds, Correspondence 1950-1959, 996.163, box 3, DHC. Government funding expectations were confirmed by correspondence Hugh C. Elliott to Mary Tivy, 24 September 1990.

⁸⁹ Brief, 34.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Brief, 33.

⁹² *Galt Evening Reporter*, 23 October 1953; *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 23 October 1953. Leavine stated that

to get a commitment from the province to invest in the village museum concept, and equally important, to secure Waterloo County as its site. Because the neighbouring city of Guelph was potentially a preferred site for the museum, Waterloo County mounted a campaign to secure the site, and offered to donate land for the project and \$5,000.⁹³ Under the triple letterhead of the WHS, Waterloo Pioneer Museum Committee, and the County of Waterloo, a prospectus was circulated to solicit support for the placement of this project in Waterloo County. The City of Kitchener also promised a grant of \$5,000, while the Kitchener Chamber of Commerce separately lobbied the Minister to place the project at Cressman's Woods.⁹⁴

We know that you are interested in the establishment in Ontario of a Museum of Rural Pioneer Life ... Such a plan is now being seriously considered in the form of a pioneer village or crossroads with its adjacent pioneer homestead and early industrial activity. Items in the proposed pioneer village would be selected on a province-wide basis and would illustrate pioneer activities through the entire province. The WHS is prepared to contribute its extensive collection of historic items toward the development of the pioneer community. Many other communities and items have also been offered. We wish to present important information as to a proposed site which had been offered to the Government for such an institution. The site is the Homer Watson Memorial Park at Doon in Waterloo County ... When you are asked for your opinion of various sites in Ontario for the Pioneer Village we ask you to give serious consideration to the Homer Watson Memorial Park.⁹⁵

Guelph posed a serious threat for the site of any provincially backed pioneer village, because in 1946 at its annual meeting in Guelph, the OHS had passed a resolution proposing Guelph as the site for a museum of rural history. The resolution called for the province to create a museum of rural history "with an authentic pioneer homestead with fences, implements in their natural setting, together with furniture and utensils," at the Ontario Agricultural College located there.⁹⁶ The Federated Women's Institutes had formally supported this motion,⁹⁷ and John Root, MLA from Wellington County, and Albert Wells, city of Guelph alderman, petitioned to secure the village to this site, or one nearby.⁹⁸ They suggested naming this village after the retiring Minister of Agriculture, Thomas L. Kennedy, who had thought the location and plan was a "splendid idea."⁹⁹ To its credit, the

"many would think the stunt a promotion for Waterloo County, while actually the museum is intended to serve the entire province. The board agreed."

⁹³ Ibid. "The board acted on the advice of Dr. G.E. Reaman of the OAC who suggested the group send a committee to Toronto as soon as possible, as Guelph, sponsoring a similar move for a museum near there, also contemplates taking action shortly."

⁹⁴ "Cressman's Woods Top Pioneer Village Site," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 7 August 1954; "Principal Sources of Revenue," Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation File, "Finance," box 1, 1956-1963, DHC.

⁹⁵ Brief, 35.

⁹⁶ "Need More Support for Rural Museum," *Guelph Daily Mercury*, 29 January, 1954.

⁹⁷ Motion, "Establishing a memorial to our pioneers," Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, undated, Premier Leslie Frost Correspondence, File "Department of Agriculture, Farm Equipment (Pioneer)," RG 3-23, box 2, OA.

⁹⁸ Correspondence Albert Wells to John Root, 19 December 1952; Root to Ernest Young, Executive Assistant, Office of the Prime Minister, 17 January 1953; Wells to Young, 19 February 1953; Root to Frost, 21 September 1953; Wells to Frost, 4 January 1954, Premier Leslie Frost Correspondence, File "Department of Agriculture, Farm Equipment (Pioneer)," RG 3-23, box 2, OA.

⁹⁹ Correspondence Thomas Kennedy, Minister of Agriculture, to Ernest Young, Executive Assistant, Office of the Prime Minister, 6 January 1953, Premier Leslie Frost Correspondence, File "Department of Agriculture, Farm Equipment (Pioneer)," RG 3-23, box 2, OA.

Ontario Agricultural College already had a museum of rural artifacts, expertise on traditional farming methods, as well as an expanse of land available for such a museum on the southern edge of Guelph. W.E. Hamilton, the MPP who represented Guelph, added that the OAC plant facilities and services that were in place could be extended easily to serve a village museum on its site.¹⁰⁰

Premier Frost's response was reportedly "rather non-committal" pending information on capital cost expectations.¹⁰¹ George Reaman, a professor at OAC contacted Louis C. Jones, to find out the costs of operating a village museum, and forwarded these substantial figures back to Frost. Jones' information may have set Frost against the idea; in 1953, the operating budget for Cooperstown was \$102,000, with capital costs in excess of \$75,000. Jones also advocated the need for careful supervision and attention to "every single architectural, decorative and furnishing detail" and sound scholarship. He suggested starting small, with just a farm unit to begin with.¹⁰²

Waterloo County also faced competition from the Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty, which opened in 1953.¹⁰³ Supported by Jordan Wines, this museum's collections of Mennonite artifacts pre-dated those objects in the WHS collections, and the museum itself already comprised a small complex of buildings, including a Mennonite farm and old schoolhouse. The museum was managed by Ruth Home, whose extensive museum experience in the Education Department at the ROM (1928–1946) and teaching experience at Ontario College of Art (1946–1964) made her one of the few trained curators in a local history museum in the province. In his speech at the museum opening, Lt.-Governor Breithaupt applauded her curatorial skills in creating an exemplary museum.

Everything is so attractively displayed that the museum sets a standard worthy of study by societies which control museums of their own... Miss Home is responsible for the excellence in display.¹⁰⁴

Louis C. Jones, credited Miss Home with making the Jordan Museum "the best little museum in North America." He said, "I constantly send folks up here to see what can be done with the aid of light, space, colour, and interpretation. Things which once cluttered the attics of the community have something to say to visitors at the museum."¹⁰⁵ Homes went on to receive an award of merit from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) for her work.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the 1950s she consulted for many historical societies and their museums.¹⁰⁷

In February of 1953, the F.R. Nunnemaker, president of the Jordan Museum and a descendent of the earliest settlers to the area, had written to Frost asking that the village of Jordan and the Jordan museum be selected officially as Ontario's first memorial museum and pioneer village. He listed the reasons for this choice: the village of Jordan had not radically changed since 1865 and most of the

¹⁰⁰ "OAC Site Favored (sic) for Pioneer Village," *Guelph Daily Mercury*, 26 July 1954.

¹⁰¹ Correspondence Young to Kennedy, 12 January 1953, Premier Leslie Frost Correspondence, File

"Department of Agriculture, Farm Equipment (Pioneer)," RG 3-23, box 2, OA.

¹⁰² Correspondence Jones to Reaman, 3 February 1953, Premier Leslie Frost Correspondence, File "Department of Agriculture, Farm Equipment (Pioneer)," RG 3-23, box 2, OA.

¹⁰³ Cressman's Woods Top Pioneer Village Site," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 7 August 1954.

¹⁰⁴ Ontario History, Volume XLV:3, (Summer, 1953), 3.

¹⁰⁵ Jones' praise for Home is cited in, "Cultural Dynamo Jordan Museum Praised," *St. Catherines Standard*, 19 May 1956.

¹⁰⁶ Cited in Dorothy Duncan, "Remembering Ruth Home," *Past Reflections: Museum Clippings*, (Toronto: Ontario Historical Society, 1994), 12.

¹⁰⁷ Home worked as a consultant for the Wellington County Museum, Hiram Walker Museum in Windsor, the United Counties Museum in Cornwall, the Lennox and Addington Museum in Napanee, and the Buffalo Historical Museum, among others. Her obituary appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, "Enthusiast for Museums, Planned Six," 5 November 1965.

original buildings were intact; the Niagara area was already a tourist draw; and there was an abundance of pioneer material available to furnish the complex. Moreover, he wasn't asking for money.

In short, there is no need to create the objects of the pioneer past or to reproduce houses, for in Jordan, the material is already there. . . . This is not a request for financial assistance. The initial capital for the establishment of the museum and its sponsorship for its continuance have been found elsewhere, but we are anxious for official recognition for reasons of prestige and as a stimulus to further efforts on our part.¹⁰⁸

Consequently, with these potential competitors in mind, the proposal that the Waterloo County Pioneer Museum Committee delivered to Honourable F.S. Thomas, minister of agriculture, in November 1953, not only outlined the Ontario Rural Life Museum project and intimated the province's expected role, but also argued the rationale for a Waterloo County location at equal length. It concluded:

We would ask you, Sir to give this formal request, to have the Pioneer Village located on the appropriate rural site, in our County, your sincere, sympathetic and early consideration.¹⁰⁹

This committee touted Cressman's Woods, which already had mythic status, as the locus of the site for the pioneer village. Homer Watson, Waterloo County's pre-eminent artist had captured these primal woods on canvas, and they were commemorated in 1943 as the Homer Watson Memorial Park. Andrew Taylor prepared a historic background for the placement of the pioneer village at this site.¹¹⁰ The location incorporated the landing where John Galt's historic Huron Road, which connected Guelph and Goderich, crossed the Grand River. Prior to Galt's Canada Company purchasing it, the Six Nations had owned the land, which was given to them by King George III in return for their support in the American War of Independence. The Jesuit Father Dailion had visited the area in 1628 as did Father Brébeuf two years later. The woods were featured in the 1937 WHS Annual Report's account of a local legend wherein a natural spring appeared miraculously in the woods when a Huron warrior and his betrothed were killed there in battle.¹¹¹ The site was situated strategically across the Grand River from the Pioneer Memorial Tower, and beside Homer Watson Memorial Park, forming a heritage landscape triangle.

In practical terms, the site's greatest assets were its pastoral setting, its distance from urban encroachment but proximity to the planned Highway 401, and price: the County of Waterloo promised to donate the land it owned there to the province, should the site be chosen. As well, Dr. G.E. Reaman, president of the Ontario Pennsylvania-German Folk-Lore Society, offered the society's wealth of material as well as a building for the pioneer village, if it were located in Waterloo County. The brief to the Minister of Agriculture delicately eschewed other potential sites, alluding to the proximity of college buildings to the proposed Guelph location: it stated that "It is highly improbable that it [Cressman's Woods] would ever be overshadowed by any modern institution that would

¹⁰⁸ Correspondence F.R. Nunnamaker to Leslie Frost, 16 February 1953, Premier Leslie Frost Correspondence, File "Department of Agriculture, Farm Equipment (Pioneer)," RG 3-23, box 2, OA.

¹⁰⁹ Brief, 35.

¹¹⁰ Correspondence A. Taylor to A.E. Broome, 27 September 1953.

¹¹¹ Walter Cunningham, "The Legend of Oromocto Springs in Attiwandaron Park," WHS Annual Report 1937, 244.

detract from its essential pioneer appearance.”¹¹² Unlike Guelph, “the park is in a county whose people are highly conscious of historical values and who would consider such an institution as a sacred trust,” citing the record of the WHS as proof.¹¹³ Much to the frustration of Verne McIlwraith of the *Guelph Daily Mercury*, other than Alderman Wells, local officials in Guelph lived up to this slight, and did not fight for the site of the museum at the Ontario Agricultural College, the one which McIlwraith viewed as the “only logical” setting for financial reasons. “We doubt if any government would risk the consequences of placing a Memorial community in a comparatively out of the way location when it could be erected elsewhere at less construction and operational costs.”¹¹⁴

While these localities competed to have the museum placed in their communities throughout the fall of 1953 and spring of 1954, the government made no firm promises concerning the project. Neither did it discourage the Waterloo County Pioneer Museum Committee. The Minister of Agriculture was reportedly “eager” to proceed with the project, and with Broome’s urging, formed a committee of representatives of agricultural heritage societies in Ontario to finalize an appropriate site for the museum.¹¹⁵ In July 1954, this committee, which had representatives from the OHS, Federation of Women’s Institutes of Ontario, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Junior Farmers of Ontario, and the Agriculture Committee of the Ontario Chambers of Commerce, examined two sites in Guelph and the site at Cressman’s Woods. Much to the relief of the Waterloo County contingent, they chose the latter, apparently on the basis of its preferred setting, although the lobby for this decision had been by far the best organized.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Somewhat ironically, the site today (2005) is overshadowed by a federal penitentiary for women built in the 1990s.

¹¹³ “Brief to the Minister of Agriculture,” reprinted in WHS Annual Report 1953, 31-39. 50 years later, the Federal Government built a large women’s prison beside the Pioneer village in Cressman’s woods.

¹¹⁴ *Guelph Daily Mercury*, 29 January 1954, 26 July 1954, 27 November 1954. Verne McIlwraith carried the torch for Guelph as a location for the Ontario Pioneer Museum through his editorials in the *Guelph Daily Mercury* throughout 1954, and was especially displeased that the Priory remains might be removed to Waterloo County.

¹¹⁵ “Pioneer Village Plan Gets Support: Agriculture Minister ‘Eager; Request \$10,000 from Ontario” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 4 November 1953.

¹¹⁶ Committee members were Mrs. Gordon MacPhatter, president of the Federated Women’s Institutes of Ontario, Leslie R. Gray, president of the OHS, Lloyd Jasper, Vice-President, Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Donald Middleton, Past-President, Junior Farmers Association of Ontario, Andrew Taylor, WHS executive, Anna Lewis, Women’s Institute Branch, Department of Agriculture, Walter Rutherford, Ontario Chamber of

The selection committee appeared to lack any sponsors for the Jordan site; had this been otherwise, Ontario might have had its first in-situ heritage village and an intact historical district. Instead, a museum village was planned of buildings that would be uprooted from their original settings and placed on the river plain across from the Pioneer Memorial Tower near Doon, Ontario.

Commerce, W. E. Hanna, OHS, Mrs. Gordon Maynard, Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, and Dr. G.E. Reaman, Ontario Agricultural College and Ontario Pennsylvania-German Folklore Society. Kitchener-Waterloo Record, 19 July, 1954.

Chapter 6: A Fellowship of Small Museums and the Education of Andrew Taylor

Introduction

In the early 1950s, local history museum workers in Ontario formed an interest group to upgrade and professionally develop the community museum. In 1953, the Museum Section of the Ontario Historical Society (OHS), (which had become dormant, after its success at getting provincial maintenance grants for local museums) was revitalized into a working group, initially called the Local Museums Committee. It was primarily through this group that the new museum philosophy of culling and organizing museum collections, developing narrative displays, and improving accuracy in historical restoration reached the local museums in the province. This chapter discusses this education of local museum curators and its effect on their museums. While members of the Waterloo County Pioneer Museum Committee (WCPMC) joined this interest group and hired an administrator who advocated these values, these principles were sacrificed by the immediate operational concerns of its board, and changes in government funding to conservation authorities.

A Fellowship of Workers: The Museum Section of the OHS

The primary interest of the OHS reorganized museums committee was professional development for individuals working in local history museums in Ontario, and its early leaders included Dorothy Drever of the Sharon Temple, Gwen Metcalfe of Dundurn Castle, and Ruth Home of the Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty. This group drew up a list of objectives at its first meeting in the fall of 1953 in Hamilton: determine standards of operation for local museums through museum visits, disseminate information, unite all museums into a fellowship, and provide training for museum personnel.¹ These objectives were to be met through the compilation of a directory of local museums in Ontario, the publishing of a museum section newsletter, and the organization of workshops and seminars.

The need to create the Local Museums Committee within the OHS speaks to the comparative irrelevance to these museums of the existing Canadian Museums Association (CMA). The CMA, which had been organized during the 1947 meeting of the American Association of Museums in Quebec City, was centred in Ottawa and was institutionally based. Its membership was restricted to representatives of museums that were open to the public at “regular” hours and that were managed by professional curators.² Consequently, most of the CMA members worked in large provincial or national institutions, and most of the small local museums in Ontario could not qualify for membership. The CMA executive was attempting to prepare, on a national scale, the same types of inventory and professional development activities as the OHS Local Museums Committee was doing provincially: a directory of museums, an assessment of the needs of museums, and training for museum workers. The CMA approach toward providing training to small museums was top-down; its

¹ Gwen Metcalfe, *Ontario History* 46:1, (Winter, 1954). See also Dorothy Drever, “The Museums Section: An Account of Its Beginning,” *Ontario History* Vol. LIII, (1961), 3.

² Associate memberships could be applied for by persons actively engaged in museum work. Canadian Museums Association (hereafter CMA), *Bulletin* 1:1, (April 1948), 3.

member experts from large institutions might, with financial assistance from the federal government, give instruction to the untrained working in smaller institutions.³ This approach contrasted with the OHS Museums Committee's more informal 'fellowship' approach to local problem solving, which was involved in hands-on workshops. However, eventually the quick mobilization and success of the latter engaged the support of the CMA, whose progress toward similar objectives was hampered by a small heterogeneous constituency spread across the country.



6.1 First Museum Section workshop, 1954. W.H.E. Schmalz and Broome are seated at front right. *Archives of Ontario*

The first of the OHS museum workshops, which centred on “Problems of the Small Museum,” was held over two days in May 1954 at the Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty.⁴ This workshop marked the beginning of decades of professional development programs in Ontario for curators of small local history museums. It also initiated an extensive relationship of shared interests and costs for promoting professional development to community museums between the major sponsors of these programs: the OHS Museums Committee, the Provincial Government, and the

³ See “Assistance to Small Museums,” *CMA Bulletin* 4:1, (December 1951), 2.

⁴ “Museum Workshop Report, OHS, Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty May 14-16, 1954.”

CMA. The Community Programmes Branch chose to provide training for local museums indirectly by funding the OHS Museums Committee to do this work.⁵

Forty-five participants from eleven small museums attended this workshop, including Dr. Broome, Andrew Taylor, W.H.E. Schmalz, and Emily Seibert who represented the WCPMC and the Waterloo Historical Society (WHS). For them, the workshop speakers confirmed the centrality of the pioneer as the subject of the local museum enterprise, and the validity of their efforts to develop a rural Ontario pioneer museum. Louis C. Jones of the Cooperstown Museum was the workshop's keynote speaker. Following in the footsteps of A.C. Parker, Edward Alexander, and others in the American museological tradition, Jones argued to this group that a museum owed an obligation to the museum public and not the museum board or donors; a statement consistent with the shifting philosophy in the American museum profession from regarding a museum as a society-based, collection-centred enterprise toward using it as a centre for public education.⁶ In plain language, he told participants that the image of the history museum as a community attic was no longer tenable and that it was neither viable for managing collections nor for interpreting them to the public. The central struggle of most small museums, he argued, was controlling collections because they lacked a clear statement of purpose to restrict collecting to distinctive subject, area and time periods. At a time when most museums continued to use systematic displays of like materials, with minimal labelling, Jones expanded his argument to cover exhibits, which he maintained should form a narrative, told simply and clearly, based on scholarly research. Exhibit narrative was optimally shaped by research and mindful collecting, with artifacts serving as visual touchstones to illustrate the textual components of the narrative. Museum narrative could be further strengthened through the recontextualization of artifacts in a rebuilt environment. The environment that Jones preferred, like the folklorists at open-air museums in Britain and Europe, was a pre-industrial, artisan-based rural and village lifestyle and he advised Ontario museum curators to do likewise.⁷ WCPMC member Andrew Taylor took Jones' advice on museum and collections management to heart and used it as a template through the initial years of planning, collecting, and narrative development for the Ontario Rural Life Museum.

Other areas of the Canadian museum community had already discussed the museum philosophy advocated by Jones and his colleagues, as is evident in the 1951 report of the Massey Commission. Canadian supporters of a public-directed museum philosophy included CMA members Alice Turnham (also a member of the American Association of Museums) and assistant director of the Redpath Museum in Montreal and C.T. Wilson of the Hudson's Bay Company Museum in Winnipeg. Their perspectives on this approach are recorded in the text of the Massey Report, and they emphasize the need for curators to be trained toward this thinking:

Inadequate accommodation or none at all, is, indeed, the chief problem of almost all Canadian museums. Without adequate and safe accommodation, they cannot carry on their two main functions, the safekeeping of their material and the enlightenment and entertainment of the public... Any discussion of problems of accommodation and display leads inevitably to a consideration of the curator, and of his duties. The

⁵ Minutes, OHS Council, 16 June 1955, refer to provincial government funding for these workshops as does Donald Garvie in his presentation at the 1958 Museum Section workshop, "The Branch depends on the OHS to provide its members with training opportunities as well as mutual advice and assistance." Donald A. Garvie, "The Status of the Local Museum in Ontario Today," Alice Davidson Scrapbook no. 2, Museums Section Workshop Report 1958, OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5444, OA.

⁶ Louis C. Jones, "Trends in the Small Museum" Alice Davidson Scrapbook no.1, Museum Section Workshop Report, OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5443, OA.

⁷ See Louis C. Jones, "The Cooperstown Idea," *American History* n.s. 1:3, (Spring 1951).

difficulty of finding a curator (and, we must add, the even greater difficulty of finding a curator's salary) was mentioned on several occasions. The importance of this official, and the ways in which he may make the most of his space and material, were explained to us by the curator of the small but admirably maintained museum of the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg. The importance of careful selection of material and of refusal to accept, much less to display, objects interesting only from age or rarity was emphasized. In this museum the principle is followed of presenting small and carefully selected displays arranged in such a way as to tell their own story. Where the original object is lacking a model is used.⁸

In an issue of the CMA Bulletin, Turnham said, "current museum practice regards each exhibition case as a single page in a well illustrated attractively bound book."⁹

The OHS Local Museums Committee made the local museum community in Ontario aware of the ideas that Jones had promoted at the workshop. In 1954, in the first issue of the OHS Museum Committee's technical leaflet series, "Local Museums in Ontario," author Dorothy Drever recapped Jones' argument: that in order to control their collections and their portrayal of the past, museums needed to determine their purpose at the outset by defining their subject in terms of geographical area and period. She asked curators not, "what will your museum collect?" but "what will your museum portray?"¹⁰

Jones' ideas were also conveyed to the public in an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* that referred to the workshop:

The establishment of county museums throughout Ontario is a gratifying development of fairly recent years. Such institutions are particularly valuable because on this continent a new civilization was founded in natural surroundings of the most primitive sort. The people who created settlements and established the basis of our present flourishing society had to contend with living conditions almost impossible to imagine even 150 years later. To be able to see how they lived; their tools and utensils, their methods of recreation and the symbols of civic and official life – all these things help to bind the generations together. The value of these museums goes far beyond mere safeguarding of objects of interest. They are very useful in education, and in the cultural life of the community and from an economic aspect.¹¹

Jones had certainly argued the case for the economic potential of good museums in the workshop. Using Cooperstown as his basis, Jones had demonstrated how his museum was financially self-sufficient and revenue generating through the production of exhibits that were both educational and exciting. The latter enabled them to compete with other growing forms of popular culture, especially television.¹²

To put Jones's ideas into practice, those who had attended the Jordan workshop developed a plan to organize the collecting and interpretation of Ontario history regionally by subject. As Drever said,

Perish the thought that we should produce in Ontario quantities of identical local museums, however fine. Let's decide in what way each museum may contribute its

⁸ *Massey Report*, 95.

⁹ Alice Turnham, "Keeping Up With the Times," *CMA Bulletin* 3:2, (August 1950), 3.

¹⁰ Dorothy Drever, "Local Museums in Ontario."

¹¹ "Local Museum a Community Asset," *Globe and Mail*, May 21 1954.

¹² Jones neglected to mention that most of the capital expenses at Cooperstown had been financed by Clark.

own individual and well-told part to the sum total of the story of this province of Ontario.¹³

She identified forty-one local museums in the province in 1954. With other members of the OHS Museum Committee, she proposed the following scheme of subject areas for designated local museums: Ontario arts and crafts at Dundurn Castle Museum; botanical and horticultural history at the Ontario Agricultural College Museum; archaeological research at the Midland Museum; religious history at Sharon Temple Museum; and United Empire Loyalist history at the Napanee Museum. The Jordan Museum would focus on Mennonite history in Ontario, while the Ontario Rural Life Museum would still maintain a Pennsylvania-German component.¹⁴ This heuristic plan did not develop further, but indicates once again the expressed need for some collecting map for the province in the absence of a provincial museum of history.

While the Museums Committee expressed its support during the 1954 workshop for the Waterloo County village museum project, the OHS executive was reluctant to back this museum development to the potential detriment of others like it. The OHS executive regarded the Ontario Rural Life Museum as representing primarily the history of Southwestern Ontario, and anticipated similar museums would be developed in other regions of the province and be funded by the Province. At its 1954 annual general meeting in the fall, the OHS passed a resolution that qualified its support for the Ontario Rural Life Museum:

The museum committee brought forward an important resolution relating to a pioneer village museum which was adopted. It was presented by the president as follows: that the OHS at this annual meeting records its agreement with the proposal that rural life museums should be established and recommends the Doon location as a suitable site for one such project. The society offers its assistance and advice to the government of Ontario and to the museum committee of Waterloo County in the early planning and establishment of this proposed Rural Life Museum. The OHS wishes to be assured that government support of the Doon Rural Life Museum project will not in any way interfere with governmental support of other rural life museums or of museums of regional importance. The society would suggest that the Pioneer Village at Doon should be illustrative chiefly of rural life of that area of Ontario.¹⁵

This resolution was prophetic. By the end of the decade, several recreated village museums would be in the process of development throughout Ontario, all of them seeking funding from the Province.

The Ontario Rural Life Museum at Doon

The responsibility for developing the Ontario Rural Life Museum did not end up with the Province. After Cressman's Woods had been confirmed as the site of the Ontario Rural Life Museum in the late summer of 1954, the WCPMC and the OHS waited for the provincial government to initiate the planning and construction process.

It is hoped that the project may be placed at an early date before the Prime Minister, Hon. Leslie Frost and members of his cabinet in charge of Departments such as

¹³ Dorothy Drever, "Local Museums in Ontario," OHS Museums Committee, 1954.

¹⁴ *Galt Evening Reporter*, 22 May 1954.

¹⁵ *Ontario History* vol. 46, (Spring 1954), 188.

agriculture, travel and publicity, highways, planning and development, and education under who's (sic) aegis aspects of the project might fall.¹⁶

However, during a meeting in the fall of 1954, the Premier denied any obligation to the project saying that he did not want to set a precedent of funding the establishment of a historical museum. Rather, he advised, once built, the museum could apply for funding from the government. The government's policy, he said, would be to fund only existing projects, effectively divorcing responsibility for the development costs of the pioneer village project from the hands of the province. This move did not deter the museum committee, which was buoyed by the more than thirteen thousand dollars in grants it had received from Waterloo County municipalities¹⁷ and a lecture from Wilfred Jury, urging them to proceed without provincial government support.¹⁸ Like Cranston, Jury believed the village project could be sustainable with local funding and tourist revenues. Jury's project to rebuild Fort Ste. Marie in Midland had been unsuccessful in its attempts to receive provincial funding but was able to raise necessary resources locally to meet the annual museum budget of \$3,000.

Since a government department would not be serving as an agency for its museum project, the WCPMC restructured itself in December of 1954 to become the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation (OPCF). The OPCF immediately applied for a provincial charter to build a "memorial to the men and women who laid the foundations of rural Ontario"¹⁹ with a mandate to "collect, preserve and place on exhibition with their original settings reproduced, buildings and other items of Ontario pioneer cultures and industries."²⁰ Broome was elected president of the OPCF, and Taylor, vice-president.²¹ Eleven of the directors were also directors of the WHS, with Taylor and W.H.E. Schmalz serving on the executive of both organizations.

The OPCF faced an immediate obstacle in acquiring more land for the site, and developed an arrangement with another agency to do this. Because Cressman's Woods was too heavily wooded for the re-created village plain, the OPCF needed the adjacent open land.²² Farmers neighbouring Cressman's Woods refused to sell their pasture land to accommodate the planned village. In 1955, Alderman Fred Breithaupt, head of the OPCF property committee (and nephew of W.H. Breithaupt) found a way to solve this problem by arranging an alliance between the OPCF and the Grand Valley Conservation Authority (GVCA).²³ This arrangement formed a promising partnership; not only did the GVCA have the power to expropriate needed property, but it also had access to the Ontario Ministry of Planning and Development funds for capital projects, and had a mandate to preserve historical resources in its watershed. Thus, the lack of funding from other provincial departments would be partially compensated through the funding available to the GVCA. The village lands became one of several land management programs of the GVCA. In a moment of supreme irony, the OPCF and GVCA moved with cavalier haste to have agricultural lands and a working farm expropriated, in order to build a museum of re-created rural life. One of the landowners who first

¹⁶ *Ontario History* 46:3, (Summer 1954).

¹⁷ "City Gives \$5,000 for Pioneer Village," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 7 December 1954, "Principal Sources of Revenue," in OPCF File "Finance," box 1, 1956-1963. DHC

¹⁸ "Experts Advice: Start Pioneer Village Without Outside Aid," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 6 November 1954.

¹⁹ Caption on the OPCF letterhead. The charter was received in 1956.

²⁰ Charter, Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation.

²¹ "Pioneer Body Chooses Its First Officers," *Kitchener Waterloo Record*, 9 December 1954.

²² "Farmers Decline to Sell Land for Museum," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 22 May 1954.

²³ "Move to Get Land Parcel," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 23 September 1955.

learned about the expropriation of his home and farm through a notice in the local newspaper was outraged, "They want to take my land and make a playhouse out of it," he complained to the Waterloo Township Council.²⁴ Council advised him to appeal his case to the GVCA, but in truth, neither the township council nor the GVCA were sympathetic to his complaints because both bodies had representatives on the OPCF.

This was one example of the relationship that would develop between conservation authorities in Ontario and organizations that developed museums.²⁵ Concerned primarily with water management and land conservation, conservation authorities were designed to be locally initiated, with the related municipalities and the province sharing the costs of operating them. The 1946 Ontario Conservation Authorities Act included the interpretation of historic land use in watershed areas as one of the concerns of conservation authorities. As Carter notes, the 1954 Grand Valley Conservation Report viewed the preservation of historical materials and buildings as an integral part of the GVCA mandate. The report expressed the prevailing sentiments that this work would provide a "source of pride" for local residents and "an important inspiration for future accomplishments" and urged cooperation with local historical societies toward this goal.²⁶ The OPCF and the GVCA seemed like a natural fit when their representatives met in 1955, and the Ontario Rural Life Museum grounds were incorporated into the GVCA sphere as part of the newly created Doon Conservation Area.²⁷ Under the terms of this arrangement, the GVCA would acquire land and provide funding for the capital developments of the site, and the OPCF would operate the site as a pioneer museum "along the lines of the well-known farmers(sic) museum at Cooperstown, New York."²⁸ The OPCF would own the artifact collections, but it was not clear at this point who would own the buildings. A joint advisory board made up of members of the GVCA and OPCF was established to administer all capital projects in connection with the village such as the purchase of land, erection of buildings, and construction of roads, fences, and watercourses. Broome, Taylor, Barrie and Elizabeth Janzen represented the OPCF on this board. Other members included Oliver J. Wright, Hugh Elliott and Garfield Disher of the GVCA and a representative from the Ontario Department of Planning and Development. This relationship with the GVCA gave the OPCF the entrance it needed through the Conservation Authorities Act to access matching provincial funding for capital expenses, although such applications required approval from both the GVCA executive and the Department of Planning and Development.²⁹

For the next two and one-half years, the OPCF waited for the land purchases to be finalized and its charter to be granted. The cost of the land, about forty-three thousand dollars, which the OPCF split with the Ontario Ministry of Planning and Development, depleted the OPCF's treasury so the OPCF was also kept busy soliciting funds.³⁰ The OPCF considered ideas and sources for potential buildings and acquired some on the spot to save them from destruction. In March 1955, Broome rushed to a site near the village of Ayr where a schoolhouse, which the media had described as a "victim of the passing of time," was being demolished.³¹ "It's a natural" for the village, he reported in

²⁴ "Grand Valley Conservation Expropriation Rapped," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 4 April 1956.

²⁵ John C. Carter, "Ontario Conservation Authorities: Their Heritage Resources and Museums," *Ontario History* Volume XCIV:1, (Spring 2002), 5-28.

²⁶ *Grand Valley Conservation Report*, (Toronto: Department of Planning and Development, 1954), 4. Cited in Carter, 13.

²⁷ Minutes, GVCA General Meeting, 10 February 1955.

²⁸ Ibid, 5 November 1956.

²⁹ Minutes, GVCA Executive Committee, 12 June 1956.

³⁰ Page letter to Eaton, bank etc.

³¹ "Becomes Historical Item," *London Free Press*, 26 March 1955.

what was described as a “last minute reprieve” for the schoolhouse,³² although the schoolhouse was never resurrected on the village lands. By June 1957, the OPCF had received its charter and had moved a bridge, barn and two sheds to the fifty-five acres that now constituted the Ontario Pioneer Community Museum, also referred to as Doon Pioneer Village.

On June 19, 1957, a public ceremony was held to dedicate the site. During a barn raising at the event, the Hon. W.M. Nickle, Minister of Planning and Development, drove a wooden pin to tie the barn frame.



6.2 Official opening of Doon, 1957. Picture (L-R) Will Barrie, Hon. W.M. Nickle, Andrew Taylor. *K-W Record Negative Collection University of Waterloo Library.*

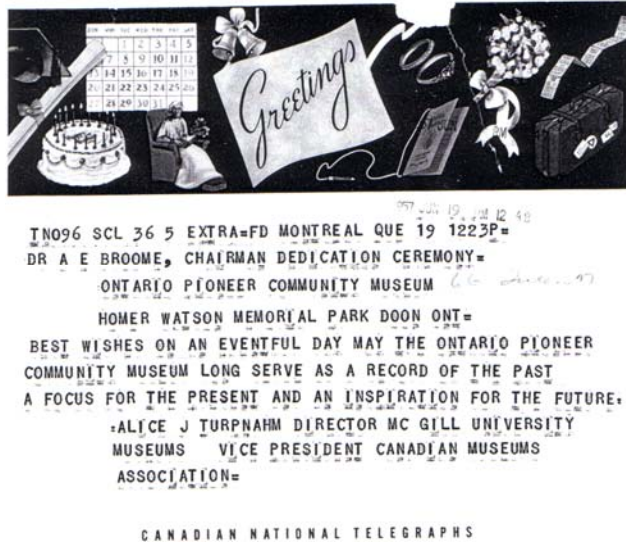
Noticeably absent from this celebration was the OPCF’s founder, Dr. Broome, who had suffered a heart attack that forced him to resign as president of the organization. He stayed on as a member of the advisory board, and Andrew Taylor was made acting president. Then, on August 31, 1957, the OPCF board hired Taylor as its first paid administrator.³³ Taylor was one of the most capable persons in Ontario at this time to undertake this work. As he wrote later in a letter to Alice Turnham:

My chief assets for the job are a familiarity with and considerable grounding in research in local history, the experience of having successfully operated a self-

³² “Old School May Be Saved for Pioneer Museum at Doon,” *Galt Evening Reporter*, 21 March, 1955.

³³ “Pioneer Body Names First Paid Official,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 31 August 1957. Broome had asked Taylor to assume the presidency of the project in March of 1957, but Taylor had declined, saying that he couldn’t afford to do the work voluntarily. Correspondence Taylor to Broome, 5 March 1957, OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 38 DHC,

sustaining family farm supply cooperative for over twenty years, some acquaintance with the building of exhibits in agricultural extension work, and five years of rubbing shoulders with museums workers in the Museum Section of the OHS.³⁴



6.3 Telegram from the Canadian Museums Association for the opening of Doon, 1957.
Doon Heritage Crossroads

The OHS Museum Section and the Education of Andrew Taylor

By 1956, the Museums Committee, by far the most active and successful group within the OHS, was established as a full-fledged and semi-autonomous section of the OHS with its own by-laws and constitution, and membership fees to offset costs of workshops and printing. Its chair, Ruth Home, was able to report in 1955 that over the previous year three new museums had opened, and 10 were in the planning stages. Six hundred and seventy thousand people had visited local museums in the province, excluding the ROM and the National Museum in Ottawa during the same period.³⁵ The next year, Andrew Taylor was elected to succeed Ruth Home as the head of the Museum Section. Indeed, Andrew Taylor was undoubtedly one of the strengths of the museum movement in Ontario. As one of the most museum-educated and active members of the OHS Museum Section, he attended all of its workshops and seminars, succeeded Ruth Home as president of the Section in 1956 and with his wife Verna edited the Museum Section's newsletter. He told the OHS annual general meeting in 1959 that the monthly Museums Section newsletter had a better response from its museum membership than did the OHS from its affiliates. The newsletter was proving to be a vital force for communicating the activities of local museums and updating members on the latest courses available for curators of small museums.³⁶

³⁴ Correspondence Taylor to Turnham, 14 August 1959, Canadian Museum Association, Training Files "Training Program 22-1," NAC MG 28 I344, NAC.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Minutes, OHS Annual Meeting, 12 June 1959.

The Museum Section Training Program

The OHS Museum Section offered multiple training opportunities: between 1954 and 1957 it presented five weekend workshops for curators of small museums, held sessions at OHS annual conferences and published a newsletter and several technical leaflets. In 1957, in conjunction with the CMA, it offered a week-long course at Jordan on museum methods. One of the first technical leaflets “Listing Objects in a Museum” by Ruth Home (1955) was subsequently published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and distributed worldwide. The president of the OHS acknowledged this work in his 1955 address to the annual meeting in Ottawa, saying that the executive viewed the museum efforts as extending the study of history of Ontario.³⁷

With financial support from the OHS and the Community Programmes Branch, the Museum Section was able to have some of the foremost museologists in North America train Ontario’s community museum curators. While some speakers were willing to deal with the practical aspects of museum operations including display, conservation, and artifact registration, it was the larger questions of museum purpose and historical interpretation that attracted keynote speakers.³⁸ Like Louis C. Jones, speakers addressing this question consistently maintained the symbiotic role of visitor education and historical narrative in the museum operation through collection, selection, and exhibit design.

Wilber H. Glover, director of the Buffalo Historical Society Museum, argued in 1956 that the function of a historical museum was to present local history in a manner whereby development and change could be clearly understood.³⁹ Glover titled his presentation “The Unwanted Object,” alluding to the culling or rejection of objects that could not fit within this controlled interpretation. Referring to R.G. Collingwood’s seminal book *The Idea of History*, Glover argued that relics had no place in locating historical significance, nor in identifying materials that epitomized a period. Citing his own museum’s focus on industrial history, he advised participants that “careful consideration of the purpose of the museum will force the staff to adopt a positive [meaning discriminatory] collection programme.”⁴⁰

In 1957, the keynote speaker at the museum workshop was Dr. Carl E. Guthe, the leading expert on small history museums in the United States. An anthropologist by training, Guthe was a research associate of the American Association of Museums, a former director of the New York State Museum in Albany, and a former professor at Harvard. Having completed a study tour of small history museums for the American Association of Museums, he published *So You Want a Good*

³⁷ Minutes, OHS Annual Meeting, 16 June 1955.

³⁸ Taylor also heard a number of other speakers who addressed specifics of museum operation, such as B. Napier Simpson of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario who said that local museums needed separate exhibit and storage areas, in order to both control exhibits and allow for frequent exhibit change to attract return visitors. Guy Moore of the Department of Travel and Publicity spoke to increasing the attraction of the local museum as a tourist destination through improved exhibits and marketing, while Kenneth Young of the Community Programs Branch discussed the relation of the museum to its local community, asking questions pertaining to the relevance of the museum operation to community needs and interests. Young based his discussion around a survey done by the Community Programmes Branch in 1953 after it had introduced grants to small museums. Museum Section workshop reports can be found in Alice Davidson Scrapbooks, F 1139-4, MU 5443 – 5444, OA. Some of these presentations were re-printed as technical leaflets and later re-published in *Past Reflections: Museum Clippings*.

³⁹ “1956 Museum Workshop Report,” Alice Davidson Scrapbook no.1, OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5443, OA.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Museum: A Guide to the Management of Small Museums in the spring of 1957.⁴¹ At the workshop, Guthe presented some of his findings from a study on Canadian museums that he was doing for the Canadian Museum Association (CMA) in order to eventually assist these museums in developing modern museum methods.

Blow the Dust off Canada's Museums

When it received a grant to conduct an inventory and analysis of Canadian museums,⁴² the CMA hired Guthe in June of 1957 to conduct the study because no one in Canada had his expertise. The goal of this project was to identify existing Canadian museum operations and enable their transformation from depositories to interpretation centres, or as the Canadian Press put it, “To blow the dust off Canada’s museums and lift them into the realm of public attractions.”⁴³ The CMA press release “Cross-Canada Museum Tour by Carl E. Guthe” described this new model for museums as follows:

The function of a museum today far transcends the early notion of a storehouse for relics. They are centres of interpretation as well. Canadian museums have a unique story to tell of the history and the natural resources of an unfolding nation, and this they can so through the applied knowledge, imagination, and courage of museum workers, backed by public understanding and support. Dr. Guthe’s visit may well be a turning point in the history of Canadian museums.⁴⁴

Between June and October of 1957, Guthe and his wife had travelled across Canada by car and trailer visiting every museum possible. They arrived at the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation on August 19 and spoke with Andrew Taylor and other members of the board. Guthe’s notes show the close alliance was between the OPCF and the WHS. Although he did not visit the WHS museum, its representatives were at the OPCF meeting with him.⁴⁵ The products of Guthe’s research were a paper “The Museum as a Social Instrument” presented at the 1957 Museum Section Workshop, and two books published the following year: *The Canadian Museum Movement*, and *The Management of Small History Museums*.⁴⁶

To his dismay, Guthe found that many small museums in Ontario persisted in what he regarded as outdated practices: collecting everything, showing everything, and failing to see the museum as an education facility with a community service. Guthe’s field notes show that some of the museums established in the period prior to World War II, such as the Brant Historical Museum, the Huron Institute, the Eva Brook Donley Museum (operated by the Norfolk Historical Society), and the Perth Museum had not been able to update their displays. They maintained what he called “old-style history exhibits,” cluttered displays organized by object type, minimally labelled.⁴⁷ Although the

⁴¹ Carl E. Guthe, *So You Want a Good Museum: A Guide to the Management of Small Museums*, (Washington: American Association of Museums, 1957).

⁴² In 1956 Alice Turnham, on behalf of the CMA received a donation of \$6500 from Stewart to fund a study of Canadian Museums. She had already contacted Carl Guthe asking if he would be prepared to do this work, since he had done similar studies in the United States.

⁴³ Canadian Press transcript attached to Press Release, “Trans-Canada Museum Tour By Carl E. Guthe,” Canadian Museums Association, undated (1957), “Training Program General,” Canadian Museum Association, (CMA) fonds, MG 28 I344, Vol. 21, NAC.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Press Release.

⁴⁵ Guthe’s hand-written notes on Ontario museums are located in CMA fonds, MG 28 File 1344, Vol. 40-8, “Letters,” NAC. Hereafter “Guthe notes.”

⁴⁶ Carl Guthe, *The Canadian Museum Movement*, (Ottawa: Canadian Museums Association, 1958).

⁴⁷ Guthe notes.

Brant County Museum had tried to redo its displays in 1956 “to place them in more suitable groupings,” the fact that this entailed an extensive re-cataloguing job indicates that they were still displaying all their collections and creating inventories based on these displays. He found that most of the small museums in Ontario still operated on a shoe-string budget, some with staff reduced to caretakers working in exchange for living quarters, bonuses, and a free turkey at Christmas.⁴⁸ It seemed that museum conditions had not changed much since the Massey Report, and that the “turning point” which the CMA had hoped Guthe’s study would initiate, would constitute instead a very slow learning curve.

Report on the Study

By the time he spoke to the Museum Section workshop participants in Toronto in October 1957, Guthe was intimately acquainted with the gamut of small history museums across Canada. He lectured on “The Museum as a Social Instrument.” Taylor, who introduced Guthe, later edited Guthe’s paper for publication by the Museum Section. Guthe disregarded museums that resembled curiosity shops featuring the old and unusual, or dusty organized collections with little interpretation, in lieu of what he called “a true museum,” one for whom the public was the primary client. Public service, he maintained, began with the museum performing as the community memory by identifying and distinguishing a local narrative that distinguished it from other communities. The museum could best communicate the storyline through well-selected and discriminating exhibits, using relevant objects.

John Hillen, a designer at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), supported Guthe’s argument during the workshop. Hillen instructed participants to base exhibits on storylines, and to use a minimum number of objects in order to keep the storyline intact.⁴⁹ Guthe and Hillen advised the curators to practice collecting artifacts and designing exhibits with prudence toward the communication of clear historical accounts, or toward the interpretation of some “former custom or activity.”⁵⁰

There is a widespread false assumption that all souvenirs, antiques, relics and heirlooms must by definition have historical significance. There is a mistaken tendency to assign historical relevance to the sentimental, romantic, nostalgic and aesthetic connotations of individual objects.⁵¹

Complementing the OHS Museum Section on its efforts to raise the standard of operation in small museums, Guthe added that it was due to their work that the museum movement was stronger and more active in Ontario than in any other Canadian province.

Application of the Training

Despite Guthe’s observations, the museum movement was not fully developed in the province. In fact, most local museums in Ontario, including that of the WHS, still fit into Guthe’s categories of curiosity shops and dusty rooms. The chaotic nature of the Sault Ste. Marie, 49th Highlander’s Museum collections and displays in 1954 was typical of the condition of many museums:

⁴⁸ Guthe notes.

⁴⁹ OHS MS 1957, Workshop Report, OA.

⁵⁰ Carl Guthe, *The Management of Small History Museums*, (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History 1959), 26.

⁵¹ Guthe, “Museum as a Social Instrument,” reprinted in *Ontario History*, Vol. Liii (1961), No. 3, 170.

This welter of material is unfortunately frequently duplicated, sometimes confusingly labelled and in several instances erroneously or not labelled at all... If the museum's show cases are not properly arranged the collection will be classed with the growing mass of unintelligible knick-knacks with which we are frequently confronted when we attempt to delineate our country's monuments and mementos.⁵²

Several local museums still operated in a rescue mentality as depositories of the historical and rare, and few adhered to the policies advocated by Jones and Guthe. Key describes many local Ontario museums during this period as having “degenerated into all-purpose repositories for natural history, antiquities and curiosities.”⁵³ They were nonetheless successful with the public, and some had initiated educational programmes. The Huron County Museum in Goderich, Herb Neill's one-man operation, was a growing concern. As a collector, his approach was object-centred and everything was on exhibit, completely at odds with the management style recommended through the OHS seminars. But the sheer extent of his museum's collection and inventive displays (which eventually included a stuffed two-headed calf, fire engines, hearses, and a full steam locomotive) as well as his hands-on models of assorted objects from grinding stones to clocks were awarded by very high attendance figures for a local, seasonal museum (nearly twelve thousand visitors in 1956). The OHS Museum Section acknowledged these qualities in 1956 when it honoured him for producing a “unique museum which preserves in three dimensions the history of Huron County.”⁵⁴



6.4 Two headed-calf at the Huron County Museum. *Photo by author*

⁵² F.F. Metcalfe, “Museum Notes,” (Sault Ste. Marie: 1954), 2. Cited in Tossell, 79.

⁵³ Archie F. Key. *Beyond Four Walls: The Origins and Development of Canadian Museums.* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 74.

⁵⁴ OHS Minutes, 14 June 1956, *Goderich Signal-Star*, 25 October 1956. Guthe Notes, “Huron County Museum.” Neill stated that people “delight to have something put in the museum in their name.”

Impact on Local Museums

Guthe's lecture, however, had an immediate effect on some of the curators in Ontario, in particular Gwen Metcalfe, curator of the Dundurn Castle Museum in Hamilton. This museum had been founded in 1900, and a curator, Clementina Fessenden appointed in 1904. During those years, the museum collections expanded to include the natural sciences, anthropology, archaeology and local history, displayed throughout the rooms of the residence. Military history was located in the master bedroom suite. The kitchen court had held an aviary and small zoo. Metcalfe wrote to Guthe that after meeting him and reading *So You Want a Good Museum*, saying she had tossed out artifacts, pulled a two-headed calf and stuffed birds off display and was starting to catalogue the collection. Further donations would be put through "a fine tooth comb."⁵⁵

The Wellington County Museum in nearby Elora, operated by the Wellington County Historical Research Society, likewise was looking to update its museum presentation. It contracted Ruth Home to design its exhibits for its opening on July 16, 1954. Hayward S. Ablewhite of the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village cut the ribbon.⁵⁶ Newspaper coverage of the museum reported:

The usual idea of a museum is a building cluttered up with ancient articles of every description, providing difficulty for the visitor to appreciate the items. Persons visiting the Elora Museum, however, are in for a pleasant surprise.... There has been considerable thought to the lay-out.... Many have already declared that it was the most interesting and best arranged museum that they have ever visited.⁵⁷

Based on Home's displays the museum won an award of merit from the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) as "one of the best small museums in Canada." This award was presented to the museum during the 1957 OHS annual conference in Elora and Guelph.⁵⁸ Like Neill, Home took an approach to exhibits, which was predominately object-centred. She emphasized the aesthetic qualities of objects over exhibit narrative using department store windows as display models. She advised local museums not to be "seduced by the story" if it required substituting generic objects in an exhibit narrative when no local item was available.⁵⁹ In this regard, she was less adamant about the narrative-centred philosophy advocated by Jones and others, but she worked to a similar purpose: to attract and engage visitors.

⁵⁵ Gwen Metcalfe to Carl Guthe, 27 February 1958, 3 March 1958, "Guthe Survey," NAC MG 28 I 344, Box 39, File 20, NAC. She also noted that people still came to the museum looking for Leo the Lion and Bill the Buffalo, former live occupants of the museum zoo.

⁵⁶ Dietrich, Bev. "The Wellington County Museum." 1990, 5.

⁵⁷ "Early Days Romance in County Museum," Guelph Daily Mercury, 17 August 1954.

⁵⁸ Minutes of the OHS Annual Meeting, 20-22 June 1957, OHS Museum Section Newsletter 65, (1960), A984.27, MU 61, File 11. Wellington County Museum Archives. In the same year the museum lands, building and contents were bought by the County of Wellington from the Wellington County Historical Research Society.

⁵⁹ See Ruth Home, "The Object of the Museum." First published by the OHS Museum Section in 1957, this article was reprinted in, Ontario History LIII, No. 3, (1961), 191-198.



6.5 Postcard of Ruth Home's exhibit from the Jordan Museum, c. 1960.

Archives of Ontario.

Of Ruth Home's exhibit style, it was later said:

It was at Ruth Home's museum, the Jordan Historical Museum of the Twenty, that many of us had our first look at a "modern" local history museum. Gone was the fusty, musty jumble of junk which we had seen in many museums (including in some cases our own). Here was something new in display – colourful, orderly, living, meaningful, demanding our attention. We returned to our domains with a concept of a good museum. All over the province, you can still see in many a museum the signs of Ruth Home's influence.⁶⁰

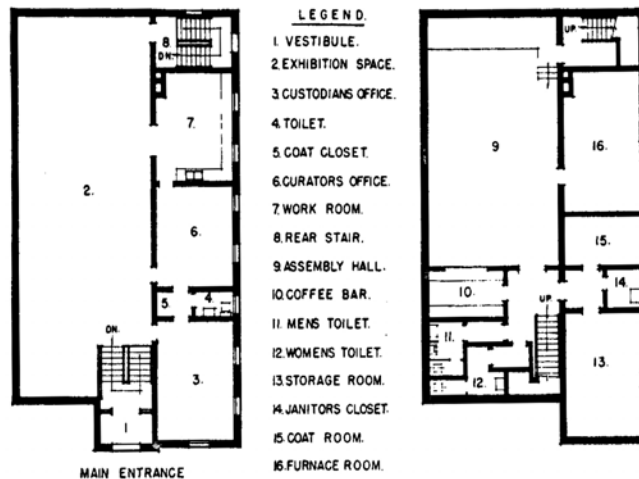
Home was also running education programs and special summer camps for children at the Jordan Museum of the Twenty by 1956, while the Wellington County Museum reportedly had programmes for eighteen school groups in the same period.⁶¹

Other organizations, like the Dundas Historical Museum, were already applying policies of collections management and exhibitions like those Guthe recommended. In 1956, for the first time in fifty years, a local historical society in Ontario had a purpose-built museum building constructed. The Dundas Historical Society raised the approximately \$60,000 in donations to cover the costs of building the Dundas Historical Museum, with the bulk of it coming from W.H. Graham Bertram, a local manufacturer, and leader of the historical society.

⁶⁰ Mrs. David McFall, OHS MS 1970 Workshop Report, OHS fonds, F1139-4, box MU 5446, OA

⁶¹ Museum Section Newsletter 27, (1956), in Alice Davidson Scrapbook s "Museum Section Workshop Report 1956" OHS fonds, F1139-4, box MU 5443, OA. The Jordan museum also featured a summer camp program called "Be an Indian."

INSIDE THE MUSEUM



6.6 Dundas Historical Museum, 1955. Ontario's first 'modern' local history museum, with dedicated storage space. *National Archives of Canada*.

Opened by Lieutenant-Governor Louis O. Breithaupt in April 1956, the museum's exhibits featured the newer approach recommended by Jones of re-constructed period interiors, including a pioneer store and Victorian bedroom.⁶² Unlike most local history museums in Ontario at this time, the architecturally designed museum had allocated a large area for reserve collections, plus a curatorial office and work room spaces. It had an assembly room that could provide space for school classes. The building was fireproof and air conditioned. Olive Newcombe, the museum's first director, eventually became chair of the OHS Museum Section.⁶³ T. Roy Woodhouse, president of the OHS in 1954 and a strong supporter of the Museums Committee, served as historian on the board of the Dundas Historical Society.

Other museums applied a display method recommended by Jones, the re-contextualization of objects into recreated environments. The York Pioneers at Scadding Cabin were using "costumed hostesses" (interpreters in period dress) to interpret the cabin, which they had restored to represent a historic home, and in doing so transformed it from a structure to display a collection of relics. The costumed interpreters' duties included giving spinning demonstrations.⁶⁴ In the spring of 1957, the Women's Institutes of Elgin County established the Elgin County Pioneer Museum, as "a memorial to the past and its traditions."⁶⁵ Like the Scadding Cabin, this mid-nineteenth century doctor's house was furnished as a period home instead of being utilized as a general exhibit space for local relics. One separate gallery showed the early history of medical practice in the county.

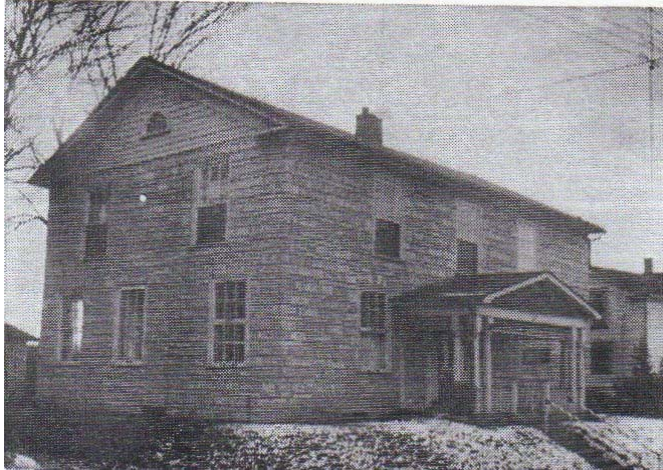
⁶² "The Dundas Historical Museum," *Ontario History* Volume XLVIII:1, (Winter, 1956), 98-99; Guthe Notes "Dundas Historical Society Museum" and Brochure "Dundas Historical Museum 1955," in "Museum Brochures" NAC MG 28-I344, Volume 40, NAC.

⁶³ Jann L.M. Bailey, "Olive Newcombe: A Passionate Museum Director," *MUSE* Volume XV:3, (1997), 58.

⁶⁴ Museum Section Newsletter 1955.

⁶⁵ Elgin County Pioneer Museum, brochure, in CMA fonds, MG 28 I344, Vol. 52, NAC.

The Elgin County Pioneer Museum



6.7 Elgin County Pioneer Museum “A Memorial to the Past and Its traditions.” *National Archives of Canada*.

Development of Open Air Museums

In the year before Guthe spoke to the Museum Section workshop, a Canadian with a passion for outdoor museums had spoken to the OHS annual workshop. Alice Turnham, the speaker, was head of the CMA training program and assistant director of McGill University’s Redpath Museum. She had been partially responsible for arranging Guthe’s study. Educated in one of the first museum study courses available through Harvard University in the 1930s, she had received a scholarship from the Carnegie Foundation to study open-air museums in Scandinavia. In 1950, she had attended an American museum seminar called “The Folk Museum Approach to History.”⁶⁶ Taylor arranged for her to speak on the application of this study to North American museums to the OPCF in early 1956 and later at the 1956 Museum Section workshop.

Using the term “living history” for these museums, because of their recreated and populated buildings and festivals, dances, music, games and costumes,⁶⁷ Turnham, described them in the forms that Broome sought to emulate, including their role in the teaching of traditional folkways. Like others, she saw the purpose of these museums as preserving “the best of the past as a working tool of the future.”⁶⁸ Moreover, she viewed each of these museums as a “miniature utopia, where, in pleasant and restful surroundings one can review the past.”⁶⁹ On their nature as an historical document, she said:

Some people criticize such a composite museum as being ersatz, unreal or doctored up. To others it represents the equivalent of a documentary film which has been processed, cut, condensed and edited with dramatic emphasis given to some parts, a

⁶⁶ “The Folk Museum Approach to History,” CMA fonds, MG 28 I344, Vol. 52, NAC.

⁶⁷ The first identified use of this term in the Ontario museum community.

⁶⁸ *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 10 January 1956.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

documentary which lives on long after the event and which can be played and replayed at will.⁷⁰

Fully anticipating the building of a Skansen-like Canadian national folk museum in Ottawa, she regarded Taylor's pioneer village museum as a regional version, saying it would "attain the distinction of being the first open air folk museum in Canada."⁷¹

In fact, there was some doubt about whether or not this would be the case. By 1957, Doon was still not open to the public. Plans had remained vague during the land purchase delay, and as Schmalz would later state, most of this time, "had been taken up with planning and developing ideas. We were not too definite about how the project should be tackled."⁷² While Taylor and the board struggled to get land and negotiate for buildings, other pioneer villages and complexes were growing in Ontario. Like Doon, the Backus Historical complex north of Port Rowan and the Black Creek Pioneer Village in Toronto were emerging under the auspices of conservation authorities, and both opened in 1956; that year the Dalziel barn at Black Creek was opened as an agricultural museum. In 1958, the Champlain Trail Museum in Pembroke, which consisted of a restored log house, schoolhouse and carriage shed, and was operated by the Ottawa Valley Historical Society, was ready to open.

Most prominent among these museum village schemes was the plan to create a heritage village museum along the St. Lawrence Seaway. This particular project garnered most of the attention of the OHS and heritage enthusiasts and the backing of the Government of Ontario.⁷³ Concerned about the displacement of whole villages with structures and furnishings dating from the United Empire Loyalist period, the OHS lobbied over several years with the St. Lawrence Power Development Commission for some form of preservation of these materials, which were due to be submerged by the St. Lawrence Seaway project.⁷⁴ In 1956, representatives of the OHS and its Museum Section, the Canadian Historical Society, and members of the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario and the University of Toronto's Department of Anthropology toured the area to be inundated and the grounds to be reserved as parkland. During that trip, George Challies, chairman of the Commission, told the group that it intended to place on the parkland:

Original and restored structures of period architecture which will house items to be preserved for posterity and displayed as our heritage such as agricultural implements, household items... and other such objects revered as a material link with our pioneering forefathers.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Alice J. Turnham, "Outdoor Museums of Scandinavia and Their Possible Application to North America," NAC MG 28 I344, Vol. 52, NAC.

⁷¹ *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 10 January 1956.

⁷² W.H.E. Schmalz, "A dream come true."

⁷³ Killan cites among the groups who lobbied the government to make heritage amends to this area were representatives of the ROM, the Archives of Ontario, and the Women's Institutes. *Preserving Ontario's Heritage*, 239.

⁷⁴ Concern for keeping records of what would be lost in the seaway development appears in the minutes of the OHS as early as 6 September 1952 at which time a committee was appointed to lobby for some form of heritage rescue of this area. See also, "The OHS and the Preservation of the Historic Values of the St. Lawrence Seaway Area," *Ontario History* XLVIII:2, (Spring 1956).

⁷⁵ Press Release, 9 January 1956, "Historical Society Visit St. Lawrence Parks Commission," Upper Canada Village, St. Lawrence Parks Development Commission Files, "Minutes of a Meeting of the Museum Committee of the OHS and Representatives of the St. Lawrence Parks Commission." Copies of both documents attached in Jeannette Shirley, "Developing a Museum History Programme," unpublished paper, July 1989. Also cited in

The reconstruction was a huge operation to salvage buildings on 20,000 acres of threatened habitation, by September of 1956 a model and plan for a memorial United Empire Loyalist period village at Chrysler Park was in place. Developed with the resources of the Ontario St. Lawrence Development Commission, the project, which came to be known as Upper Canada Village, proved to be the most ambitious historic village project in Ontario's history. The government largesse that the OPCF had so strongly anticipated in 1953 for its village at Doon flowed instead downstream to UCV. This village was modelled on American village museums such as Colonial Williamsburg, Greenfield Village, Old Sturbridge Village, Cooperstown and Shelburne; sites that representatives of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario had visited earlier in 1956.⁷⁶ Within two years a staff of eight heritage professionals was on site, working under architect Anthony Adamson and historian Ronald Way, who had previously transformed Old Fort Henry into a "living museum" using Depression-era government relief funding. Among the staff were John Peter Stokes, a leading architectural historian, and Jeanne Minhinnick, the person in the province most knowledgeable about pre-confederation material life.⁷⁷ By the time of the village's opening in 1961, the Ontario Government would have spent an unprecedented three million dollars to reconstruct a village on a sixty-five-acre tract of partially wooded land on the new shoreline of the St. Lawrence River.⁷⁸

Planning Doon: Philosophical and Functional Limitations

Without the force of government support that underwrote the production of history at Upper Canada Village (UCV), Doon was unable to develop with the same latitude. Anthony Adamson spoke at length at the OPCF annual meeting in the fall of 1958 about the need to maintain historical authenticity using the research and restoration methods employed by the staff at UCV.⁷⁹ But the financial resources of the OPCF could not be extended to produce the kind of work that was taking place at UCV.

Attempts to Develop the Village Museum

Funding was an ongoing problem for Doon in this period. By 1960 its development expenditures would amount to less than 5 percent of those at UCV. In comparison with the funding UCV received, in 1957–58 the OPCF provided Taylor with \$100 at his request to conduct research on pioneer life in Southwestern Ontario. The budget approved through the GVCA for land and buildings for 1958 was \$43,000.⁸⁰

Perhaps intending to establish a broader base for the project, Taylor proposed in 1958 that the OHS move its headquarters from Toronto to the village site at Doon.⁸¹ He said he visualized an arrangement similar to the New York State Historical Association (NYSHA) at Cooperstown. Thirteen years earlier the OHS had unsuccessfully asked the provincial government to give it a

Ann Martin, "Loyal She Began...: The Beginnings of Upper Canada Village," University of Waterloo Unpublished paper, (1989), 8; and Ann Martin, "Sugar Coated History: Implementing the Historical Message at Upper Canada Village." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, May 1992.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See for instance, Jeanne Minhinnick, *At Home in Upper Canada*. Toronto: Clarke, Irwin, 1970.

⁷⁸ Stanley Fillmore, "The Miracle of Upper Canada Village," *Canadian Homes*, (June 1961).

⁷⁹ "Pioneer Village Problems Told," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 5 December 1958.

⁸⁰ Minutes, Doon Conservation Advisory Board, GVCA, 28 April 1957.

⁸¹ Minutes, OHS Executive Committee, 24 May 1958. OHS fonds, MS 249 reels 2, OA.

leading role in forming a provincial history centre with a museum responsibility. Taylor now proposed something similar at Doon. Although the OHS would never have the full backing of a philanthropist such as the NYSHA's Stephen Clark to cover the costs of this move, Taylor explained that through the GVCA, the Department of Planning and Development would pay 50 percent of the cost of erecting an OHS building at Doon. A special meeting of the OHS executive considered this offer, tabled it and never acted upon it.⁸² The OHS was finding that its allegiance to both Doon and UCV as provincial village museums needed to be reconsidered.

Negotiating government funding for Doon was unsuccessful again, in part because the OHS backed away from the project. Those within the OHS were aware of the delicate nature of asking for government support for potentially competing developments. Richard Preston of Kingston's Royal Military College stated the situation concisely: while the OHS had pledged support for both Doon and UCV, its fierce pressure on the provincial government to provide some form of heritage rescue in the seaway area had been critical to the creation of UCV. The latter was Premier Frost's chosen project, and so OHS lobbying for funding for Doon would have to be negotiated carefully. Preston recommended an OHS resolution that would be both "innocuous, and useful" to Doon, by backing a grant application for capital funds from the federal rather than the provincial government for building an agricultural museum on site.⁸³ Despite Taylor's lobbying the OHS to support this application by reminding them of their earlier endorsements of the village, OHS support was ultimately not forthcoming.⁸⁴ As head of the Museum Section of the Society, this denial of interest in his project must have frustrated Taylor almost as much as did the provincial government's funding attentions to UCV.

Throughout 1957, 1958 and 1959, Taylor focussed his efforts on planning the village layout, and identifying and acquiring the correct structures and artifacts for his village museum. Drawing on the models of Cooperstown and Old Sturbridge Village, Taylor drew up a layout for his village in the shape of a wheel. It centred on a village common, with roadways and bridges radiating from this hub to direct visitors to six distinct areas. Taylor identified these areas as follows: a mill pond with generic pioneer scene designed to face the road for curb appeal; a Pennsylvania-German farm from the 1820s; another early pioneer structure of some kind (perhaps a maple sugar camp) predating the 1840s; a later pioneer village setting with buildings from the period 1840-1867; a farm area showing different farming techniques to the present; and a reception building connected to the common by a bridge and to the parking lot by a toll gate. This last building would house a museum of agricultural and local history, administrative offices, a gift shop, restaurant, lecture rooms, and workrooms.⁸⁵ This plan followed the pattern of Old Sturbridge Village, Cooperstown and Upper Canada Village, which had each resolved the problem of dealing with large agricultural equipment by establishing a separate museum building to house it.

On the village common would be the centrepiece of the village, the reconstructed Guelph Priory, a huge rectangular log building measuring fifty feet by thirty feet with wings added on each end. The Priory was originally designed by John Galt, as was the hub design of his Guelph town plan

⁸² As discussed at the following executive meetings of the OHS 24 May 1958, 12-14 June 1958, 29 November 1958.

⁸³ Preston and John Gray of the OHS Executive Council had offered to assist Doon's application for federal funds. Correspondence Preston to Gray, 27 January 1959, File 1 "Correspondence 1954-1959," OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 38, DHC.

⁸⁴ Minutes, OHS Executive Committee, 29 November 1958.

⁸⁵ Andrew Taylor, "The Ontario Pioneer Community – An Outdoor Museum," *Ontario History*, L:1(Winter 1958), 13-14.

which had a number of streets running as radii from the building to focal points in the town.⁸⁶ The Priory had been dismantled thirty years earlier and much of it had been chopped up and distributed as firewood by the City of Guelph during the Depression. With praise from his OHS peers and others in Wellington County concerned about its demise, Taylor acquired its remains, consisting of about one hundred logs from one of its wings.⁸⁷

The OPCF also obtained a toll house from the Governor's Road (Dundas Street) in York Township dating from 1857.⁸⁸ By the end of 1958, the OPCF had acquired the 1810 Babcock Inn, which had been dismantled for highway expansion, from near Sheffield, Ontario as well as an 1840 general store from Delaware, Ontario, and the log cabin residence of nineteenth-century essayist and humorist Peter McArthur, which dated from the 1830s.⁸⁹ The moving, rebuilding and restoring of these buildings was estimated to cost \$42,000, of which only \$16,000 was expected from the OPCF. The remaining monies would be provided through federal-provincial winter works programs and the Ministry of Planning through the GVCA. It was anticipated that in 1959 these buildings would be erected, along with the museum/administration building.⁹⁰ Meanwhile, board members including A.W. Sandrock, chair of the building selection committee, solicited more buildings from potential donor sources.⁹¹

Blurred Lines of Authority

As work on the village and museum building progressed from 1957 to 1959, Taylor found himself in a dilemma that has since proved common in museums: professional staff and governing boards in conflict over museum philosophy and operations. The lines of authority and responsibility between Taylor, a paid director, and his amateur board were not clear. He could not get consensus from the planning and construction committee of the board for his plan, a difficulty that was frequently noted in the minutes of the GVCA and the OPCF. Nor was there total agreement between Taylor and the board about the project limits. While Broome had ardently opposed the construction of any modern building on-site to use as an agricultural or local history museum, Frank Page, the president of the WHS, was busy collecting materials to include in one, and by the autumn of 1958 Schmalz had prepared architectural drawings for the building.⁹² Page was "agitating" for the museum building to be completed because he realized that the WHS days with museum space at the Kitchener library

⁸⁶ Gilbert A. Stelter, "Guelph and the Early Canadian Town Planning Tradition," *Ontario History* Volume LXXVII, no.2 (June 1985), 83-95.

⁸⁷ Minutes, OHS executive meeting 30 November 1957; "Better Doon than dust" one frustrated member of the Guelph committee to save the Priory was quoted in "Guelph's first dwelling moved to Doon site," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 22 February 1958; and "Priory is Centre of Pioneer Display," *Guelph Daily Mercury*, 15 April 1958.

⁸⁸ "The Ontario Pioneer Community: An Outdoor Museum," *Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report* 46, (1958), 3.

⁸⁹ "150-Year-Old Inn Bought for Doon Pioneer Village," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 13 September 1958, "Delaware Store", *London Free Press*, 13 December 1958.

⁹⁰ GVCA General Meeting Minutes, 27 November 1958, "3 Pioneer Buildings Will Rise at Doon Village During Winter," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 17 December 1958.

⁹¹ A. W. Sandrock, Chair of the Building Selection Committee forwarded a "wish list" to the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario of buildings in keeping with Taylor's plan that all structures and contents be pre-confederation and in good condition. Dr. Broome wrote to Norman Schneider, of Schneider's Meats asking for a corporate donation. A.E. Broome to N. Schneider, 30 November 1957.

⁹² GVCA Minutes, Annual General Meeting, 27 November 1958.

were numbered.⁹³ Although Taylor knew that the WHS collections were destined for Doon, he believed that the agricultural/local history museum component should ideally restrict its exhibits and collections primarily to the village period. To his alarm, the OPCF board was soliciting and accepting a range of artifacts for the museum, which seemed to have a dubious relevance to the village.⁹⁴ For instance, Schmalz had accepted a “Le Roy” automobile made in Kitchener in 1903, donated by Norman Schneider. Page, who along with Will Barrie was on the project’s museum committee, was keen on establishing the local history/agricultural museum component, and he collected much of the material that came to the village at this time.⁹⁵ Page and Barrie were also president and vice-president respectively of the WHS and voted WHS funds toward the museum project.

Taylor turned to American experts for advice about this issue and about collections for the museum. Frank Spinney, director of Old Sturbridge Village and Fredrick L. Rath Jr., vice-director of the Cooperstown Farmer’s Museum, recommended that Taylor limit collections in the agricultural museum to those objects that could fit the village time period and the story being told. This work, they argued, could only be done with a clear plan of the village, its period and subject matter. Rath referred Taylor to Guthe’s *So You Want a Good Museum* and to Parker’s *A Manual for Historical Museums*, and invited him to attend Cooperstown’s summer seminars on American culture.⁹⁶ Taylor forwarded this correspondence to the OPCF board in an attempt to have them commit to his plan.⁹⁷

By January 1959, a month after Adamson had spoken to the OPCF on the importance of authenticity in the village project, Taylor sent a brief to Schmalz, the chairman of the village planning committee.⁹⁸ In it, he urged the Planning Committee to follow the procedures for their work in accordance with standards set by the Canadian Museum Association and Guthe’s *So You Want a Good Museum*. Specifically, he called for adequate record keeping of all artifacts and asked that the village project be confined to the years 1820–1860 and that the board limit acquisitions to these dates. The museum of local history/agriculture he agreed could be a supplementary project, which could accommodate collections from the earliest time to the present.

In February 1959, Taylor and the board faced a funding problem; they learned that the Department of Planning and Development was cancelling matching grants for historic structures at conservation authorities. A petition from the OPCF to the Ministry to reverse this policy change was unsuccessful.⁹⁹ This was a huge blow to the planned development of the village and it was expected that delays and changes in the project were inevitable, since anticipated revenues to complete some of the structures would not be available. Fortunately, the museum building had been included in the 1958 fiscal year. The OPCF had budgeted \$70,000 for the 1959 year, of which the Department of

⁹³ Schmalz, “A Dream Come True,” 5; “Society Has Problem Storing Its Antiques,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 13 June 1959. The last report published by the WHS Museum’s Committee stated that “water-filled floors and dismal surroundings have been no deterrent to the people who have enjoyed the Waterloo Historical Museum.” WHS Annual Report 1958, cited by Tom Reitz, “Celebrating 80 Years With the Waterloo Historical Society,” *Waterloo County Times*, February 1992.

⁹⁴ OPCF Donor Records, 1954-1960, DHC.

⁹⁵ Ibid, and “Museum Registration 1955-1960” OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 22, DHC.

⁹⁶ Correspondence, Rath to Taylor, 21 January 1958, Spinney to Taylor, 22 January 1958, “Correspondence 1950-1959” OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

⁹⁷ Correspondence, Taylor to Board of Directors and Committee Chairmen, Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation, 5 February 1958.

⁹⁸ Taylor, “A Brief Submitted to the Chairman of the Planning Committee,” 12 January 1959, “Correspondence” OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

⁹⁹ Likewise, representatives from Black Creek Pioneer Village protested this policy shift. “Blast Move to Give Up Historic Sites Grants,” *Toronto Star*, 12 February 1959.

Planning was expected to provide \$35,000. Instead, it approved \$2,000 for labour, picnic tables, and parking.¹⁰⁰

In spite of the board's resistance, Taylor still intended that the museum exhibits be directed toward interpreting the village, and he readied himself to design and install these displays by applying for admission to the first museum course available in Canada, a two-week program in June offered by the CMA on exhibit design. Under Alice Turnham's direction, the course was held at the Redpath Museum in McGill University. Taylor and other participants attended illustrated lectures on design theory and practice and were put through the paces of exhibit design work: producing exhibit scripts, floor layouts, object selection and case design and labels.¹⁰¹ Quoting Wilson Duff of the British Columbia Provincial Museum, Alice Turnham said to the workshop attendees:

All museums pass through a process of evolution from the embryonic phase of random collecting, through the display of quantities of unrelated specimens. The next phase is a more selective type of display where duplicate or study material is segregated and only the choicest items are placed on view. As the museum develops problems of storage, record keeping, and extension services become increasingly important. A "display" becomes an "exhibition" when it uses formerly dissociated objects in a context as 3-dimensional illustrations to emphasize a theme or basic principle.¹⁰²

Frederick Rath, of Cooperstown and the NYSHA expanded upon this thinking in the subsequent Museum Section workshop.¹⁰³ In his lecture "Interpretation in our Museums," Rath spoke on maximizing the educational use of the object through exhibits by reducing the amount of material on exhibit to those objects that could tell a story with the most clarity. Prior to the OHS Museum Section workshop in Cornwall, Taylor visited Cooperstown, Shelburne and Old Sturbridge Village "in search of ideas" for his village project.¹⁰⁴ He may have met with Louis C. Jones on this trip for at this time or later he arranged for Jones to consult with him on the village plans and to address the board and members of the OPCF at their annual meeting in October 1959.¹⁰⁵

Jones came to Doon and met with Taylor a few days before his meeting with the OPCF and the WHS on October 20, 1959, at Kitchener city hall. Together they walked the property and worked out a plan that they believed would be feasible, using the buildings the OPCF had on hand, which would also allow the village to be open to the public in 1960. Aware of the difficulties that had arisen between Taylor and the board, Jones combined his address to the board about a blueprint for Doon, with a discussion of the responsibilities of museum boards. The heart of his lecture emphasized the critical importance of a highly detailed master plan grounded in a limited historical focus determined by a cut-off date.

¹⁰⁰ "Pioneer Village Group to Proceed with Plans," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 14 February 1959; "Cut in Grant Won't Stop Pioneer Plans," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 14 February 1959; "Expected \$70,000, Group Gets \$2,000," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 29 April 1959.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Alice Turnham, "Display in Museums," Museum Section Workshop report 1959, Alice Davidson Scrapbook no. 2, OHS fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5444, OA.

¹⁰³ Frederick Rath, "Interpretation in our Museums" OHS Fonds, F 1139-4, box MU 5453, OA.

¹⁰⁴ *Guelph Daily Mercury*, 12 November 1959.

¹⁰⁵ Unfortunately the New York State Historical Society Archives has no extant correspondence records between Taylor, Jones and Rath. Correspondence Wayne Wright, Associate Director, Research Library New York State Historical Association to author 27 September 2005.

The plan developed by Taylor and Jones called for the village to portray a period before the advent of railways and to have a cut-off date of 1860. In their layout, the museum building was an initial reception centre. Past this, a road with a toll-booth and covered bridge would lead to the Priory, which Jones called “Ontario’s Ellis Island and Plymouth Rock all poured into one ... I hope you can make a good deal of that building – I think a very significant one.”¹⁰⁶ Behind the Priory on one of a group of planned streets, which would “go off as sun’s rays,” would be placed the store and the inn. The McArthur house would be to the right of the Priory. Jones recommended that the OPCF look for a Pennsylvania-German farmhouse and eventually a grist mill, saw mill, church, school and Scottish stone house.

Jones emphasised the need to limit the project to one single, complex story, and avoid the disparate qualities of museums such as Ford’s Greenfield Village, which he observed, makes no “comprehensive statement.”

You will want to add buildings that come within your terminal date, that is before 1860, that are characteristic of Ontario and that tell the story you have designed and are determined to tell... this gives you a basis for selection of objects as well as the selection of buildings – but you’ve got to have a terminal date,... a stopper - you’ve got to have a cork in the bottle - otherwise you get a hodgepodge. You get confusion and you aren’t telling any one story, you’re trying to tell 20 stories and no one museum can do that. You are trying to tell one single story, actually a complex single story, and that’s the story of what it was like to live in Ontario in the early years of its settlement. And that’s it! ... You just can’t go galloping off in all directions.¹⁰⁷

On the nature of historical significance and historical representation, he advised that buildings should be either historically significant or be symbolically representative of building types so that the village would maintain a relevance to a wider area.¹⁰⁸

The story depicted in the village would be supplemented by the museum, which could enlarge on themes about life in Ontario before 1860. Jones suggested exhibits about McArthur and his writings, about taverns, toll booths and about the Priory and its role in land development and immigration. Jones was very positive about the museum building and its allocation of space for storage and work areas. He agreed that the museum could accept items past the village terminal date for study collections, within limits, and that it should not take everything offered. Having spoken with both Page and Barrie, “about their collections,” he observed that these were unusually “man-directed,” and included little that represented women’s lives or domestic interiors. Artifacts that were still needed included items such as furniture, decorative arts and weaving. These objects, he advised, should be exhibited in a narrative manner meeting current standards in museums:

There is so far very little furniture in evidence and yet you are going to have a tavern and other buildings to furnish. When it comes to farm tools, implements and craft tools you are in very good shape – or at least Mr. Barrie is in good shape. You could develop an exciting set of exhibits in the modern methods, where you aren’t

¹⁰⁶ Typescript, “Master Plan: Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation: Excerpt from a speech delivered October 20 1959 in the County Courthouse, Kitchener by Dr. Louis C. Jones,” 6.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 4. Address by Dr. Louis C. Jones, Farmer’s Museum, “Cooperstown to the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation” in WHS Annual Report Volume 47, (May 1960), 57.

concerned with hundreds of items but with carefully selected items, well-labelled with illustrative material.¹⁰⁹

Jones addressed the need for both a clear master plan and a delineation of responsibilities for its implementation. The master plan would be a blueprint for the total concept as well as the physical layout of the buildings. He cautioned that without such a clear-cut statement of purpose “misunderstandings could arise ... in this case between the board and the administrator.”¹¹⁰ He reminded the board that its chief concerns were determining policy, while Taylor’s responsibilities were to put policy into practice. Jones fully endorsed Taylor as administrator of the project:

The longer I work with Andrew Taylor the more I respect him, not only as a man but as a museum professional. He is one of the leaders in the museum profession in the Province of Ontario and he is canny. He has just the brand of “doggedness” that job requires... The kind of conclusion he has come to out of his experience jibes with the kind of experience we’ve [Cooperstown] had over the last thirteen years developing our program.¹¹¹

On the exhibits in the museum, Jones said that the board should trust Taylor, who he said had a “clear-cut understanding of the most modern techniques.”¹¹²



6.8 Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation Members in new museum building, 1959. W.H.E. Schmalz, the architect, is on the far left, with Barrie and Taylor at centre. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

While Taylor wished to follow Jones’ advice about keeping the exhibits directed toward the theme of the village proper, the board wanted to display items outside the thematic areas of the village. With reduced finances and a museum building that was almost complete, the focus of the

¹⁰⁹ Address by Dr. Louis C. Jones, Farmer’s Museum, Cooperstown to the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation, in WHS Annual Report 1960, 54.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 54-55.

¹¹² Ibid., 59.

operation over the winter of 1959–1960 was to prepare the museum component for a public opening in June of 1960. During this time the WHS, forced to vacate its quarters in the Kitchener Public Library in December, transferred its collections to the OPCF and relocated them at Doon.



6.9 Moving the Conestoga wagon from the Waterloo Historical Society Museum to Doon. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

Meanwhile, "a flood of other valuable and interesting material was constantly being received."¹¹³ Page and Barrie saw the museum as a showcase for the new collections of the OPCF. Taylor wrote to Page about exhibiting these materials:

As I read the records, the sickle and scythe the cradle and flail, the cart and waggon (sic) and sled were tools of Ontario pioneers. Horsepowers and threshers and reapers and buggies and carriages largely followed the prosperity of the Crimean War and the coming of the railways. They are the kind of thing Dr. Jones had in mind from Cooperstown when he said in his address at Kitchener "unfortunately it hadn't occurred to anybody we needed a terminal date... and we're still suffering from... the errors. If you and the other members of the Board wish to display a great variety of material in a museum of pioneer life, you are free to proceed – but I can't. It's a matter of integrity."¹¹⁴

Normally in a museum it is the executive director who is responsible for putting displays together. I do not know if I am to be allowed to build exhibits portraying pioneer life, as suggested by Dr. Jones, but if I am I would like to see the buggy and cutter ... sit at the end of the line with a label: "Changes, brought by the Crimean

¹¹³ Schmalz, "A Dream Come True," 6.

¹¹⁴ Correspondence Taylor to Page, 26 December 1959. OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

War and by the railways, made it possible for settlers to buy better equipment than ever before. The pioneer period was over.”¹¹⁵

In fact, it was the period of Taylor’s administration that was over. Letters between Taylor and Page, and Barrie and Page, reveal the fundamental discrepancies in vision and method between Taylor and museum committee members. Page wanted a traditional, systematic exhibit of the OPCF and WHS collections, divided into subject areas, such as “Indian relics, rare birds, old carriages, and other groupings of items of general interest.”¹¹⁶ He said that while he agreed with Taylor that some of the exhibits could “point the way” to the early days of Ontario, he did not want the museum limited to that subject.¹¹⁷ “It was never suggested that the museum was to display pioneer life. The Village is to do that.”¹¹⁸ For his part, Barrie said:

Dr. Jones and Andrew have some very decided ideas to what should go into the museum, but I feel that the sooner we fill the museum with interesting things the better it will be for us. The idea that everything should date back to 1860 is all right for an old established museum like Cooperstown but I don’t think we can afford to do that yet. Goderich Museum has a great many valuable articles that don’t date back 100 years yet it is attracting large crowds all summer long. I do feel that the museum selection committee... should have the say as to what should go into the building and not just the administrator.¹¹⁹

At the meeting of the board of the OPCF on March 1, 1960, Taylor tendered his resignation, stating that he could not continue unless the board proceeded with his plans or similar ideas that conformed to both a cut-off date of 1860, and to Canadian and American Museum Association standards. “I have my plan ... approved by Dr. Jones, Mrs. Alice Turnham, and others ... If my plan is brushed aside, then I feel my integrity is involved.”¹²⁰

The board accepted his resignation. Its objectives were clear; the chairman of the OPCF, O.J. Wright had stated in February that there should be less striving for perfection and greater effort at getting the village built up and open to the public. Hugh Elliott later confirmed that the board was “less concerned with historical accuracy, more with assembling an interesting collection of buildings and artifacts that would attract visitors.”¹²¹

The board replaced Taylor with Howard Groh, an experienced millwright, steam engineer and maintenance superintendent. His duties included installing the museum exhibits and erecting the historic buildings on site under the guidance of the OPCF board. James Gooding, the provincial museum advisor, spent several days in the museum helping the museum committee and Groh design and assemble the exhibits and the museum was ready for its grand opening on June 15.¹²²

On that day, with much publicity and public applause, the Ontario Pioneer Community was officially opened. Dr. Broome cut the ribbon to the Pioneer Village, and the local Women’s Institute,

¹¹⁵ Correspondence Taylor to Page, 23 January, 1960. OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

¹¹⁶ Correspondence Page to Taylor, 30 December 1959. OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

¹¹⁷ Correspondence Page to Taylor, 26 January 1960, OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

¹¹⁸ Correspondence Page to Taylor, 30 December 1959. OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

¹¹⁹ Correspondence Barrie to Page, 9 January 1960. OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

¹²⁰ Minutes OPCF Board of Directors, 1 March 1960; Correspondence Taylor to O.J. Wright, President OPCF, 1 March 1960, “Pioneer Village Man Quits,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 2 March 1960.

¹²¹ Correspondence Elliott to Tivy, 24 September, 1990.

¹²² Correspondence Howard Groh to James Gooding, 12 May 1960, Gooding to Groh 14 June 1960, Museum Correspondence RG 47-51, OA.



decked out in period costumes, served tea and refreshments. The only building open was the museum, whose collection's nucleus was the artifacts that had belonged to the WHS. More than twenty-five hundred objects were arranged in groups of like materials¹²³ and the range spanned several centuries: "In total the museum artifacts show Canadiana from the day of the Indian to the early 20th century."¹²⁴

6.10 Museum Opening, 1960. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*



6.11 Doon Museum Opening, 1960. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

¹²³ "2,500 Pioneer Village Items Displayed at Opening Event," *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 16 June 1960.

¹²⁴ "Pioneer Era Lives Again at Doon Village," *Galt Evening Reporter*, 14 June 1960, "Pioneer Village is Readied for Opening" *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 11 June 1960.



6.12 Doon Museum Opening, 1960. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

The following week during their annual meeting in Preston, which was just south of Doon, OHS delegates visited the Ontario Pioneer Community Museum. Taylor, who was not present at the site, showed the delegates slides of historic places in the county at a separate session. At that meeting, he was elected first-vice-president of the OHS, and went on to become its president. Schmalz, Barrie, and Page continued to serve as members of the nominal WHS museum committee, which was the same as the OPCF museum committee.

In his letter of resignation to the board of the OPCF, Taylor had asked to be allowed to drop out of the organization completely.¹²⁵ However, he managed to leave evidence of the modern museum

¹²⁵ Correspondence Taylor to Oliver Wright, President, Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation, 1 March 1960,

methods that he had tried to apply at the Ontario Pioneer Community. He had Louis C. Jones' full address to the OPCF on his plan for the Ontario Pioneer Village printed in the 1959 WHS Annual Report.¹²⁶

Later, as president of the OHS, Taylor wrote to Alice Turnham about his experience at Doon, and forwarded a copy of his letter to Schmalz, still head of the planning committee for Doon.

As for Doon, having been a spokesman for the Museums Section and finding ways of expressing myself through the Newsletter, I found I could not preach one thing and practice another. Faced with a board which was bound and determined to have things done in ways that I believed to be wrong I found myself faced with a choice of dropping out at the provincial level ... or of quietly telling the local group that if they were determined to build Doon as a hodgepodge they had to find someone else to carry out their orders. That was 3 years ago... When Dr. Guthe visited Doon in 1957 he said that one of the things he liked about the project was that I was on the ground so early. "A group of amateurs by themselves will just go ahead and spoil it - and it is too late to call in experts after all the mistakes have been made..." A few days ago when a plan of Doon - what had been done and what is proposed - came into my hand, I felt that most of the spoiling that Dr. Guthe foresaw is now woven into its structure.¹²⁷

A New Role for the Province

In 1959, the Government of Ontario took a step that marked the beginning of the province's role in advising local history museums, a role that would grow considerably in the 1960s and 1970s. That year the government created the position of a provincial advisor for community museums, after much lobbying by the OHS. At the 1958 OHS annual meeting, Andrew Taylor and his museum-section colleagues had passed a resolution that the government provide this form of assistance to museums. Prior to that, the OHS had made several applications to the provincial government to appoint an advisor under the auspices of the OHS. In 1955, the OHS offered to provide, with funding support, a museum advisor to assist with small museums and to recommend those deemed worthy for government funding.¹²⁸ In 1957, in the aftermath of Guthe's lecture and his report on the museums in Ontario, the OHS had tried again unsuccessfully to have the Department of Education fund an OHS field worker who would also provide advice to museums.¹²⁹

The Community Programmes Branch of the Department of Education was keenly aware of the miserable state of most community museums, and their need for technical advice as well as funding. Although the Community Programmes Branch had several community advisors on staff (such as two puppeteer consultants), who offered technical advice for the programmes it funded, it was unable to get approval to hire a museum advisor. Instead, it had given grants to the OHS museum

OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

¹²⁶ There are two separate versions of Dr. Jones speech, one of which was reprinted in the WHS Annual Report, and another unpublished typescript in the Archives of DHC. The latter "excerpt" contains no references to Mr. Taylor's capabilities, while the former, published in the WHS while Taylor was on the WHS publications committee, does.

¹²⁷ Taylor to Turnham, 23 March 1963 "Correspondence 1963," OPCF fonds, 966.163 OPCF Box 3, DHC.

¹²⁸ OHS Annual Meeting Minutes, 16 June 1955, OA.

¹²⁹ OHS Executive Committee Minutes, 30 November 1957, 8 February 1958, OA.

committee to run an annual museum training workshop, relying on those working in the museum community to provide advice and share information through this venue.

In response to the OHS Museum Section lobbying, K.L. Young, director of the Programmes Branch, convinced the Minister of Education to transfer the museum programme and workshop allowance to the recently formed Historical Branch of the Department of Travel and Publicity. This Branch had jurisdiction over the provincial historic sites board, and was prepared to hire a museums advisor.¹³⁰ D.F. McOuat of the Historical Branch agreed with Young that "one of the vital things lacking in the government museums policy is the presence of some person who can give technical advice to museums on display, organization and so on."¹³¹ The grant transfer took place in April 1959 and the term "historical" inserted as a descriptor of the types of museums the province funded. Jim Gooding was hired immediately.

As part of his role, Gooding assisted Taylor with the Museum Section Newsletter, forwarded references to Taylor on operating standards for museums, and helped acquire twenty-two surplus exhibit cases from the ROM for the museum building at Doon.¹³² Gooding, who was a speaker at the Museum Section workshop in Cornwall in 1959, was lauded by Alice Turnham as the first provincial museum advisor in the country. In succeeding decades the provincial museum advisory service would become central to how local history museums organized and interpreted their collections and exhibits to the public.

¹³⁰Community Programmes Branch, "Transfer of Museum Grants," K.L. Young to C.W. Booth, 3 October, 1958, RG 2-74 RG 5.B.1.013.24, OA.

¹³¹Department of Travel and Publicity, "Memos D.F. McOuat to Deputy Minister," "D.F. McOuat, to G. Moore," 20 October 1958, RG 2-74, 5-B-5-3.19, OA.

¹³² Correspondence Gooding to Taylor, 9 November 1959. OPCF fonds, 966.163 OPCF Box 3, DHC.

Chapter 7: From Haphazard Juxtapositions toward Narrative: 1960– 1971

Having heard that the Pioneer Village of Doon, a property of 55 acres, largely wooded, with stream and dam, just a few miles south of Kitchener and within an hour's drive from here was well worth a visit, we toured down in "The Bluebird" a few weeks ago. One enters the place at a knick-knack stand and then proceeds to the museum, the main building. Here on display are articles of almost every description, from a well furnished old fashioned parlour to articles used by the early pioneers, paper documents, irons, shoes, fancy work, kitchen utensils, etc. Downstairs are small shop and trade displays. A collection of military items and uniforms has been assembled. Natural history is portrayed by a collection of stuffed birds and small animals. Leaving the museum, one goes to the barns which are filled with pioneer equipment of all kinds from threshing machines to baby carriages. After a covered bridge is crossed one arrives at the Pioneer Village and finds the clock has been turned back a hundred years. Here are located the village store, harness store, print shop, carpenter shop, butcher shop, blacksmith shop, school and church. Visit the Pioneer Village of Doon some time, you will not be disappointed.¹

Introduction

Sentiments such as those expressed by Norman High at the 1960 Waterloo Historical Society (WHS) annual meeting about the disappearing landscape, compounded with the nationalist fervour of the Canadian centennial, promoted a surge in the growth of museums during the 1960s. Forty local museums received operating funds and advisory services from the province in 1961;² by 1971, this number had increased to one hundred and sixteen.³ Provincial government funding was critical to this museum growth; it rationalized its funding and advisory services as helping to raise the operating standards in these museums and thus profit local educational and tourist needs.⁴ Centennial funding at the federal level in the 1960s underlined the parallel notion of the civic value of these institutions; and federal centennial programs supported thirty-six projects to develop new or upgrade existing museums in Ontario.⁵ As the museum work place expanded, those coming to work in it likewise increased the membership of the organizations such as the Canadian Museum Association (CMA), the Ontario Historical Society Museum Section(OHS MS), and its successor, the Ontario Museum

¹ Jim Hamilton "By the Way: Visit to Doon Pioneer Village" c. 1965.

<http://heresthescoop.net/HJBVisitDoonPioneerVillage.html>; accessed 24 January 2006.

² When it became clear other provincial funding was not forthcoming, the OPCF applied for the maximum museum maintenance grant of \$1000.00 in 1961, under the auspices of the Grand Valley Conservation Authority (GVCA). At this time the province was not funding museums run by historical organizations.

³ "Report of the Historical Branch," Annual Report of the Ontario Department of Travel and Publicity (1961), 45; "Report of the Historical Branch," Annual Report of the Ontario Department of Public Archives and Records (1971), 54. It should be noted as well that the Branch estimated there were approximately 215 museums operating in the province by 1971.

⁴ "Report of the Historical Branch," Annual Report of the Ontario Department of Public Records and Archives, (1962), 56.

⁵ A list of these can be found in "Canadian Museums Association." RG 47, Accession 20752, Box 10, AO

Association (OMA); all devoted toward improving the museum and its work force through educating museum workers.⁶ The OHS and the OMA, along with the museum advisors, pushed museums to control their collections, to contextualize them in historical narratives and to perfect historical verisimilitude in restored or recreated rooms and structures. This chapter examines these changes in the museum environment and the relative development of Doon Pioneer Village between 1960 and 1971.

Creating Museum Narratives and Controlling Collections in Ontario

The doctrine for small museums during the 1960s remained consistent in emphasizing the importance of narrative as central to museum purpose, collections and exhibits. Narrative and collections formed a symbiotic relationship in this modern museum attitude: narrative was the primary interpretive tool of the collection, and a controlled collection would facilitate narrative. This symbiosis would preserve certain parts of the past and enhance their attraction to visitors, make them meaningful and rationalize their preservation. The implementation of these formative ideas would later be viewed as heritage management. The frequently used metaphor “community attic” conveyed the state of the now outdated, antiquarian approach in which, as Eugenio Donato has noted, the past is “treated as an archaeological museum of fragments haphazardly juxtaposed.”⁷ The move to discriminate and script the past was at the centre of the unresolved disagreement over identifying and reconstructing an historical tableau at Doon that provoked Taylor to leave the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation (OPCF) project in 1960.

Principles of Historical Narrative

Throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s the Museum Section continued to advocate for controlling collections for useful and effective narrative display to convey historical meaning.

Your museum can be a bunch of curios and miscellaneous objects, both valuable and worthless, thrown together into a community discard centre or your museum can be assembled with a definite purpose, with all the useless junk thrown out, and all the unsuitable but valuable objects sent to appropriate museums elsewhere. A functional collection must be the result of purposeful choosing.⁸

Although he had left the project at Doon, in his capacity as president of the OHS Museum Section, and co-editor (with his wife) of its newsletter, Taylor continued to encourage museums to collect, organize and exhibit their artifacts following the recommendations of Guthe and Jones.⁹ At the 1960 annual meeting of the OHS held in Preston, William Cranston, (now chairman of recently formed the Ontario Archaeological and Historic Sites Board), spoke on the rise of local museums in the province and on their new approach to using artifacts as components of narratives. Narrative, he said, served not only to bind the collections but also to engage the public. Taylor published Cranston’s lecture in full in the 1959 WHS Annual Report:

⁶ By 1968, for instance, registration at the annual workshop was over 120 people. Annual Workshop Report. OHS MS, (1968). By the early 1960s the circulation for the newsletter was over 175.

⁷ Eugenio Donato, “The Ruins of Memory: Archeological Fragments and Textual Artifacts,” *MLN*, 93 (1978), p.595.

⁸ OHS MS Newsletter 106 (1966).

⁹ See for instance, OHS MS Newsletter 77 (January 1962) “Because the facilities of a small museum are restricted it is vital that it should confine the scope of its collections.”

The rapid growth of local museums in this province is a further evidence of a healthy parochialism... No longer is the average local museum in Ontario a repository of odds and ends from cellar and attic, including souvenirs brought back by Great Aunt Matihilda from Borneo or New South Wales. Our curators and their committees have realized the potentiality of telling a cohesive story of a community in terms of its own local artifacts.¹⁰

The method of narrative formation with artifacts was conveyed to Museum Section members through a set of metaphors. Speaking at the 1960 workshop, Anthony Adamson, chief architect of Upper Canada Village, stated that artifacts were not history per se, but relative ingredients in historical narrative: "The warp and woof of history is preserved in museums, in archival collections and in libraries. But these things are not history. History is the interpretation that is placed on them."¹¹ Using a different allegory, Alice Turnham told the OHS MS newsletter readers that same year that curators were musicians composing historical narrative using artifacts as their instruments. It was no longer enough just to preserve these artifacts; the curator's responsibility was to make them "speak" by arranging them in context.¹²

At the 1963 workshop, James Gooding, the province's museums advisor, said that museum workers should view the reorganization of their museum exhibits to express narratives as their prime goal.¹³ One of his successors, Pauline Hooten, emphasized the benefits of this method in her 1969 guide to producing local history museum exhibits:

During the last decade tremendous strides have been made to change the museum from a storehouse where objects of curiosity and antiquity were placed on public view in row upon row of gloomy monotony, to a living building dedicated to making education a pleasure, dedicated to giving these same objects meaning. ... One of the ways that this success has been achieved is through the realization that an object is not fully appreciated unless it can be understood. ... in terms of its context. ... Our most important decision regarding the collection is the storyline. This is what we call display with a purpose. It can be seen that the efforts which have been taken in this field, are receiving their just rewards of increased museum attendance.¹⁴

The judicious acceptance and use of collections to develop historical narrative and enhance attendance, first advocated in the 1930s by Arthur C. Parker, became the dominant message to museum workers in the province from 1960 onward.¹⁵ At the 1962 Museum Section Workshop, Albert Corey, the historian for the State of New York, and secretary of the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH), outlined methods for developing collections to relate local history. His lecture and accompanying technical leaflet *Guideposts for a History Collection* advised that

¹⁰ William Cranston, WHS Annual Report, (1960), 51-59. On the introduction of the Archaeological and Historic Sites Board see D.F. McOuat, "Functions and Operations of the Historical Branch, Department of Travel and Publicity" *Ontario History* Volume LI (1959), No. 4, pp. 280-283.

¹¹ Anthony Adamson "Preserving Ontario's History," 1960 Museum Section Workshop Report, Alice Davidson Scrapbook, OHS fonds F1139-4, box MU 5444, Box 24, OA.

¹² OHS MS newsletter No. 60, June 1960, OA.

¹³ OHS MS Workshop Report, (1962). Alice Davidson Scrapbook, OHS fonds F1139-4, box MU 5444, OA.

¹⁴ OHS MS Workshop Report, (1966), 12. Alice Davidson Scrapbook, OHS fonds F1139-4, box MU 5445 OA.

¹⁵ Parker's *Manual for History Museums* was recommended reading for history museum curators affiliated with the CMA. CMA fonds, MG 28 I 344 Volume 21, File 6, NAC The reader is reminded of Lisa Robert's argument that narrative became the essential communications tool for museum educators in the late twentieth century.

collections needed to be limited to historical boundaries: geographic area, period and subject. Exhibits, he recommended, should serve to relate the significant elements of local history. Continuing the theme of the “Unwanted Object” from Glover’s 1956 OHS MS workshop lecture, Corey detailed the process for disposing of objects deemed insignificant and irrelevant. “Eliminating objects from a collection is never easy ... but ... necessary, if the collection is to be used effectively.”¹⁶ Noah Torno, whose company, Jordan Wines, subsidized the Jordan Museum of the Twenty, provided museum section members with an example of discriminating collecting on their part. “Imagine for example, not accepting an early fire pumper! But then, no fire pumper had ever been used on the Twenty.”¹⁷

In 1962, the Section circulated “10 Commandments for Museum Workers” copied from the British Columbia Museums newsletter *Roundup*. These commandments focused solely on exhibit development and stressed the nature of the exhibit as a communication device. Among them, the following were listed:

You shall have a plan for your exhibit and make it immediately clear to the visitor;
... You shall always show objects in their functional position, [and]... You shall not arrange monotonous rows of things on shelves, nor crowd your cases.¹⁸

Perhaps the strongest and most easily facilitated narrative was the rhetoric of a recreated setting, a method that Henry D. Brown of the Detroit Historical Museum regarded as most effective in his 1963 workshop keynote speech “Intrigue Before You Instruct.”¹⁹ These settings could be vignettes and dioramas in museum displays or, as at Doon, they could be an entire assemblage of buildings and landscapes. Recreated historical villages required this narrative and collections management sensibility writ large in the placement of buildings on the created landscape. In 1960, Ronald Way, supervisor of the Upper Canada Village project, explained to academic historians the nature of creating living history at this site. He viewed the project as “an animated diorama of history, conceived, executed and operated for the purposes of mass education.”²⁰ Historical buildings and objects were components of a larger narrative, the finished product greater than the sum of the parts. For instance, “When the actual story of a particular house does not add anything to the picture of a typical village, that building’s history will be subordinated to the main theme, and our uses of it amended for that purpose.”²¹ The actual story of a particular house and its perceived worth was determined through architectural and historical research.

Maintaining a building’s architectural integrity through careful restoration was the chief concern of architectural historians in Ontario, such as John Peter Stokes, and Verschoyle Blake. Like Way and Adams, they worked on the development of Upper Canada Village. Historical accuracy in restoring buildings was their focus and that of architectural historian, John Rempel, who spoke to the Waterloo Historical Society’s annual meeting in 1961. Perhaps with one eye cast to Doon, he cautioned his audience that many preservation groups in the province, sadly lacking in expertise or direction, were moving too rapidly to preserve buildings. He reminded them that historic buildings

¹⁶ *Guideposts for a History Collection*, (Albany: New York State Education Department, Division of Archives and History, June 1962.) p. 8. [Re-published in 1963 by the American Association for State and Local History.]

¹⁷ OHS MS Newsletter 69 (1961).

¹⁸ OHS MS Workshop Report, (1962), Alice Davidson Scrapbook, OHS fonds F1139-4, box MU 5444, OA.

¹⁹ OHS MS Workshop Report, (1963), Alice Davidson Scrapbook, OHS fonds F1139-4, box MU 5445, OA.

²⁰ Ronald L. Way, “Living Museums: An Aspect of the work of the Ontario-St. Lawrence Development Commission” Annual Meeting, Canadian Historical Association, Kingston, June 9, 1960, p.3-4. Cited in Ann Martin “Sugar-Coated History,” p.39.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

were very expensive to restore and to maintain. He agreed with other architectural historians and museum leaders that buildings designated architecturally or historically significant should be restored intact and, if possible, in situ, and should not be used as containers for general displays of local history collections. Purpose-built structures were superior for the management of artifact collections and did not compromise the integrity of the historic structure, best conveyed through restoration and animation.²²

Application of Principles of Historical Narrative

Such “Museum Section principles,” as they were called in the OHS MS newsletters, had a theoretical mass, but were applied unevenly, according to the resources of individual museums. Examples of the good application of these principles included the mammoth restoration of Dundurn Castle, owned by the city of Hamilton. Directed by Anthony Adamson, this half-million dollar centennial project, begun in 1965, transformed the forty-room mansion back to its 1855 splendour, a time when its owner Sir Allan Napier MacNab was premier of the United Canadas (1845–1856). Curator Gwen Metcalfe reported early in 1965 that she was emptying “Hamilton’s largest attic” of sixty-four years of collecting miscellanea.²³ That was just as well, because at the CMA annual meeting held the year before in Hamilton, members had condemned the place for its crowded and indiscriminate displays of relics, and were unanimously supported its restoration to a living history site.²⁴ As the restoration researcher later observed, “Fashions change in museums and in public taste ...” Dundurn’s character “had been submerged under the mediocrity of display space.”²⁵ A small special exhibit at Dundurn later offered a reflective look at these ‘old-fashioned’ museum presentations. R. Alan Douglas, a leader in the Museum Section observed on the effect of these philosophies at Dundurn:

You have to state the ultimate purpose of the museum. If it is to be restored to its original condition, certain things will have to be kept. If it is to be a historical museum, certain other things must be kept.²⁶

Likewise, the volunteers at the Sharon Museum were taking the advice of the Museum Section to heart. Aided by architectural historian B. Napier Simpson and substantial endowments, they erected a sympathetic building to house collections related to the Children of Peace:

A half century ago when the York Pioneer and Historical Society acquired the Temple of Peace, Sharon, Ontario with the purpose of using the unique building as a museum, principles of collecting and display had not been as refined as they are today. A decade ago or so it became apparent that this community attic genre was just not good enough. Because most of our volunteers were learning about modern museum techniques at this [Louis C. Jones 1954 workshop] and succeeding workshops, they attempted to define the purpose and scope of this museum.²⁷

²² OHS MS Newsletter No. 60, (1960).

²³ OHS MS *Newsletter* No. 101, February (1965).

²⁴ OHS MS *Newsletter* No. 97, July (1964).

²⁵ Marion MacRae, *MacNab of Dundurn*, Toronto/Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin and Company, (1971), 206. To commemorate the old museum and its ways of thinking, a few specimens from each era of the museum’s collecting history were saved for an exhibition on Dundurn’s sixty years as a city museum.

²⁶ Douglas, quoted in OHS MS *Newsletter* No. 97, July (1964).

²⁷ "Museum section principles applied at Sharon Temple," OHS MS, Newsletter, 115, September, (1967).

Napier Simpson also advised on the re-restoration of the William Lyon Mackenzie House in Toronto, after its transfer from a volunteer organization to the Toronto Historical Board in 1960, the latter ostensibly formed to raise the standards of operation in historic museums in the city.²⁸ Simpson wrote to Jeanne Minhinick:

The House [sic] is in a very confused state as the kindly Liberals have put into the house everything that they thought might be cute and interesting. We want to restore the house, as it was when Mackenzie lived and died in it during the sixties.²⁹

Perhaps the most outstanding development among community museums in Ontario was that of Black Creek Pioneer Village, located north of Toronto and operated by the Metropolitan Toronto Region Conservation Authority. Albert Colucci, an art historian and curator of the village also worked closely with Simpson, following a master plan for the village development. Former teacher Dorothy Duncan brought her pedagogical expertise to the historic setting. By the late 1960s, the village was touting itself as “Canada’s fastest growing folk village,” offering a myriad of educational and interpretive programs contextualized to the establishment of a mid-nineteenth century crossroads community and its expansion and industrialization.³⁰ The major components of the village interpretive plan followed a narrative of the community settlement and development between 1800 and 1867. The nucleus was an intact farmstead of several buildings (1816) and an adjacent second homestead (1832) both built by Daniel Stong, a Pennsylvania-German who immigrated to the area with his family in a Conestoga wagon, about the same time as the Brickers’ arrived in Waterloo County. The contrast between the extant first and second Stong homesteads built sixteen years apart provided visual evidence of the material and cultural changes in this short period. This narrative of change and growth was further contextualized in the village proper, which was composed of carefully authenticated and restored pre-confederation buildings from central Ontario, using themes of mercantile and industrial development and of the growth of educational and cultural facilities. The village also had a museum and local history collections. Exhibits were “arranged in an interpretive manner, each an entity in its own sphere.”³¹ These displays included exhibits of toys, flax processing, maple sugar making, and a cooperage. The museum also contained a Conestoga wagon.

These museums were exceptions that proved the rule. Because of lack of resources and the need to train the growing museum workplace, theory and practice did not necessarily converge in many museums. Ninety-percent of community museums were still seasonal, and volunteer-run on a pittance. Most museums still displayed everything, had no concept of narrative, and showed instead the rare, the unusual, and curios from anywhere in the world.³² The Chatham-Kent Museum brochure highlighted its collections’ novelties including an Egyptian mummy and Australian Aboriginal weapons, while its curator put out a call for help on deciding what it should or should not collect.³³

²⁸ By-law 21006, Corporation of the City of Toronto, 6 July 1960, cited in Douglas Fife, “History of Mackenzie House,” 6.

²⁹ Napier Simpson to Jeanne Minhinick, July 1962, cited in Douglas Fife, “History of Mackenzie House,” Unpublished paper, (1990), 7.

³⁰ Black Creek Pioneer Village brochure, 1968. in OPCF Fonds, “Correspondence 1968” 996.163 Box 4, DHC; Marty Brent “Black Creek Pioneer Village.” Paper presented at the Ontario Museum Association Annual Conference, 18 October 2002.

³¹ *Black Creek Pioneer Village*, Toronto: Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, (1972).

³² Author interview with Peter Styrmø, Toronto, 17 October 1990.

³³ “Suppose the museum already possesses fine collections of irrelevant materials, isn’t it better to accept the fact as a necessary complication than it is to remove all unrelated material from the museum?” Brochure, Chatham-Kent Museum, (1966), OHS MS Workshop Report, 13, Alice Davidson Scrapbook 5, F 1139-4, MU

Despite Herb Neill's 1963 career award at the age of seventy-eight from the Museum Section as its first honorary member, his museum was no longer a prime example of museum section principles. Its most popular exhibit was its two-headed calf. It had no storage area and virtually everything accepted went on display in galleries loosely arranged by artifact type.³⁴

Museums that had once flourished were eclipsed through lack of funding, skills or interest. In 1962, the museum advisor sent new display plans to the curator at Collingwood's Huron Institute. Its collections and displays had fallen into disarray, and it is uncertain if the suggested exhibits were installed. The Institute and its collections burned to the ground in 1963.³⁵ The Peterborough Historical Society, inheritors of the remains of the Victoria Museum collection, closed their museum to the public in 1964 to pressure local authorities to increase support for it.³⁶ By 1968, the Wellington County Museum had become so packed with material that Ruth Home's careful displays had disintegrated into open storage.³⁷

Museum Advisors

Many museums were operating without any intellectual direction in their collecting; space commanded the only limitation, evident in the question a curator posed to the museums' advisor: "Should we accept everything offered ... even if it is bulky?"³⁸ Ontario's museums' advisor answered these questions, and other calls for help from community museum curators.³⁹ Teaching the importance of a statement of purpose and exhibit storyline to help these museums harness their collections and exhibits was the essence of his work.⁴⁰ James Gooding, the provincial museums advisor from 1959–1964, provided an intensive hands-on and hand-holding service to local museums and set an example for future advisors. He advised museums on board and staff responsibilities, exhibit design and installation, cataloguing and artifact storage. He authenticated artifacts, provided museum training information, distributed materials on behalf of museums and organized advertising efforts. In addition, he prepared plans for the development of both gallery museums and historic houses.⁴¹ Gooding made on-site consultations to about eighty museums a year throughout the

5445, OA.

³⁴ Raymond Scotchmer, unpublished paper, Correspondence to J.H. Neill, 20 May, 1963, "Huron County Museum, 1989," Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 20752, box 11, OA.

³⁵ James Gooding to Dudley Irwin, 7 September 1962, "Collingwood Historical Museum 1959-1974," Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 20752, box 14, OA.

³⁶ Doherty, 143. The museum was later rebuilt as a centennial project

³⁷ Bev Dietrich, "History of the Wellington County Museum" Unpublished typescript, (1990).

³⁸ L. Taylor to J. Gooding 11 October 1962, "Lincoln County Historical Society 1960-1963," Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 20752, box 12, OA.

³⁹ From 1963 until 1972 the museums advisors were part of the Historical Branch of the Department of Public Records and Archives. The Museums Section was established by 1972 within the Historical and Museums Branch (formerly the Historical Branch) of the Archives of Ontario. In 1973, both the Section and the Branch were transferred to the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities, where they formed a part of the Cultural Affairs Division. In 1975, the Museums Section was transferred to the new Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, where it formed part of the Heritage Administration Branch. In 1980, the Museums Section was re-named the Museum Services Section. In 1982 the Heritage Administration Branch and the Archaeology and Heritage Planning Branch, along with the Heritage Trust, were united to form the Heritage Branch. With this change, the Museum Services Section was merged with the Historical Conservation and Promotion Section to form the History, Museums and Administration unit of the new Branch.

⁴⁰ Author interview with Peter Styrmø, Toronto, 17 October 1990.

province and developed information leaflets on frequently requested topics such as artifact cataloguing and setting up a museum board. He was also expected to provide advice to provincial operations, such as Upper Canada Village. In addition, he led sessions at the annual OHS museum section workshop, and organized and taught seminars for the Canadian Museum Association.⁴² His correspondence with client museums reveals the primitive state of museum work at community museums. About the curator of a museum in Kent County, he noted, "He has very little knowledge of what a museum should be, what to collect, how to display it, how to label it and very little knowledge of museum procedure. He does seem willing to learn."⁴³

During the five years that Gooding was on staff, the number of local museums in the province receiving provincial funding support more than doubled, from twenty-seven to sixty-one.⁴⁴ When Gooding left to work for Parks Canada in 1964, Peter Styrmo from Fort York was hired to replace him. A year later, the service added an exhibit design specialist, Pauline Hall [nee Hooten], to form a two-person team to deal with the monumental task of raising the quality of Ontario's local museums.⁴⁵ While this objective may have been the intention of these programs, the largely unqualified availability of operating funds actually stimulated the development of new museums. A number of changes resulted in an increase in the number of museums and of demands on the advisory service.⁴⁶ Such changes included the advent of centennial capital funds for museum building projects in the early 1960s, the reduction in the quota of days that qualifying museums had to be open, and the availability of a one-time "establishment" grants to cover fifty percent of the cost of setting up a museum (to a maximum of \$1200). By 1968, eight-seven museums were receiving operating grants totalling \$70,785. The problems facing the local museums remained constant because of this growth and learning curve: lack of conservation facilities; poorly catalogued or uncatalogued collections; and untrained personnel. These untrained museum workers had little experience with basic museum operations including administration, exhibit design, education programming and research. Few of the

⁴¹ J. Gooding to Mrs. G. Allen, May 12, 1960, James Gooding "The Work of the Museums Advisor." Museum Section Workshop Report, (1959), Ontario Historical Society Papers, "Northumberland County, Barnum House 1959-68." Alice Davidson Scrapbook 1957-59, Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 20752, box 12, AO.

⁴² James Gooding, "The Work of the Museums Adviser," Museum Section Workshop Report 1959, OHS fonds, Alice Davidson Scrapbook, F 1139-4, MU 5444, OA.

⁴³ Gooding, "Memo to file," File "Fairfield Museum 1959-1967," "Museums Correspondence" RG 47-51, Accession 20752, box 11, OA.

⁴⁴ Steve Otto "History of the Grants Program," "Discussion paper" p.1-2, Unpublished paper, 14 August 1978, Ministry of Culture and Recreation Minister's Papers, RG 47-78, Accession 19909, box 7, OA.

⁴⁵ This objective was listed as the main goal of the museum grant program in the annual report published by the Historical Branch of the Department of Travel and Publicity, and later the Department of Public Records and Archives. See Annual Report of the Department of Travel and Publicity, 1962,56; Annual Report of the Department of Records and Archives, 1966,55.

⁴⁶ Steve Otto "History of the Grants Program."

museums had any stated philosophical purpose, and many were still developing without any collecting controls. As the chair of a museum board wrote to Pauline Hall: "We are not too conversant with such points as the purpose of a museum, or the work to be performed."⁴⁷

The work of the advisors continued unabated. During 1968 for instance, the two advisors processed 90 applications for museum funding, provided advice to 185 museums, made on-site consultations to 164 institutions and provided plans, illustrations, models, designs and advice to 18 museums for new exhibits. They completely designed and installed a museum exhibit for Moose Factory, met with 50 government bodies interested in museums and their development, and organized and delivered training sessions at the annual Museum Section workshop and for the recently initiated diploma program of the Canadian Museum Association, in addition to other services. By 1971, this work focused on a display improvement program, while the number of museums in the program that received funding increased to 116 and the department appropriation was over \$96,000.⁴⁸ With few other sources of museological support and advice, the Province's funding and expertise in museum planning and administration, artifact cataloguing, conservation, exhibit design and education program had become fundamental to community museums developing in Ontario and those working in them.⁴⁹ Styrmø urged his superiors to support additional training of museum workers on the basis that it was essential to the improvement of museums in his department's purview.

I am firmly convinced that the key to improving the museums' operations and presentations in this province lies in training and education. As you know, it is virtually impossible for two museums advisors to visit all (191) museums in the province on an annual basis and difficult on a bi-annual basis because of distance and time factors. It would appear that our participation in this kind of venture coupled with our present program would make our total effort much more effective.⁵⁰

The Professionalization of Museum Workers in Ontario

"There is an urgent need for the recognition of the museum profession as a 'profession'" argued Dr. W.E. Swinton, Director of the ROM in 1964.⁵¹ Calls for training programs for museum workers had been issued by the CMA since the late 1950s, bolstered by various studies such as the Massey Commission and the Guthe's publication *The Canadian Museum Movement*. This path of professionalization began when, after much deliberation, the CMA launched the first accredited program for museum training in Canada in 1965, having received funding from the Canadian Centennial Commission to set up a secretariat.⁵² Following the British Museums Association model

⁴⁷ A.W. Ormston to P. Hall 28 July 1967, File "St. Catherines Historical Museum 1965-1969," Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 20752 box 12, OA.

⁴⁸ See Department of Public Records and Archives Annual Reports, 1968, 1971.

⁴⁹ Regarding the work of Peter Styrmø, the Museum Section of the Ontario Historical Society noted in its newsletter that "'Pete' has been run ragged giving advice, sympathy and encouragement on every conceivable angle of museum work." Ontario Historical Society Museum Section Newsletter, 226, (1974).

⁵⁰ Memo Styrmø to McQuat 21 April 1969, Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 13302-7-1, Volume 1, OA.

⁵¹ "The purpose of the diploma." Cited in OHS MS *Newsletter* 97 (July 1964).

⁵² Prior to this date, students applied through the CMA for entrance to the British Museums Association diploma program, and completed examinations based on Canadian museums. One of its first graduates of this hybrid program included Ruth Home.

of professional development for those working in museums, this program offered three levels of study in an attempt to address the variability in knowledge and skill across the country. It relied on local instructors and markers to address a syllabus concerned with museum functions, such as financial management, cataloguing, conservation, display and interpretation the program expected students to use their own sites and experiences in fulfilling the written and practical requirements for each course. Students had to complete a minimum number of seminars, instruct a seminar and prepare a ten-thousand-word research paper.⁵³ The exhaustive range of information required to complete the assignments illustrates the combined academic and administrative skills deemed necessary by staff operating at these sites.⁵⁴ Initially a committee of the CMA council operated the program; in 1971, a training coordinator was hired to facilitate the delivery and marking of the courses.⁵⁵ In Ontario, museum advisors were the core support of the CMA program, as James Auld stated to Peter Swann, president of the CMA.

An outstanding example is your Association's Level 1 training program for museum curators. Based on CMA curricula, these courses have been run entirely by Mr. Styrmo and Mrs. Hall of our Archives Department., and Mr. Douglas Hough of our St. Lawrence Parks Commission.⁵⁶

The CMA also piggybacked their program on Museum Section seminars, with the Museum Section fully backing this joint effort to upgrade museums and their workers.

The Museums Section of the OHS, recognizing the very real need for making available more formal instruction in museum methods and techniques, has undertaken to sponsor a continuing training program in cooperation with the CMA. The first seminar - Registration - took place April 9 through 12th [1969] at Dundurn Castle. The response is such that it is planned to arrange for similar sessions in other parts of the province. Ultimately it is hoped to have a group of individuals who are not only more fully aware of the nature of their museum problems but are prepared and equipped to draw on greater knowledge and resources to cope with them, and thereby ensure better preservation of the more tangible evidences of our history. The presentation and use which gives these materials significance is in itself a highly specialized art.⁵⁷

⁵³ It is clear from correspondence and documents in NAC 21-6, "CMA Training Program, General 1953-1955" that the British Museums Diploma was the working model for CMA. See also Susan Waterman, "Professionalization in Museums: An Overview" Unpublished paper, University of Waterloo History Department, 1986, and Carrie Brooks-Joiner "The Ontario Museum Association and Professionalization of Museum Workers" Ontario Museum Association *Annual* Vol.1 (1992) 4-7.

⁵⁴ Tailored to Ontario students, an early examination sheet for "Folk-Life and Local History" component of the hybrid British-Canadian diploma asked for a range of information including: a critique of Canadian folk-life literature, a description of the methods of building a log cabin, or blanket-weaving in 19th century Ontario, a discussion on the relative importance of collecting versus display and a discussion on the community needs served by a folk museum., File "Diploma Examination 1963," Volume 22, "CMA -Training Program General." CMA fonds, MG. 28 I 344, NAC.

⁵⁵ Correspondence Jean-Paul Morrisett to Allan Douglas, another diploma candidate 18/01/71 informed him that program had been in abeyance, but that they had just hired a full-time training coordinator, NAC MG 28.

⁵⁶ Auld to Swann 13 July 1970, Department of Tourism and Information, Minister's Correspondence, File "Museums, General" RG 5-A-1-16.04 RC7, OA.

⁵⁷ OHS AGM Museum Section Report 1969. OHS fonds, F 1139-2, MS 249, reel 2. OA

A Professional Association

In 1966, the OHS council instructed the Museum Section to consider offering a short museum management course for “non-professional custodians of small museums,” as a way of helping local history museums deal with conservation cataloguing, exhibition and interpretation problems.⁵⁸ However, a growing awareness of the “highly specialized art” required to preserve artifacts and make them significant in a museum setting actually propelled the Section down a different path towards professionalizing the wider museum workplace.

Although the Museum Section was the prime supplier of instruction in museum techniques in the Province, membership was restricted to those with membership in the OHS or an affiliate historical society. By the mid 1960s, some members of the Museum Section questioned this prerequisite, as they did the position of the Section within the OHS. In 1968, the Section proposed an associate membership for museum workers not affiliated with a historical society:

It should occasion no surprise that in the years since the formation of the first museums’ committee, its membership have become increasingly aware of the fact that they were developing a rather different identity from the OHS membership at large, and attracting to their deliberations an increasing number of those whose first interest lies in museums rather than history per se. It has been suggested that a form of ‘associate membership’ within the museums section be established.⁵⁹

The OHS executive rejected this proposal.⁶⁰ Members of museum section, now calling themselves “museologists,” called for secession from the OHS and development of an independent museum association of professional museum workers.⁶¹ In reference to their work, leader Alan Douglas said “Make no mistake about it. Museology is a profession.”⁶² In 1968, he argued his case to the Museum Section members at the OHS annual general meeting. He recalled their accomplishments. In 1962, the American Association for State and Local History had recognized the Museum Section for service to the museums of Ontario. To provide a model for other museums worldwide, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had published the professional code of ethics (written by Douglas) for museum workers, which the Section had adopted in 1965. The Section had played a key role in organizing and leading sessions at the AASLH conference in Toronto one month earlier. The CMA, which had re-evaluated its training program and given increased responsibility to the provincial museums associations to delivering museum training, had just given the Museums Section notice that their workshops were now accredited towards the CMA diploma program.⁶³

Douglas reasoned that the interests of the OHS were not necessarily those of the Museum Section and that the Section needed to be capable of speaking with its own voice in matters of external affairs such as the implementation of the CMA training scheme at the provincial level or

⁵⁸ OHS Council Minutes 29 January 1966, OHS fonds, MS 249 reel 2. F 1139-2, OA.

⁵⁹ Museum Section, “Chairman’s Report,” (OHS AGM 1968), Alice Davidson Scrapbook 5 OHS fonds F 1139-4, box MU 5445 OA. Noted also by Killan, *Preserving Ontario’s Heritage*, 236.

⁶⁰ Minutes, OHS 1968, OHS fonds, F 1139-2, MS 249, reel 2, OA.

⁶¹ For instance, see the article “Tribute to Ruth Home, Ontario’s pioneer museologist.” OHS Museum Section Newsletter 106, January 1966.

⁶² Alan Douglas, “Code of Ethics for Museum Workers,” (1966).

⁶³ Museum Section, “Chairman’s Report,” (OHS AGM 1968), Alice Davidson Scrapbook 5 OHS fonds F 1139-4, box MU 5445 OA.

negotiating with regard to provincial grants.⁶⁴ Other provincial museum associations thrived in Quebec, Alberta, British Columbia and the Maritimes, and could serve as a model for one in Ontario.

Although highly debated and finally defeated by those members who preferred the security of the OHS as a umbrella organization, this movement eventually culminated with the formation of the Ontario Museum Association in 1971. As museums became more and more places of performance rather than research, museums workers increasingly identified with their medium and workplace rather than their research subject, and for a second time, the Ontario Historical Society forfeited its central influence in Ontario community museums.

On July 7, 1971, the OMA was founded with objectives that paralleled those drawn up by the Museum Section almost twenty years before: aid in the improvement of museums, implement training programs to upgrading the quality of museum work and develop professional practices and procedures; promote public understanding of museums; and make representations to governments and other agencies.⁶⁵ The aura of fellowship was diminished; members vetted admittance to this new professional organization.⁶⁶ Gwen Metcalfe wrote to Alf Schenk at Doon Pioneer Village in disappointment about the OMA inaugural meeting, which she viewed as a “personal power” exercise.⁶⁷ Believing that the Museum Section was still a better association for workers in small museums, many of its long-standing members such as Metcalfe chose not to join the OMA.⁶⁸

Through its seminars and publications, the OMA promoted the virtue of narrative over chaos in the museum. At its inaugural meeting, guest speaker Professor Maurice Careless, head of the History Department at the University of Toronto, advocated the use of context when displaying artifacts, preferably with social history as an interpretive theme.⁶⁹

Narrative and Professionalism at Doon 1960–1971

Against the background of an increasingly professional, growing community museum field in Ontario, Doon began an era of growth driven fundamentally not by Museum Section principles but by financial limitations. So, despite the capabilities of those on the OPCF Board, the hard work and best intentions of its volunteer working committees, the OPCF’s efforts to build and operate a museum and village complex ultimately failed to meet professional expectations. Nonetheless, the project itself became a popular public space, thereby fulfilling some of its intended purpose.

The funding problem of the 1960s had begun initially with the province’s indifference toward assuming the village operation at Doon in the mid 1950s. This was followed by the decision in 1959 to eliminate funding for historic buildings for conservation authorities, leaving the OPCF with no working capital to buy buildings. With the withdrawal of anticipated provincial funding, the OPCF were forced to compromise their plans. As Hugh Elliott later explained, this shortage of funds, coupled with pressure to fabricate the village and the museum quickly, necessitated a piece-meal and ad hoc approach to the project.

Old buildings and historical artifacts became available on all sides, and resulted in a continuing problem to provide accommodation, with limited financial resources. Due

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ OMA Council Minutes 7 July 1971. OMA fonds F 2091-1, Box 1, OA.

⁶⁶ The qualifying conditions for admittance to the OMA were eventually removed in part due to the nascent state of the profession and lack of accredited training programs.

⁶⁷ Letter, Gwen Metcalfe to Alf Schenk 19 July 1971 OPCF fonds, “Correspondence 1971” box 5, , DHC

⁶⁸ Metcalfe is not included on the early membership lists of the organization. OMA fonds, F 2091-1, Box 1, OA.

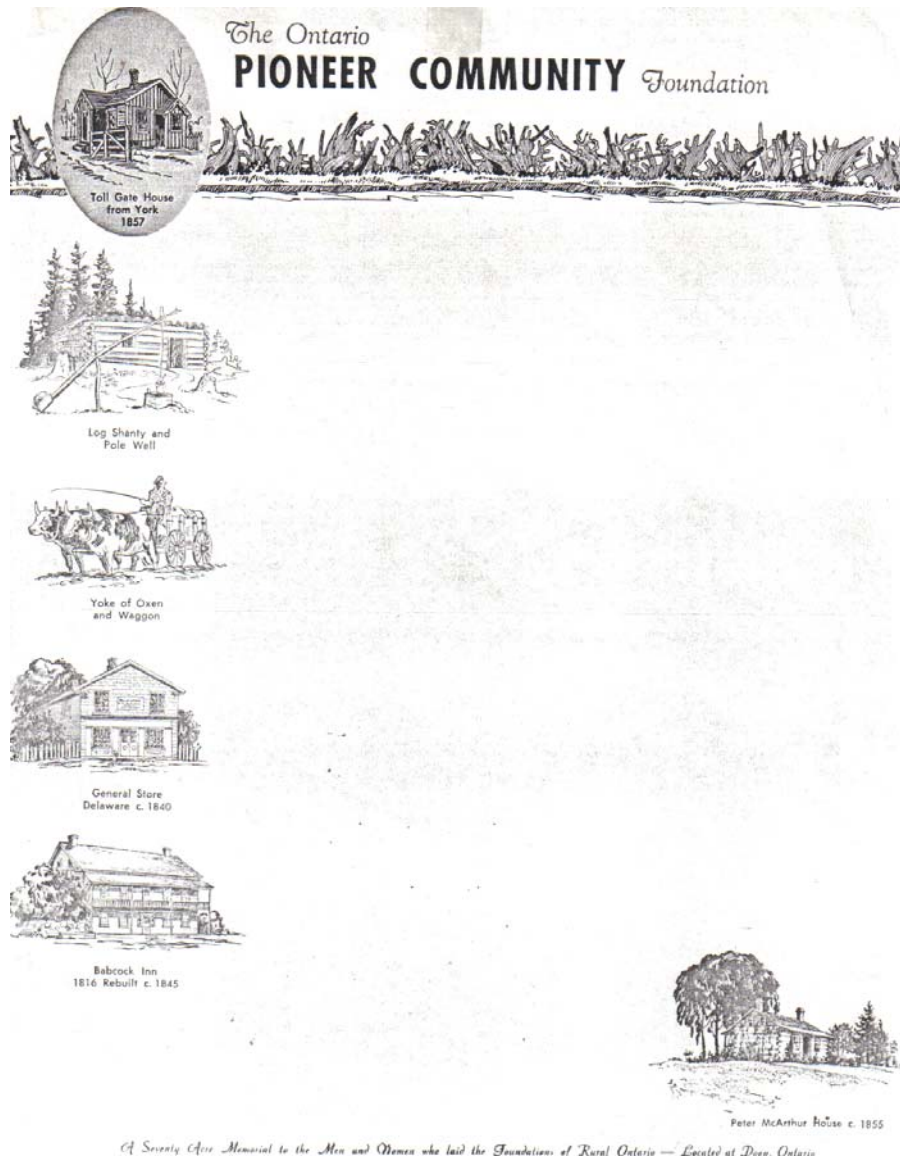
⁶⁹ OMA Minutes. OMA fonds F 2091-1, Box 1, OA.

to such pressures, the directors decided that they could not follow the advice of Dr. Jones of Cooperstown, by setting a terminal date for collections and construction projects.⁷⁰

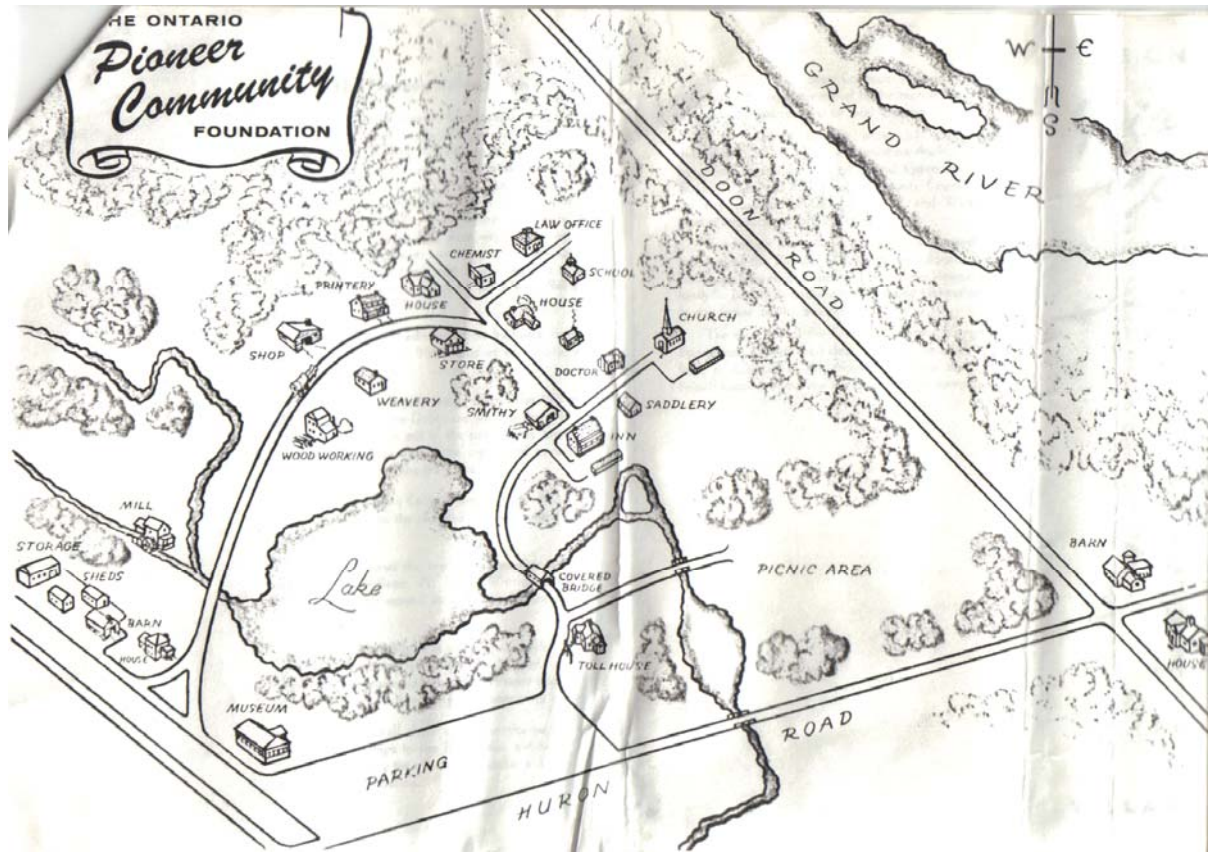
With financial support from the GRCA, the OPCF also had to address complex issues of land grading, water flood levels, plantings, maintenance of village roads, bridges, and parking lots and visitor services including signage, snack-bar, shop, lavatories, garbage disposal as well as on-site security.⁷¹ In 1961, funding for the project consisted of municipal grants from Waterloo County, the cities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Galt totalling \$16,500. Provincial income was restricted to \$4,000 in support for land management concerns through the GVCA, and a \$1,000 museum operating grant through the Department of Travel and Publicity. The Waterloo Historical Society continued to donate \$500.00 annually for maintenance of the museum collection. This revenue barely met operating expenses.

⁷⁰ Undated Correspondence Hugh Elliott to Jim Bauer, "Doon Master Plan Study 1980-1981." Box 14, 996.163 DHC

⁷¹ See Appendix D "Doon Budgets." The museum does not show up as a line-item until 1971. Minutes of the OPCF during this period show the extensive amount of time, labour and expenses required to manage the landscape and built structures.



7.1 Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation letterhead. The Babcock Inn and Toll Gate House were never erected. *Doon Heritage Crossroads*



7.2 Drawing of layout of Doon, c.1961. *Doon Heritage Crossroads*

Key buildings and items that the OPCF had hoped to include on site became beyond their reach. Galt's Priory, the centrepiece of the project, was abandoned due to reconstruction estimates of \$40,000.⁷² Kept in storage on site at Doon, the remaining logs of this building eventually disintegrated and disappeared. The toll gatehouse was too expensive to reconstruct, as was the Babcock Inn, which never arrived at Doon.⁷³ These buildings, identified as historically significant by both Taylor and Jones and, with the exception of the Priory, acknowledged as architecturally intact by the architectural historian Verschoyle Blake, were forsaken for lack of resources to reconstruct them.⁷⁴ The nearby Parkway Mill, first built in 1812 and obsolete by 1961, was considered as a strong element for inclusion in the village. Unfortunately, it remained beyond reach, since neither money nor sponsor could be found to cover the cost of moving it.⁷⁵ It was eventually torn down.

⁷² Correspondence, W.H.E. Schmalz to Gordon R. Couling, 15 January 1970, OPCF fonds, Correspondence 1970 (1), 996.163 box 4, DHC.

⁷³ The York Historical Society asked for the return of this toll gatehouse, but there is no further evidence of its return or reuse. OPCF fonds, OPCF Minutes, 3 November, 1960, box 1, DHC. Interview Alf Schenk with author, Waterloo, 5 November 1989.

⁷⁴ V.V. Blake to A.H. Richardson, Undated, 1959. "Proposed Buildings," OPCF fonds, Box 13, 996.163, DHC. Although never erected these buildings remained featured on the letterhead of the OPCF for many years.

⁷⁵ OPCF Minutes 26 Sept. 1961, OPCF fonds, box 1 DHC. A brief history of the Parkway Mill, known also as German Mills, is printed in "Parkway Mill Closed" WHS Annual Report 196, p.59-60. The mill's history and output is also included in Elizabeth Bloomfield's *Waterloo Township Through Two Centuries*, p.191, 283. At



7.3 Demolition of the Parkway Mill. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

In some cases, political factors played a role. The OPCF could not convince the City of Waterloo to donate the earliest extant schoolhouse in the county.⁷⁶ It also held no sway with the Department of Highways who refused to donate a milestone from the King's Highway near Napanee, despite Page's repeated requests.

We are one of the very few provincial organizations with a provincial charter and represent the whole province. We feel that our village at Doon should be able to show one of these early marks of our history. It would be placed in a fireproof museum. So much of our historic past has been lost by delays and purchases by American museums and villages that we are working desperately to preserve what we can.⁷⁷

Interestingly, the historians consulted by the Department of Highways differed philosophically with the OPCF's removal and reconstruction approach to heritage management. "Several eminent specialists in Ontario history have said they [milestones] should remain in their original locations," Page was informed.⁷⁸

various times a sawmill, woollen mill, flour mill, and eventually a feed mill, it was last owned by the Waterloo County Supplies Co-operative.

⁷⁶ OPCF Minutes, 15 December 1960. OPCF fonds, , box 1, DHC. This 1820 log schoolhouse is located in the city-owned Waterloo Park.

⁷⁷ Frank Page to W.J. Fulton, Deputy Minister, Ontario Department of Highways, 21 February 1961. OPCF fonds, Correspondence, 996.163 box 3, DHC.

⁷⁸ Ibid, Fulton to Page 13 March 1961.

From Taylor's original plan, only the McArthur log cabin from Appin was successfully resurrected at Doon, at a minimal cost of \$700. Even then, Taylor's replacement, Howard Groh, had misgivings about interpreting the significance of the house of this little-known writer whose works were no longer in fashion,⁷⁹ and the board had to answer to members of the McArthur family who thought the restoration inaccurate.⁸⁰

A Volunteer Effort

With the exception of Groh, his son, and contract labour for major construction, all other work consisted of volunteer efforts by the board of the OPCF. These members formed active working committees overseeing the reconstruction and furnishing of individual buildings, installation of museum exhibits, management of grounds, village store, public relations and finance. Desperate for finances, the OPCF resorted to a planning policy dependent on private individuals or community groups volunteering to donate buildings. Local department store owner J.R. Goudie sponsored the most successful of these early ventures by donating \$10,000 to move and restore a general store from Delaware Ontario that opened to the public in 1961.



7.4 General Store, Doon 1961. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

⁷⁹ Howard Groh "Administrator's Report 1963," OPCF Minutes 1963, OPCF fonds, box 1996.163, DHC.

⁸⁰ *Kitchener Waterloo Record* 18 September 1963; letter to editor from Dan McArthur. In his response, OPCF Board Chairman Howard Ziegler said the cabin was furnished in an early Canadian style and did not pretend to be an exact duplicate of McArthur furnishings; other members pointed out that McArthur family had promised furnishings that never arrived.

By the mid-1960s, several other buildings subsidized by individuals and community groups were erected at Doon. A century-old United Brethren church from Freeport was moved to Doon in 1962. In 1963, two old log buildings were donated and eventually used to construct a blacksmith shop and a schoolhouse. An old barn was adapted as a woodworking shop and cooperage, while a harness shop and butcher shop were opened in 1964 and 1965, made from new materials with funding and donations of printing materials and butchering tools, the latter by Norman Schneider, son of J.M. Schneider.⁸¹



7.5 Visitors looking at map of village, museum in background, 1963. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library*

In 1964, Kitchener underwrote the cost of moving a redundant 1911 CPR locomotive to the site, and in the same year, Galt donated a 1938 Fire Truck. By this time, any notion of a cut-off date for the village had clearly been relaxed. Both of these large donations required complementary buildings, which the OPCF later acquired.

Pressured by the City of Kitchener, itself responding in turn to citizen concerns, the OPCF reluctantly agreed in 1964 to accept a house that had once belonged to a descendent of the Eby family. It belonged to Emily Seibert, a member of the OPCF board, and was slated for demolition to make way for road widening. With much publicity, this project became a community effort as the

⁸¹ Harness shop was equipped with help of Mr. Fehrenbach, the printer's shop received assistance from the Bean Printing Co. and the estate of Louis Kaiser of Roseville donated wooden type and other equipment.

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America donated labour to dismantle and move the building.



7.6 Seibert House before demolition. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library*

Unfortunately, its gambrel roof collapsed on route to the village, and the house was totally reconfigured onsite to a Victorian gothic one-and-a-half storey clapboard cottage with characteristic high centre and side gables. Viewed as making a silk purse out of a sow's ear, this became a creative project for museum manager Mel Moffat during the late 1960s and early 1970s. He set out to incorporate into the exterior of this house, components of various extant Waterloo County Victorian bargeboards and veranda posts. Because of this work, each gable bore a different pattern in bargeboard copied from houses in the region, while the veranda posts were a combination of different posts from Kitchener houses.



7.7 Seibert house transformed to “Gingerbread House.” *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

Seibert herself was on site to interpret the house, which was labelled the “Gingerbread House,” to the public once it opened in the early 1970s. However, she disagreed with the reconstruction and later recalled the irony of the OPCF designating her childhood home as the “Gingerbread House.”

They put on gingerbread. And my father detested gingerbread. They call it the gingerbread house ... Why would they have put gingerbread on it? Was there gingerbread on it at some time? Never, never, because Dad detested gingerbread! In one way, it’s all right because they have nice examples of gingerbread on that house. But I don’t like the colour of it now ... A terrible yellow, a terrible yellow ...⁸²

Questions of historical authenticity threatened the board’s plan to have the new Waterloo County Hall of Fame located at the village site. Groh, the OPCF and the Hall of Fame board (who shared many members) fought to have this shrine to the county’s prominent athletes and citizens located at Doon in order to boost village attendance.⁸³ Because of its cement block architecture, Kitchener city planners maintained that the structure was anachronistic and inappropriate to the village site, and proposed instead to situate it across the road, facing the village. The OPCF board turned the planners’ argument back on themselves, responding that the “Huron road is considered as an exhibit which should not be destroyed or encroached upon.”⁸⁴ The OPCF won the day and construction of the Hall of Fame at Doon began in 1971 with the building facing away from the road.

Options for Re-Framing the Past: Changing Doon to a Museum of Trades and Industry

The demands on one full-time staff member to manage both a museum and a historic village, even with working volunteer committees, drove Howard Groh to rethink the purpose and operation at

⁸² Emil Seibert, KPL Oral History Tape 168, pt. 1.

⁸³ “Hall of Fame Seen as Pioneer Village Aid” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* 23 November 1966.

⁸⁴ OPCF Minutes, 5 February 1971. OPCF fonds, Minutes,, box 12, 996.163,DHC.

Doon. Impressed with the industrial museums he visited in the United States, Groh proposed to the OPCF in 1964 that Doon abandon its village pretensions and become instead a museum complex of early trades and industry. No doubt he was also influenced by his participation in the Early American Industries Association.

He prefaced his idea by arguing what a “poor cousin” Doon was compared with the operation of other Canadian pioneer village museums. Groh estimated that Upper Canada Village had a full-time staff of thirty, plus one hundred seasonal staff, and a budget he believed to be over one million dollars, serving about two hundred thousand visitors each year.⁸⁵ Black Creek Pioneer Village had a budget in excess of one hundred thousand dollars, and eleven full-time employees, forty summer staff, and operated a comprehensive education program during the school year. In 1964, it had more than one hundred and sixty thousand visitors; two hundred thousand were schoolchildren.⁸⁶ Doon’s operating budget for the same year was less than thirty-two thousand dollars. Groh had ten extra staff during the summer season, four of whom worked in sales and reception, to assist with almost seventy thousand visitors.⁸⁷ Some of these visitors, he noted, were beginning to complain that Doon did not offer the level of accuracy in restoration, furnishings and interpretation evident at projects such as UCV, Sturbridge or Williamsburg.⁸⁸

I know that to switch the accent from village to trade [complex] and tool museum may raise some eyebrows but the present approach to operating Doon as a village is certainly not realistic. To attempt to build a whole village of durable and architecturally interesting buildings and still operate and improve the property with a budget of \$30,000 to \$35,000 is becoming completely out of the question... Each building added increases the problems of upkeep and supervision.⁸⁹

Furthermore, Groh also addressed the problems of historical integrity that arose not only in furnishing buildings, but also in the act of removing them from their original context to a pioneer village museum. He told the supervisor of the Province’s Heritage Administration Branch,

Unless a building is to be saved on its original site, the problems of moving and still saving the original character including the choice of suitable surroundings, become almost insurmountable. If a building is small enough to be moved whole, it has quite probably been altered for a purpose much different from its original use and must be restored accordingly. In any event ... the scarcity of craftsmen and suitable material can easily make the cost prohibitive.⁹⁰

To the OPCF, Groh recommended the Bucks County Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania, from which he had recently returned, as a working model for a museum of trades. The legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer, this museum and its collections (in addition to his Moravian pottery studio) reflected Mercer’s interests in the arts and crafts movement and in early American tools and trades.⁹¹ Groh explained that, like Waterloo County, Buck’s County had moved from agricultural and small

⁸⁵ Budget figures for Old Fort Henry and Upper Canada Village combined were over \$1,000,000 in 1964 of which 75% was salaries. See Province of Ontario, *Public Accounts*, 1964 V.10

⁸⁶ Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, *A Compendium of Information* (Toronto: 1965).

⁸⁷ “Administrator’s report” “PCF Minutes 23 November 1964 OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 1 DHC.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Groh, Administrator’s Report 1964, OPCF fonds, , 996.163, box 1 DHC.

⁹⁰ Correspondence Groh to Richard Apter, Supervisor, Historical Branch, Department of Public Records and Archives, Queen’s Park 21 December 1965. OPCF correspondence, OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 6 DHC.

⁹¹ Henry Mercer’s interpretation of the past in his museum is described by Steven Conn in *Museums and American Intellectual Life 1876-1926*, 167-176.

town roots to become highly industrialized, and the Bucks County Museum collections illustrated this shift. Early tools and trades were equally relevant to Waterloo County history he argued; moreover, he said, this was an area of study largely ignored by other pioneer villages and historic sites in Ontario. Especially important for the OPCF was the financial feasibility of collecting this material and its interest for the local community.

There are countless industries which have very lowly beginnings... and you could have... a much more complete picture of the early life of the residents of Waterloo County, than the more expensive and routine way of competing with the antique fancier for the furnishing of the homes... As the collection of tools grows, too, it may be possible to attract financial donors among the industries to move a collection into its own building in the village itself, just as we are now preparing to do with the butchering tools we have and which the J.M. Schneider Co. is financing. To the farmers and workmen of this area, and these provide the bulk of our attendance, I am sure it could be a most interesting experience to identify themselves with their beginnings. This identification is the key to public interest ... This I feel should be a guidepost for future development.⁹²

Groh's vision appears quite similar in many ways to that spelled out by Broome in his 1954 proposal for the village, and contains echoes of Breithaupt's framing of the area as historically unique.

I am quite sure that many tools of now almost forgotten trades and crafts, can be found in the attics and sheds of Western Ontario. Every village had one or more of the following – a cigar maker, a tanner, an ashery for the reduction of ashes to the potash of the soap maker, a lime kiln a foundry a brewery or distillery, a charcoal maker, a ropewalk. The list is almost endless. To these could be added the domestic arts of cider and apple butter making, maple syrup and sugar making, soapmaking, butchering and preserving meats, spinning and dyeing of yarn. These and many others lend themselves to education demonstration and which I hope will be included in the Village function sooner or later. They are part of our folklore heritage and no place in Ontario should be more eager to preserve them, since Waterloo County was the first inland settlement in Upper Canada.⁹³

While Groh waited for the board to respond to his proposal, the continual acceptance of artifacts into the museum proved a dilemma for him. On one hand, the OPCF needed artifacts for the village component, and to pursue his interest in developing a collection relevant to tools and trade he realized the museum would have to “collect every object available which is even remotely suitable.”⁹⁴ In the midst of detritus in attics and sheds offered to the museum, one might find priceless tools he said, such as a “button-lathe, which would highlight the fact that Berlin was the first town in Canada to commercialize the lowly button.”⁹⁵ On the other hand, the collections had exceeded available space. In the autumn of 1964, Groh announced to the OPCF that he was no longer willing to accept items on loan since he could not guarantee their safety in the crowded museum, following a complaint by a donor of a birch bark canoe who subsequently saw damages it had suffered on exhibit. Groh

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Correspondence, Groh to Anne Wilcox, 27 September 1966. Correspondence 1966, OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 9, DHC.

⁹⁴ Groh, Administrator's Report, Minutes 1965 OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 1 DHC.

⁹⁵ *ibid.*, A button-lathe was donated to the village in 1974.

attributed this problem to a shortage of staff and a museum “jammed” with articles, prohibiting safe display.⁹⁶ He later wrote:

The museum opened to the public in 1960... Almost immediately more articles showed up as donations. These have continued to flow in until storage is now a serious problem in spite of a steady program of moving and erecting buildings to display them.⁹⁷

While some of Doon’s collection had historic worth, he considered much of it no more than “just interesting objects out of the past.”⁹⁸ A year later, he told the board that: “The present museum is so full that proper display is out of the question, and very little can be done about it until you are able to erect the new addition.”⁹⁹ In 1965 Groh called for a halt in acquiring buildings for Doon until existing structures were brought up to a higher standard. He also pressed instead for an addition to the museum, whose displays were suffering.

As he did in many museums in the province, Jim Gooding assisted Howard Groh with the exhibits installed in the museum building for the opening of Doon in June 1960.¹⁰⁰ Later he tutored Groh when Groh revised exhibits that members of the OPCF had prepared for the museum opening. Groh tried to balance the constant influx of materials for the museum against the appearance of cluttered, unattractive exhibits.¹⁰¹ He attempted to contextualize the exhibits by creating a central information board with text and graphics illustrating Indian settlements, pioneer settlements in 1805, early railway lines and other historical material. On this installation, he noted, “Such interesting historical material is everywhere here and needs but the collector’s touch.”¹⁰²

Looking for support for his suggestions for improving the museum and redeveloping the village Groh asked Peter Styrmo to speak to the OPCF board in 1965. Styrmo said, “It is apparent that every dollar that has been put into the exhibits has been stretched so far that it is in danger of tearing.”¹⁰³ He told the Board that their buildings needed to be more “historically refined” through better-furnished interiors and landscaped settings, and that they should be heated both to protect the interiors and to permit year round visiting. He also recommended they put historical interpreters in the buildings, for instance, a printer in the print shop.

Hiring interpreters depended on GVCA budgets for seasonal jobs. Groh estimated that between six thousand and seven thousand students visited the village each year with their school class and told the board in 1965, “If the village is to justify its existence then some educational programs will have to be set up.”¹⁰⁴ By comparison, Black Creek Pioneer Village offered a series of on-site school programs centred on pioneer history and crafts, using staff as interpreters.¹⁰⁵ Groh attempted to

⁹⁶ Groh to P.R. Hilborn 13 October 1964, OPCF Correspondence 1964, OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.
Groh to Wilcox, 27 September 1965 OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3, DHC.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Groh to Apte 21 December 1965, OPCF correspondence, OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 3 DHC.

⁹⁹ Howard Groh, Administrator’s Report 1965, OPCF Minutes 1965, OPCF fonds, 996.163, box 1 DHC

¹⁰⁰ Among many examples, Files “Lincoln County” and “Northumberland County.” Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51 Acc. 20752, box 12 OA. Gooding prepared exhibits for the Niagara Historical Museum and Barnum House Museum in 1960. Gooding – Groh correspondence 12-14 May, 1960, OPCF Minutes 28 April, 1960. OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 1 DHC

¹⁰¹ OPCF Minutes, 7 July 1960, “Pioneer Village Display Cut,” *Kitchener Waterloo Record* 8 July, 1960.

¹⁰² Howard Groh, Administrator’s Report, 1963 OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 1 DHC.

¹⁰³ OPCF Minutes 14 September 1965, OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 1 DHC.

¹⁰⁴ Howard Groh, Administrator’s Report 1965, *ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ BCPV School Program Brochure. Correspondence 1966, OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 3 DHC.

make up for the lack of guides for school classes during the school year by compiling historical facts into a series of leaflets that linked the village and museum artifacts to historical narrative. Titled, "Short Journey into the Past" (nos. 1-3), these six to eight-page page leaflets began with the history of the Native peoples in central Canada and the arrival of the earliest Europeans, followed by the emigration of Europeans to North America, and subsequently to Waterloo County. Groh based his research on written sources from his large private library.¹⁰⁶

Despite the apparent shortcomings at Doon, the site continued to be a popular destination with the public. In 1965, sixty-eight thousand people visited the site in during the months of May to October, and Doon earned revenue through admissions and sales of more than \$26,000. That year, grant revenue from four local governments, the Department of Travel and Publicity and the WHS was slightly over \$17,000.¹⁰⁷

In the middle of the season, Groh tendered his resignation, complaining of an excessive workload. The board convinced him to stay by offering to hire him an assistant, who started in early 1966.¹⁰⁸ Nonetheless, Groh resigned again in March 1967, his frustrations evident in the press release he issued following his resignation. Citing lack of board support for his vision of the village as a complex of early industries in Waterloo County, he stated that if the board had followed his suggestions, it would have been a showcase for the story of progress and...

Made Doon the most unique effort in preservation in Ontario... because of the limited vision of the present board ... I deeply regret that I must leave my hopes for the recognition of this special form of pioneer behind ... the immediate loss is the opportunity in this our most fitting year, to demonstrate to thousands of visitors, the progress of a community from forest to high industrialization and the better life it provides.¹⁰⁹

As Groh implied, Doon was increasingly becoming less than unique in its historic endeavour as a pioneer village. Nineteen existing and planned historic villages or historic building complexes were on the go in Ontario in 1967.¹¹⁰ Of these, four were in a sixty-mile radius of Doon (Fanshawe Pioneer Village, Westfield Pioneer Village,¹¹¹ Black Creek Pioneer Village, and Todmorden Mills). Apparently without any warning to Doon, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture announced it was purchasing eighty acres of land about twenty miles distant in nearby Halton County, to build a provincially operated museum of Ontario's agricultural heritage, as a centennial project.¹¹² The

¹⁰⁶ "Short Journey Into the Past" Nos. 1-3, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 18, DHC.

¹⁰⁷ "OPCF Operating Statement 1965" OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 10 DHC.

¹⁰⁸ At this time Mrs. Irene Elliott, wife of Hugh Elliott, GVCA appointee on the board of the OPCF, served as the secretary-treasurer, purchasing agent, advertising agent, pay-roll administrator and general office manager for Doon. Correspondence, Hugh Elliott to author 24 September 1990. Financial records from this period are sketchy, but the assistant's salary may have been supported by the previous year's surplus of almost \$6,000.00.

¹⁰⁹ Howard Groh "News Release June 1967." OPCF Correspondence 1967, OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 3 DHC In this letter of resignation he chastised the board for not subsidizing the costs of his research for the pamphlets "Short Journey Into the Past."

¹¹⁰ This figure does not include military forts. In 1967 five pioneer villages/ historic complexes opened as centennial projects: Grey-Owen Sound Museum, Haliburton Highlands Museum, Lang Pioneer Village, Pickering Museum Village, and Todmorden Mills.

¹¹¹ In 1962 a representative of a new pioneer village project, Westfield Heritage Village, in nearby Rockton, wrote to solicit buildings from Waterloo County to "adequately represent" the area in its planned "permanent home for pioneer structures." Glenn Kilmer to J.S. Bauer [Mayor of Waterloo] 30 March 1962. OPCF Correspondence 1962 OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 3 DHC.

¹¹² This museum operation was independent of any other provincial department responsible for heritage and museums. Opened in 1974, it was closed by the Province in 1996, and turned over to a non-profit organization.

museum plan showed a large interpretive centre and restored buildings including over four hundred pieces of steam-powered equipment and agricultural antiques, and sawmill, shingle mill and blacksmith shop that belonged to the Ontario Steam and Antiques Preserver's Association.¹¹³ Andrew Taylor's subsequent editorial in the MS newsletter for September 1967 "How are the new centennial museums to be maintained?" asked about their projected upkeep and observed that while public boards seem to be the best form of museum governance "Amateur interference has sometimes made life tough for professional museum workers."¹¹⁴

Groh's resignation created a state of crisis management at the site. OPCF president Mel Moffat remarked:

Due to a state of emergency because of the resignation of our superintendent it was necessary to carry on without any plan for the future development and to meet each situation as they developed much as an emergency... it must be realized that there is not a set plan for the proposed extension [sic] of the village.¹¹⁵

Within six months, Moffat resigned as president of the OPCF to take Groh's position as manager of the village.¹¹⁶ Moffat was well-known in the community, a former mayor of Galt (1948-50), citizen of the year (1962) and member of many service clubs and organizations. He oversaw the reconstruction of buildings on site, and with limited resources, he and the assistant Groh hired, Alf Schenk, attempted to put together the pieces of a pioneer village and to manage the museum. Groh's plan for a museum of trades and industry departed with him.

Alf Schenk and the Pioneer Past at Doon

Groh had asked the board for an "assistant who could arrange displays ... so they tell a story."¹¹⁷ His letter of resignation protested that the Board had hired instead an assistant "with no previous [museum] training, or proof of aptitude and with no knowledge or sense of history."¹¹⁸ Age 51, Schenk was a modest individual with neither a high school diploma nor museum training. He did have a rich personal knowledge of the southern part of Waterloo County in which he grew up. Although raised in Lutheran home he had worked for twenty years with a Pennsylvania-German Mennonite family as a market gardener prior to coming to work at Doon. His ties made him both a local folklorist and a folk-artist. He was especially familiar with German dialects in Waterloo County, and his sense of history was located in oral and artistic expression.¹¹⁹ While Moffat handled many of the larger-scale building projects, Schenk became the curator of collections and their full-time interpreter. In his fourteen years as curator of Doon, and during an equal number of years as curator

On its development see Judy Henderson, "The Background and Development of the Ontario Agricultural Museum, Milton, Ontario" University of Toronto: 1987" cited in Peter Nayler "From Furrows to Farmsteads: A Conceptual Analysis of the Ontario Agricultural Museum" (University of Waterloo, History Department).

¹¹³ OHS Museum Section Newsletter, No. 111 (January 1967).

¹¹⁴ OHS Museum Section Newsletter No. 115 (September 1967).

¹¹⁵ OPCF Minutes 16 August 1967. OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 1 DHC. Evident in the same minutes is that major concern of the Board is money to erect buildings and that the Board sees reuse of old buildings as a method of filling out the village.

¹¹⁶ OPCF Minutes, 22 January 1968, OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 1 DHC

¹¹⁷ "Hall of Fame Seen Pioneer Village Aid" *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* 23 November 1966.

¹¹⁸ Groh "News Release." In fact, Groh had envisioned his son, a seasonal worker at the site, succeeding him and carrying forward his plans. His hopes were dashed when the Board made no overtures to retain his son, who left to work at the Historic Sites Board.

¹¹⁹ Information on Alf Schenk gathered in author interview with Alf Schenk, 5 October 1989.

emeritus, he became a living catalogue of the museum, the village, its contents and the oral histories that connected the artifacts and buildings to the local past. He arrived at Doon just as local arrangements to celebrate Canada's centennial were in progress. His views on preserving the past were consistent with the sentiments of filiopianism, nationalism and social purpose cited by the OPCF at its outset, and remarkably like those expressed by others during Canada's centennial work-up.

May the descendants of our pioneer forefathers preserve their rich heritage, their love of the land, their thrift and their willingness to work hard and to contribute to building a better Canada. Above all, may they demonstrate reverence for the enduring God who brought them to a land of peace and prosperity.¹²⁰

As part of these centennial celebrations, Waterloo Township built at Doon a full-scale replica of the original 1868 Waterloo Township Hall located in nearby Centreville.¹²¹ On opening day in 1967, a parade led by the village's replica Conestoga wagon began at the original Township Hall site and travelled the three miles to Doon to celebrate the opening of the building. The new hall provided extra exhibit space for related furnishings and memorabilia and served as a much-needed gathering space for groups. That same year the Baechler family from Bruce County donated sawmill equipment to the village in recognition of the Canadian centennial. In 1967, the Township moved the interred residents of nearby Limerick cemetery and their grave markers, in the way of highway expansion, to rest alongside the Freeport Church erected at Doon in 1962.

Over the next five years, the Board acquired a railway station from nearby Petersburg, and a post office from Wellesley. Much to the dismay of the OPCF, especially Schmaltz, who was a philatelist, the Federal government refused to make the post office an operating postal station because of low mail volume. The Pennsylvania-German Folklore Society and the Clan Donald Society each began restoration projects to bring extant mid-nineteenth century houses of immigrant Pennsylvania-Germans and Scots, respectively, to Doon. This form of heritage performance served to solidify group identity; members of the Clan Donald Society viewed this project as "a means of welding the clan into close association," feeling "like pioneers themselves while engaged in this work."¹²²

¹²⁰ Alfred Schenk, *Folk-Song Book in the Street-Talk of Berlin Ontario* (Kitchener, Ont.: St. Jacobs Printery, 1991), 194.

¹²¹ This small crossroads community had been annexed by the city of Kitchener in 1958 for suburban expansion. Bloomfield's *Waterloo Township Through Two Centuries* provides detailed information on the annexation of Centreville and other small communities from Waterloo Township to Kitchener in the 1950s.

¹²² "Clansmen Donate Landmark to Doon Pioneer Village" *Hespeler Reporter*, 27 December 1969.



7.8 Clan Donald House. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library*

These activities met the Board's requirements of minimal cost, and reflected the recognized ethnic heritage at Doon. Another house, built by Peter Erb about 1820, but much renovated a century later, was also donated to the village. It later caught fire and was ultimately deaccessioned. The Caryndale congregation of the Swedenborgian Church donated an 1845 log cabin that had belonged to the Detweiler family (whose significance was tied to a descendent who was an early advocate of hydroelectric power.) Along with the Seibert (also known as the Eby house) these buildings remained under construction and unopened until the 1970s.

Heritage as a Visitor Attraction

Lack of funds has hampered development, and financial support is needed if the plans for this village are to be realized in the near future to avail this area of its share of the lucrative tourist dollars, and to assist in preserving our historical heritage ... Doon PioneerVillage will be a monument to the industry and sacrifice of the men and women who toiled to make a goodly place for us to dwell ... [and] a fitting memorial for them and the posterity of our culture.¹²³

At Doon, the matched purposes of memorializing the past with economic development were evident from the outset during the OPCF struggle to win Doon as the site of the Museum of Ontario Rural History. Relying more and more on admissions for revenues, OPCF eyed the visitor as its primary client, stepping up their advertising, which branded the village as a utopia where "time stood

¹²³ Mel Moffat, OPCF Fundraising Appeal, Correspondence 1967, OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 3 DHC.

still,” and where visitors could find “life as it was, one hundred or even two hundred years before,”¹²⁴ “lived at a pleasant pace.”¹²⁵ Newspaper coverage carried similar messages of escape to another place in time, providing “harried missile-age city dwellers a chance to escape to another and more mellow age.”¹²⁶

Keenly aware of the need to keep visitor numbers up to maintain revenues, the OPCF Board added two quasi-historical attractions to the site in 1967, which proved to be highly popular with visitors.¹²⁷ Chief Pale Moon, alias Albert Greene, a Mohawk from the Six Nations Reserve, set up an Indian encampment near the CPR steam locomotive. Pale Moon’s tepee, backdrops, and costumes were composites of Plains Indian styles that had currency in reproduced Native material culture at the time, and had no historical basis in Mohawk culture. Nor was he an Indian chief. But his presence was in accordance with Broome’s original design to include an Indian encampment at the site. He also served as a living extension of a prominent exhibit in the museum on early Native habitation in Waterloo County. His job was to relate Indian legends to the public and answer questions about Native history and lifestyles. During the open season, he lived above the village’s general store.



7.9 Chief Pale Moon. *K-W Record Negative Collection University of Waterloo Library*

Another popular activity was riding a miniaturised replica of a nineteenth-century steam train, fashioned after the original which ran between Galt, Kitchener and Elmira. With the engineer straddling the locomotive, adults and children sat in open small boxcars and travelled around one thousand feet of track at the eastern end of the village.¹²⁸ The OPCF contracted out this attraction, receiving 10 percent of the operator’s gross receipts from the tickets.

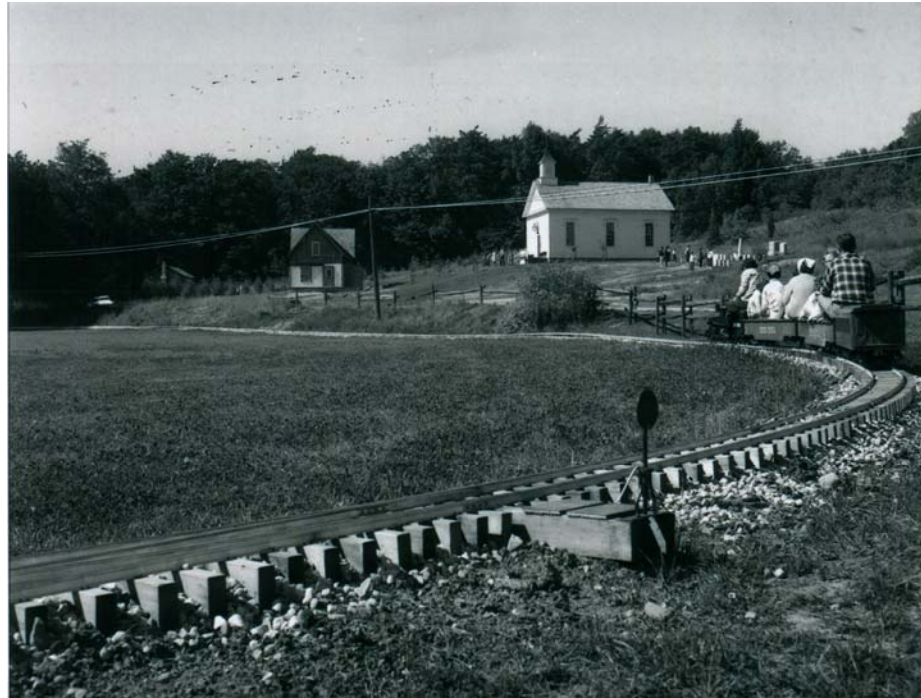
¹²⁴ Radio Script, 8 July 1967 Correspondence 1967, OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 3 DHC.

¹²⁵ Press Release, 28 July 1967 OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 3 DHC.

¹²⁶ *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, May 3, 1963.

¹²⁷ The Board “felt strongly... that several special attractions should be lined up and advertised.” OPCF Minutes March 1967, OPCF Minutes, OPCF fonds 996.163, box 1, DHC.

¹²⁸ Like this railway, Doon village was also a miniaturisation of the past. As Susan Stewart has observed the miniature is linked with nostalgic notions of childhood and history, and presents a “diminutive, and thereby manipulatable, version of experience, a version which is domesticated and protected from contamination.”



7.10 Mini-train at Doon, 1968. *K-W Record Negative Collection University of Waterloo Library*

Animating the village through on-site artisans and special events began in earnest in 1968 with Alf Schenk's assistance.¹²⁹ A blacksmith had worked on-site occasionally since 1963, and beginning in 1968 a number of local artisans and organizations demonstrated traditional activities such as spinning, weaving and quilting. Several special weekend events brought in new and return visitors: steam threshing, doll show, vintage car shows, corn festival, Pennsylvania-German Day, Scottish Day, all featuring a myriad of artisans.

¹²⁹ Board committees worked to produce special events, but Schenk assisted with on-site coordination.



7.11 Scottish Day, 1970. *K-W Record Negative Collection University of Waterloo Library*

The demonstrations included Native dancers, broom making, pottery, rug-hooking, soap making, grain flailing and sausage-making. As well, groups sang and danced, bands played and ethnic foods were served. The arrival of the Samuel Bricker and his \$20,000 was re-enacted at Doon in 1969 by the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, which also presented scenes from “The Trail of the Conestoga,” the play presented in 1952 for the County’s centennial. Like the village itself, these performances embodied rituals of nativism and cultural regeneration.¹³⁰ Some of these events were only loosely connected to the pioneer village theme, and some appear to have been totally invented, such as a pioneer gypsy fair held in 1963.¹³¹ Held in open green spaces on the edges of the village, special events like the antique car shows were physically and historically separate from the village operation.¹³² By the early 1970s, Schenk reported that these events and demonstrations were the main draw at the village: “Live exhibits seem to be the order of the day.”¹³³ Schenk also tried to ‘enliven’ the inert exhibits in the museum.

¹³⁰ Participants in these performances have a shared understanding what was culturally appropriate and authentic. On these events see for instance, “Doon Pioneer Village: Thirteenth Season Starts Today,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 3 May 1969. Anthropologist Marjorie Halpin describes this process at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia in her unpublished paper “Quality and the Post-Modern Museum.” Ivan Karp calls festivals “totalizing participation,” and quotes folklorist Richard Bauman’s description of these as a “blowout.” Ivan Karp, “Festivals” in Ivan Karp and Steven D, Lavine, ed. *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1991), 282.

¹³¹ OPCF Minutes, October 23, 1962. OPCF Minutes, OPCF fonds 996.163, box 1, DHC. The administrator’s report for 1963 noted that 3,000 people had visited the gypsy fair, in OPCF Minutes, OPCF fonds 996.163, box 1, DHC

¹³² A noted exception was the use of the church for special religious “Rogantide” ceremonies.

¹³³ “Curator’s report 1973,” OPCF Minutes, OPCF fonds 996.163, box 1, DHC

Creating Narratives in the Museum Space

In Waterloo County, the shift of artifacts in 1960 from the WHS museum to Doon signalled a shift in the rationale for collecting and preserving these objects. The WHS museum in the Kitchener Public Library had been primarily a research and reference collection; not fully a public space. Despite the efforts of W.H. Breithaupt, its hours were restricted and its materials poorly displayed. Artifacts were received into the collection as they surfaced, and in this context, consisted of distinct vestiges of the past, and with the exception perhaps of the Conestoga wagon, these other objects appeared of equal worth. Certainly, the museum building constructed at Doon reflected a continuation of this cabinet model of the museum collection. In contrast, the pioneer village project at Doon served primarily as a performance space designed for full immersion of the public into the past; an educational historical experience through a life-size re-created environment. Conceived without a collection, its plan employed chosen buildings and artifacts to furnish one or several historical narratives on pioneer life, scripted and animated by its creators. At least, this was how the project was envisioned. Its development changed after the departure of Andrew Taylor and his dogged adherence to a limited historical map.

A 1967 extension to the museum building contained a new exhibit area, a workshop, offices, library and an apartment for a custodian. As with the original building, the architect for this addition was Schmalz. Static exhibits in the museum, and guided tours of the museum and village were Schenk's responsibility. Through attendance at CMA and Museum Section workshops, and advice from provincial museum advisors, Schenk was exposed to the prevailing ideas concerning collections management, exhibit design, and interpretation and education, and those working in these areas. He enrolled in the CMA diploma program in 1968, and was in the first graduating class of five students in 1976, a period of study prolonged by administrative problems that periodically put the program in abeyance. At Doon, he constructed dioramas, vignettes and traditional case exhibits to both display the museum collections, and to give a chronological perspective of the early part of county history. As he reported in 1968 to the Board about his new exhibits, "The visitor can now follow the steps in history from the times of the Indian to the coming of the pioneers."¹³⁴ To the right of the museum entrance, were case displays of prehistoric and post contact Native artifacts, including a dugout canoe. These displays later had a companion audio recording of the "legend of Naskwooksie." Loosely coordinated also with Chief Pale Moon's presence outside the museum, this story told of a Huron warrior and his lover's death in a battle against the Iroquois in Cressman's Woods. A spring flows up spontaneously from the ground on the site where their bodies fell.¹³⁵ Along with the proximity to the Huron Road and the Pioneer Memorial Tower, this legend served to reinforce the site of Doon as sacred space.

Next to this exhibit, Schenk built a diorama called the "Voice of the Past" depicting native people in Waterloo County at the time the Weber family arrived in their wagon.

¹³⁴ Alf Schenk, Curator's report, 1968 "Report of the Curator," OPCF fonds 996.163, box 17, DHC.

¹³⁵ A version of this story was written up in the Waterloo Historical Society 1937 annual report as the "Legend of Oromocto Spring." Walter Cunningham, "The Legend of Oromocto Spring in Attiwandaron Park – Cressman's Woods" WHS Annual Report 1937:264-266. The genesis of this legend is uncertain. Although North American Indian legends do include transformation tales, they are not of this motif-type. See Stith Thompson, ed. *Tales of the North American Indians*, (Indiana University Press, 1966). The legend appears to be derived from Irish and Celtic transformation tales, in which a spring breaks forth to commemorate a place of death or burial. See Stith Thompson, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (Indiana University Press, 1956), Volume A, Motif A941.4.1., p.173, and Volumes D-E, Motif D283.1, p.30.



7.12 Diorama: The Voice of the Past. *Doon Heritage Crossroads*

It led the visitor to what Schenk called the “treasure of the whole establishment,” the Conestoga wagon donated in 1913.¹³⁶ This wagon was Doon’s primary icon; a drawing of the wagon was the logo of the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation and of Doon Pioneer Village throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and a working replica of the wagon was a symbol of Doon in local parades and other celebrations. As it had for the Waterloo Historical Society, for the board and staff of Doon the wagon represented the central narrative of the pilgrimage to and the founding of, Waterloo County by Pennsylvania-Germans, and the struggles these settlers endured.¹³⁷ Schenk titled the wagon display “The Court of Honour,” and here the wagon was isolated, elevated and enshrined with the pieces considered most important in the museum’s collection, including an 1823 Eby family Bible with fractur decoration belonging to one of the first settlers. Next, visitors saw displays on the Pennsylvania-German and Scottish settlements in the County. This for the most part, was the end of the chronological sequence. Elsewhere in the museum, dioramas of a pioneer kitchen and Victorian parlour, and a series of window vignettes of small shops and trades, based on local historical examples, contextualized some of the material in the museum collection.¹³⁸ Most of the artifacts however, were still organized into case exhibits by type, titled “spectacles” “bibles” “coins” and so on. Local natural history was represented by a large display of stuffed birds and small mammals, plus a large collection of bird eggs.

¹³⁶ This is the term Schenk uses in the visitor guide he wrote in 1967. Pamphlets, OPCF fonds 996.163, box 30, DHC.

¹³⁷ Alf Schenk, interview by author, Waterloo, Ontario. October 5, 1989.

¹³⁸ These exhibits included Richard Gemmel's early barber shop from Ayr, a boot and shoe shop operated by Robert Foster in Crosshill, and photo equipment used by Alex Perrin in his photography studio parlour in Kitchener.



7.13 Taxonomic exhibit of tools, *Doon Heritage Crossroads*.

Schenk also was responsible for school visits to the site. When possible, he would personally guide groups through the museum and village. Notwithstanding the fact that the steam train and Chief Pale Moon seem to have been the most memorable parts of these children's visits, Schenk attempted to make the village and museum collections intelligible through a number of interpretive story lines he scripted.¹³⁹ He synchronized these with his exhibits, "so we can tell the story of our area in a sequence starting with the Indian, the land deals, the coming of the Conestoga wagons, and the establishment of farms by the early settlers."¹⁴⁰ Story telling was his favourite medium, and in his reports he discusses the importance of stories as the context for the objects, to attract visitors. He was attempting to follow principles conveyed in his museum diploma program.

Fiscal Peril and Salvation

Despite attendance of about sixty-five thousand visitors each year, as the decade came to a close the OPCF financial situation was dire enough for President Snyder to appeal to local lawyers, asking them to have their clients consider bequests to Doon. Using the hook of moral imperative, he said that Doon:

Compares favourably with a number of other Canadian 'villages' much better endowed financially than Doon. The exhibits are being constantly upgraded and are now a repository for that Canadiana which would so soon disappear forever without an effort of this kind, to give young people an interest and a pride in the thrift,

¹³⁹ Letters from schoolchildren to Doon in 1970 show that steam train is by far most popular experience at Doon, followed closely by Chief Pale Moon. "School letters," OPCF fonds 996.163, box 8, DHC.

¹⁴⁰ Alf Schenk, Curator's Report, 1969. "Report of the Curator," OPCF fonds 996.163, box 17, DHC.

ingenuity and desire to work inherent in our forebears and to assist in giving them a direction in times not altogether noted for that particular quality.¹⁴¹

Bequests were not immediately forthcoming, and revisions to the tax laws dealt the OPCF a deadly fiscal blow. In 1970, faced with a 600 percent increase in municipal taxes on the assessment of its buildings, the OPCF petitioned the GRCA (whose name had changed from the Grand Valley Conservation Authority) to assume financial responsibility of the village. It asked the county to increase its per capita assessment toward the village operations from nine to fifteen cents per capita. The County, local councils and the GRCA agreed to this arrangement, the former on the condition that the GRCA not erect more buildings and return to these councils for an increased levy to cover their costs.¹⁴² The transfer took place in January 1971. In fact, the OPCF continued to manage the collections and operate the village under the terms of its charter, allowing it to receive donations, while the GRCA assumed responsibility for all other revenues and expenses. The OPCF was released from its financial burden, and the site fell under the umbrella of larger agency chiefly concerned with water management and land use.

While the shift from of the collections from the WHS museum to Doon designated a shift in ideology toward objects, history and the public, the transfer of the management of Doon from the OPCF to the GRCA was the organizational corollary to the creation of this public space. The fiscal and managerial demands on operations such as Doon exceeded the capacity of a volunteer group, as did the expectations of a growing museum profession, and a public becoming more sophisticated about historical restoration. These shortcomings effectively pulled Doon into the next decade, as it did many other museums, further away from being a project of a volunteer historical society, and much closer to being directly operated by local government. Along the way, the museum collections and buildings were re-interpreted in a number of frameworks shaped again by the collections, visitor needs, professional expectations and organizational capacity.

¹⁴¹ Snyder form letter 16 August 1969. Correspondence 1969 1 of 3. OPCF Correspondence, OPCF fonds 996.163, box 4, DHC.

¹⁴² Correspondence G.M. Coutts, General manager, GRCA, 8 January 1971, to all municipalites. "Reports-Meetings with GRCA" OPCF fonds, 996.163 box 15, DHC.

Chapter 8: Standardizing the Collected Past: Professionalizing the Community Museum 1972–1983

Introduction

In 1975, at the age of 85, W.H.E. Schmalz, a founding member of the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation (OPCF), typed up a chronology of the development of Doon from its founding over 20 years before. The long list of accomplishments detailed setting a site, purchasing land, moving and restoring buildings, constructing a museum to hold artifacts and exhibits and making these available to the approximately 50,000 people who visited each year. It was to Schmalz, “A Dream Come True,” as he titled his paper.¹ [Appendix “A”:A Dream Come True] This optimistic view of Doon was not unanimous; four years later an extensive study by heritage consultants condemned Doon as a nightmarish melange of artifacts and images of questionable historical purpose.² The dissonance between these opinions lay in twenty years of institutional change in the museum field since Schmalz and the OPCF began working on Doon.

New government strictures and funding programs endorsed by a professional movement that emphasized better care of collections, improved historical accuracy in presentation and interpretation, and audience cultivation had changed the expectations of the preservation and presentation of the past in Ontario’s local museums. These top-down factors affected local museums such as Doon, and between 1972 and 1985 reshaped the presentation of the past there and at other sites. The resulting changes both reflected and compounded the growing view of the museum as an educational experience, rather than a temple of the muses.³ With the increase in status of the museum visitor, dedicating museum resources to protect collections and effectively communicate meaning with them, underlined museum efforts in the 1970s and 1980s. At the helm of this movement was the office of the provincial museum advisors. The province, through its system of museum grant allocations, new capital allotments and accompanying museum advisory services, became especially influential in the operations of community museums during this period. This chapter charts the efforts of the federal government, the provincial government and the growing museum profession to improve local history museums in Ontario during this period. The outcome would be a provincial policy for community museums aimed at strictly guiding the institutional and intellectual foundation of these museums through funding regulations.

Democratising and Decentralizing Museum Resources: The Catalyst of Federal Policy

The year 1972 was an auspicious one for museums in Ontario. In March, the Liberal Government unveiled a National Museums Policy based on the twin principles of democratisation and decentralization. Politically aimed toward encouraging Canadian unity, this program was apparently

1 W.H.E. Schmalz, “A Dream Come True” typescript. “Doon Pioneer Village Background- Miscellaneous” OPCF fonds 996.163, box 18, DHC.

2 *Doon Master Plan Study* (Waterloo: Grand River Conservation Authority, 1979).

³ This reference is to Duncan Cameron’s landmark essay “The Museum: A Temple or the Forum?” discussed in Chapter 1.

inspired by France's Minister of Culture, André Malraux, and his notion of having "maisons de culture" spread nationwide.⁴ For the first time, Canada's national government pledged funding assistance to museums outside the traditional purview of its Ottawa-centred National Museums Corporation.⁵ As described by then Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier, this new "D&D" policy promised to decentralize museum collections from large centres to smaller ones through the provision of travelling exhibitions to museums, newly formed national exhibition centres and through travelling museum mobiles (buses). Additionally, museums across the country would benefit from a planned national inventory of museum collections and a conservation service. Access to heritage was the issue at stake, and Pelletier was clear that the policy's "prime mover" was the museum user, and that the needs of the museum visitor needed to be clarified:

[The] first task, as groundwork for a diffusion program, is to undertake a scientific study of the museum public (and non-public). There exists too little data on the needs, reactions and attitudes of the public vis à vis museums ... It is essential to have this information in order to tailor our programs to respond to these needs.⁶

The report on the study, *The Museum and the Canadian Public*, which was published two years, later regarded the public (as opposed to the artifact) as the primary client of the museum. It eschewed the traditional style of museums as being irrelevant to the greater public; and described such museums as: "Depositories devoted to conserving and preserving articles of value, centres for academic research ... located outside the mainstream of urban life physically and perceptually."⁷ Instead museums were now to be "... a medium of communication. Unless the museum is able to fulfill this task it is failing its purpose."⁸

Funding and Development of the Museum Profession in Ontario

Democratizing the museum to increase public interest required a trained work force. To facilitate this education, the National Museums Policy provided \$500,000 to provincial museum associations and educational institutions to professionally train museologists.⁹ Consequently, within ten days of Pelletier's announcement, the Ontario Museum Association (OMA) announced that it was planning a formal, in-service educational program for museum workers, adding that in future it would also co-sponsor all CMA courses held in the province.¹⁰ Beginning in 1973, the OMA received \$30,000 from the Museums Assistance Program (MAP), the body created to administer the National Museums Policy, to cover costs for a full-time training coordinator, bursaries for students, a museum study-tour

⁴ See Chapter 1 on Malraux and his ideas of democratizing museums.

⁵ On the influence of the Museum Assistance Program 1972-1986 on small museums see Bonita Hunter-Eastwood, "Federal Heritage Policy and the Small Museum: The Role of the Museums Assistance Programs 1972-1986" (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1987).

⁶ Gérard Pelletier, "Democratization and Decentralization: A New Policy for Museums" Notes for an address by the Secretary of State, the Honourable Gerard Pelletier, to the Canadian Club of Calgary, 28 March 1972.

⁷ Michael Brawne, *The New Museum: Architecture and Display* (New York: Praeger, 1965). Cited in Brian Dixon, Alice E. Courtney and Robert H. Bailey, *The Museum and the Canadian Public* (Ottawa: Canada: Department of the Secretary of State, 1974), 1.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Pelletier:11. Pelletier spoke of producing specialists in conservation, restoration, registration, exhibition, interpretation and education.

¹⁰ OMA Council Minutes 1972" OMA fonds, F2091-1 Box 1,OA, and OMA Minutes, Annual General Meeting 7-8 April 1972. F 2091-12, OA

for forty persons, a monthly newsletter and ten seminars per year.¹¹ With this ambitious new program, the OMA was fully in the business of training museum workers. The OMA seminars were designed to address a basic level and offered no equivalencies for work experience. They spanned the wide range of skills required for community museum operations: fund-raising and financial management, cataloguing and research, education and interpretation, conservation, restoration and exhibit design. In its first full year, the OMA training program offered twenty-one seminars of up to three days each, to over 200 members across the province, from Dryden to Ottawa.¹²

The strength of the OMA program diminished training programs offered by other associations in Ontario. Eventually, it eclipsed the Ontario Historical Society Museum Section (OHS MS) efforts, which remained limited to an annual workshop and monthly newsletters. Not surprisingly, by mid-1973 the Museum Section was questioning its purpose and future, asking the OMA to hold a joint annual meeting with them that year to “break down the barriers between amateur and professional.”¹³ The OMA eventually swallowed the CMA training program. With the OMA training program accelerating, the CMA increasingly leaned on it and on other provincial museums associations to organize seminars for its own flagging diploma course. In 1974, it decided to mothball its museum training program and grandfather the diploma path for those enrolled in it. Although it had a sound syllabus, the program had become a logistical nightmare because, unlike the OMA program, it had more variables to manage: three levels of instruction in two different languages in on-site seminar formats across the country and the attendant scheduling, delivery and marking, which depended on volunteer instructors. Moreover, credit equivalencies for each of these seminars were adjudicated separately for each student through a complicated, qualitative formula based on education, years of work and job description.¹⁴

Professionalization: Schools of Museum Studies

By 1974, the OMA was the main resource of professional development for persons already on the job in Ontario’s museums. It was not, however, the sole provider of museum education in the province. If anything indicates a growth in museum professionalism, it was the development of several university and college programs where a decade earlier there had been none. In 1964, Louis C. Jones invited OHS MS members to apply to his newly created graduate program in Museum Studies and History (a hybrid program run jointly by the State University of New York and the Cooperstown Farmer’s Museum), noting there was no equivalent museum education in Canada. This national shortcoming changed in 1966 with the appointment of the dynamic Peter Swann as director of the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). One of the early promoters of the OMA, with a personal mission to modernize the ROM, Swann, with the assistance of Dr. Loris Russell, Rom Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology (and

¹¹ Correspondence C.J. Mackenzie, Secretary-General National Museums Corporation to G. McLaughlan, President of the OMA. 23 March 1973. File “OMA Council Minutes 1973” OMA fonds, F 2091-1 box 1 OA.

¹² Estimate based on “Training Seminars 1973-1974,” “Training Seminars 1975.” OMA fonds, F 2091-11, OA

¹³ OHS Executive Committee Minutes, 5 May, 1973, OHS fonds, F 1139-2, OA. In light of the OMA developments, discussion questioned if the Section should be reduced back to a Committee status.

¹⁴ For instance in 1971-1972 the CMA offered thirteen introductory level seminars of three days each on five separate topics, one of which “Acquisitions and Documentation” was only available in French. It had three intermediate seminars, and one advanced seminar, of several days each and available only in English. These seminars were held across the country, ranging from Prince George to Saint John and taught by volunteers from the museum community. Credit was given for students’ years of professional experience and this was evaluated through a complicated formula and applied to different courses and course levels. “Proposed Seminar Schedule 1971-1972” CMA *Gazette* Volume 5 (3), p.13

chair of the Canadian Museums Association Training Program), subsequently negotiated a graduate program in Museology with the University of Toronto and Royal Ontario Museum.¹⁵ Its first class of twelve students registered in 1969. This program also received MAP funding.¹⁶ In 1971, Algonquin College in Ottawa introduced a three-year diploma program in museum technology, while Seneca College in North York, Ontario, offered a two-year diploma in historical and natural interpretation. In 1974, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, introduced the first graduate degree program in Canada in Art Conservation.

The other source of museum training in Ontario continued to be the office of the provincial museums advisors, which offered seminars on subjects such as setting up a museum board and collections cataloguing. Advisors carried on providing detailed advice to individual museums on their collections, exhibits, restoration projects and interpretation programs. They worked closely with the OMA organization and its training program: the museum advisors frequently taught seminars for the OMA; moreover, they sat on the OMA council and at times headed its Training Committee. Thus, a core group of like-minded people were developing curricula and advice for community museums in the province with the shared goal of improving the management and interpretation of the past in these places.

Communications Breakdown and Collections Crisis

The federal museums policy viewed museums as a medium of communication; the provincial museum advisory service viewed museum exhibitions as the "vehicle for the museum's message."¹⁷ As in the previous decade, organizing a museum's collections and exhibits around a coherent message, theme or purpose remained a central component of professional advice during this time.¹⁸ In restored historic buildings, this message was meant to be grounded in authentic verisimilitude forged from well-researched and carefully crafted restoration and interpretation. Models for this type of work included the big-budget sites of Upper Canada Village, Black Creek Pioneer Village and Dundurn Castle.

Principles of Museum Display

Perfecting context was the guideline for both historical restoration and gallery design. The 1975, OMA seminar "Orientation to History" said of historic house restoration: "If you can't do it exactly as the original, forget it and cut your losses."¹⁹ The accepted wisdom in gallery and case exhibit design

¹⁵ Unlike the Cooperstown program, The University of Toronto program reflected the multidisciplinary nature of the ROM; thus it accepted students with graduate specialties in anthropology, classics, art history, zoology, etc. as well as history.

¹⁶ Among these graduates, three became co-ordinators of the OMA training program, and another, executive director, within the first decade of the organization.

¹⁷ Pauline Hall, "Display: the vehicle for the museum's message" (Toronto: Historical Branch, Department of Public Records and Archives, 1969).

¹⁸ Even venerable institutions such as the Royal Ontario Museum were advised at this time to develop a single interpretive theme common to all departments, their collections and exhibitions. See David H. Scott, "The Royal Ontario Museum: Guidelines for Planning" (Guelph: David H. Scott Consultants, 1975): 42, "The desirability of a comprehensible theme for each exhibit, and for the museum as a whole, as well as the need to help the visitor make his visit as productive and interesting as possible, would seem to dictate a sequential viewing experience for a general museum of the ROM type."

¹⁹ One participant, Harry Collins of Doon Pioneer Village, responded on his course evaluation that this goal not

continued to stress storyline development as the best use of the collections and most effective way to communicate local history. Pauline Hall (nee Hooten) of the province's museum advisory service, who remained the most important source for this work in local museums during the 1970s and early 1980s, continued to promote the use of storyline as the anchor for exhibit design. As she explained to participants at the 1974 OMA seminar "Presentation," they must:

Uphold the initiative of a definite storyline. ... The words interpretation, theme and storyline all extend the idea of selecting and putting in a logical and acceptable form the material for presentation.²⁰

"Display: the Vehicle for the Museum's Message," Hall's 1966 paper delivered to the OHS MS that same year, and subsequently to the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) in 1967, was expanded, published and distributed to client museums throughout the 1970s by the Department of Public Records and Archives, and the successive Ministries within which the museum advisors were placed.²¹ The CMA also reprinted the leaflet for national distribution. While this guide laid out in general terms the story-line sequence for a local history museum, Hall still made on-site consultations to dozens of museums per year, providing gallery layouts for museums such as the Wellington County Museum's new location in the former County House of Industry and Refuge.²² As before, both Hall and successive advisors continued to develop a "sequence of topics" for client museums,²³ and stressed research as the "most important ingredient in a step-by-step program in telling the storyline."

A well-documented back-ground for a "story-line" requires accurate facts, figures and information which can be gleaned from books, personal papers and manuscripts, municipal records, early maps, land registry records and other archival material ... It is a fact that the success of any museum display is directly proportionate to the amount and quality of the research that has gone into it.²⁴

As Peter Styrmø noted, groups were advised to conduct research, write a storyline and then "hang" the artifacts in the appropriate places in the narrative.²⁵ In the process of constructing narrative then, artifacts became illustrations of a storyline based usually on text sources. This shift from object-centred to narrative-based approach to artifacts produced a dilemma for many curators. Many of them had very little information on the collections in their museum.

always feasible. OMA fonds, F 2091-11, box 12, OA.

²⁰ File "Seminar Presentation." OMA fonds, F 2091-11, Box 12, OA.

²¹ Pauline Hall, "Display: the vehicle for the museum's message" (Toronto: Historical Branch, Department of Public Records and Archives, 1969).

²² Hall and Styrmø to Museum Board, Wellington County Museum 13 December 1972. Hall also drew up detailed plans for the gallery wings of historic house museums, such as Heritage House, Smith Falls. Museum Correspondence RG 47-51 Accession 23245 Box 8, OA.

²³ Based on the book *Niagara Annals*, Hall devised a chronological story-line for the revision of exhibits at the Niagara Historical Museum. Pauline Hooten to Jack Dorland 8 February 1966, "Niagara Historical Society" RG 47-51 Accession 20752, Box 12 OA.

²⁴ Hall, "Display" 2.

²⁵ Interview with Peter Styrmø, 17 October, 1990.

Problems with Museum Display and the Museum's Message

However, as many in the museum field were beginning to realize, local history museum collections and local history narratives did not necessarily harmonize.²⁶ Museum artifacts had been donated for a multiple of reasons, rarely with narrative in mind. The difficulty with making objects speak, as Alice Turnham had advised Museum Section members they should do in the 1960s, resided partly in the anonymity of many of the artifacts in museum collections, effectively rendering them mute. The problem lay with inadequate record keeping and research capacities of these community museums, which had been founded at a time when simply salvaging local heritage was the chief goal. For most museums, artifact documentation consisted of little more than hand-written register books with object lists and donor names. Although training had been provided on cataloguing, the problem of museums acquiring objects at a rate that exceeded their capacity to manage them properly had not been resolved. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, it had simply grown worse with the development of new museums. Ruth Home had written a leaflet on cataloguing collections in the 1950s as instruction for museums, and OHS MS workshops had likewise dealt with this topic and collections care. Archie Key had spoken some years earlier on the nation-wide prevalence of this problem in small museums, noting that it was impossible to evaluate the cultural worth of the collections in many small museums because their records, if they existed at all, were haphazard, and idiosyncratic.²⁷ Even Gérard Pelletier referred to this problem in his announcement of the National Museums Policy:

As a whole the National Cultural Heritage is in such a state of neglect that if remedial action is not taken quickly; the value of the collections will diminish greatly in the next ten years, particularly in the small and medium museums.²⁸

The challenges facing Ontario museum curators in managing their museum collections was extensive and undermined their capacities to effectively communicate the past. The curator of the Ear Falls Museum described her job as typical: as the only museum employee, she was responsible for all artifact cataloguing, conservation, exhibition, research, interpretation, supervising volunteers, correspondence, board liaison and janitorial duties. Her museum's collection encompassed an archives, domestic artifacts, furs, natural history specimens, agricultural machinery, materials related to mining, carpentry, trapping and logging, aboriginal artifacts, plus outdoor exhibits: a tugboat, airplane, logging sleigh and tree farm materials. Temperature and humidity levels fluctuated erratically in the unheated and uninsulated museum building, ranging from 98 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer to 50 degrees below zero Fahrenheit in the winter, irrevocably damaging paper, textiles, furniture and metals.²⁹ Likewise, the curator of the outdoor Pickering Museum was its only employee and as well as its custodian, and oversaw fifteen restored buildings full of agricultural implements and domestic materials. She complained that board members brought materials straight from someone's driving shed and put them on exhibit "without any thought to looks or reason."³⁰ The first full-time curator of the Wellington County Museum, Ken Seiling, explained that he had recently been hired in

²⁶ Discussed in Tivy, "The Quality of Research is Definitely Strained: Collections Research in Ontario Community Museums," David Richeson, "Museum Collections: Distortions of the Past, Thomas Schlereth "Artifacts and the American Past."

²⁷ OHS MS 1965 Workshop Report, Archie F. Key "Canadian Museums Association – Centennial Projects" 12. OHS fonds, Alice Davidson Scrapbook F1139-4, box MU 5453, OA.

²⁸ Pelletier, 4.

²⁹ Lil Tessier to Jean Van Nostrand 4 November 1974, OMA Seminars Files, OMA fonds, F 209-11 Box 12, OA. "Basic Conservation for the Small Museum."

³⁰ Isabel Annis to Jean Van Nostrand 12 November 1974, *ibid.*

July 1974 to oversee the move of the collection of about five thousand objects to the former County House of Industry which would, for the first time, provide a separate storage area for a collection consisting of a “smattering of everything” ranging from textiles, weapons, oil paintings and photographs.³¹ Meanwhile by 1972, the Doon village and museum had approximately eleven thousand objects with some information and a further nine thousand with none at all.³²

Shortly after its founding, the OMA council had sounded the alarm that over 77 percent of the museums the Ministry funded had no collections policy.³³ With little apparent change in this situation, in 1980 they submitted a brief to the Minister on the conservation crisis in community museums.³⁴ Similarly, the province’s chief museums advisor, Peter Styrmo, appealed to his superiors in 1972 for assistance with rectifying the poor collections conditions in community museums stating, “In 9 years we have only begun to scratch the surface of a problem which grows proportionately larger each day.”³⁵ This issue of the state of museum collections in local museums later became as Styrmo called it, the “striking point”³⁶ for developing a provincial policy for community museums in Ontario. The policy aimed at rectifying the situation through restricting the growth of museums, and requiring evidence of professional standards of operation directed toward a public audience.

A Policy to Manage Heritage in Ontario’s Community Museums

Canadian provinces were pressured to respond to the largesse of the National Museums Policy that affected the museums in their jurisdiction. As a result of the National Museum Policy and in response to the impoverished state of small museums in Ontario, during the 1970s the Province was pressured to develop a policy to govern the expanding number of local museums it advised and subsidized. This process took almost a decade; with it the OMA developed a secretariat, and the Province reconfirmed its relationship to provide leadership but not to operate local history museums, which remained community efforts.

Museum Policy Development in Canada

Several provinces, including Ontario, issued policies or guidelines of their own through their museum and granting advisory services, in the period following the introduction of the National Museums Policy. For instance, in 1975, the Quebec government created the Service des Musées Privés (a museum advisory service for public museums not administered by the Provincial Government of Quebec). By 1977, the Government’s analysis of the situation of musées privés (based on the Dixon study) had prompted the formation of a museum policy for Quebec that reinforced the federal notions of what these community museums should be, as opposed to what they were. Its statements included:

³¹ Ken Seiling to Jean Van Nostrand, 14 November 1974, *ibid.*

³² Information from Liz Hardin, Registrar, Doon Heritage Crossroads, 3 May, 2006.

³³ OMA Council Minutes, 3 March 1972. OMA fonds, F 2091-1 Box 1, OA.

³⁴ “OMA Brief on Conservation” OMA *Currently* June/July 1980 4:3.

³⁵ “A Suggested Program for the Development of Local Museums in Ontario” Section 7: “Registration and Records,” “Museum Policy Development Reports 1970-1981. File, “Museum Policy” and “Project Programs and Related Costs for Museums in Ontario.” RG-47-51, Accession 21910 File, “Museum Policy” and File, “Estimates: Historical and Museums Branch.” OA. “Project Programs and Related Costs for Museums in Ontario.” RG 47-51, Accession 20752, Box 10, File, OA.

³⁶ Term used by Peter Styrmo to describe catalysts for the Ontario Museum Policy development. Peter Styrmo, interview by author, Toronto, 1994.

It will be necessary to change these [museums] from charitable volunteerism to professionalism. ... The selection of cultural material... must follow the thematic philosophy of each museum. ... The state of conservation prevalent in museums is downright deplorable... Museums as a whole must undertake the tremendous task of transforming themselves into place of true cultural enlightenment, where discovery and learning go hand in hand, where one has the desire to return time and again because relevant objects are interestingly displayed, where information is provided, and where life overrules death... A museum which displays oddities and antiques, where the collections are appreciated by only the occasional specialist, can no longer meet the needs of today's society. ... This policy will ensure that museums will provide educational and cultural programmes which will reshape their traditional appearance. ... Museums should be perceived as vehicles for cultural promotion ... providing attractions, encounters, exchanges and extension services.³⁷

Some provinces, such as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had regional branches of the main provincial museum, through which advisory services and heritage collection could be decentralized. In addition, the Nova Scotia Museum already had its own museum assistance program, and museums applying for support from this service had to have their statements of purpose and plans vetted and approved by the provincial museum.³⁸ Five provinces and territories (Saskatchewan, Ontario, Quebec, the Yukon and the NWT) had museum advisors serving in provincial government departments that issued grants. In the other provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland), museum advisors were based in the provincial museums.³⁹ In Alberta, the provincial museum issued advice to smaller museums; while the government provided grants.⁴⁰ Increasingly, these advisors pushed for provincial government funding to be based on more criteria than simply the number of hours and days the museum was open, as it was in Ontario⁴¹

Ontario Community Museum Policy Development

Lack of artifact documentation combined with the storage chaos of most museums, rallied the museum advisors and the OMA during the 1970s and early 1980s to demand a strategy and a policy from the province to address these appalling conditions. The OMA argued for more equitable funding for the museums since museums of all dimensions, operating capacities, and varied local support

³⁷ "A Museums Policy for Quebec" Speech presented by Pierre Boucher, Deputy Minister of Cultural Affairs, translated by Léo Rosshandler. A copy of this speech with the cited sections highlighted was circulated by the policy-makers in the Ministry of Culture and Recreation ("Museum Policy 1976-77" RG 47-78, Accession 19909, Box 7 OA.) In 1975 twenty-eight accredited museums in Quebec received 325,000 in operational grants, this figure rose to \$4,277,600,000 for forty-five institutions, including art galleries, in 1977.

³⁸ Correspondence, J. Lynton Martin to Archie F. Key, 23 September 1966. "Museum Training – CMA," Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 20752, Box 10, OA.

³⁹ On museum policies in other Canadian provinces see the following unpublished papers: Anita Rush, "The Evolution of Federal Support to Museums and Art Galleries, (1987), Jean Trudel, *Les Musées au Québec – Un Point de Vue*" (1988). The following unpublished papers from the Masters of Public History program at the University of Waterloo are available in the History department there: Cathy Woolfrey "The Development of Alberta's Heritage Preservation and Presentation Policy (1986); Lisa Kelley, *Maritimes Museum Policy* (1986).

⁴⁰ In 1974 the Quebec government created the *Service des Musées Prives* [meaning public museums not administered by the Provincial Government of Quebec], followed in next year by standards for community museums attached to operating grants.⁴⁰ By 1975 twenty-eight accredited museums in Quebec received 325,000 in operational grants, this figure rose to \$2,500,000 for forty-five institutions in 1977.

⁴¹ "Provincial Museum Advisors" *Museogramme* 3:1 (April 1975). Cited in Rush, fn. 71.

qualified for the same provincial maximum annual grant of \$1000.⁴² In addition, the OMA wanted the province to stop fostering the growth of new museums, and cancel its one-time “establishment grants” of \$1500 that the province had introduced in 1969. The editorial in the first issue of the OMA newsletter argued:

Vis à vis the small community museums, I believe the OMA must work not for the proliferation of museums, but rather excellence and concentrated interest on existing institutions.⁴³

Increased Provincial Support

Beginning in 1972, the province began to respond to these demands for more money and services, due partly to a serendipitous transfer of the Historical and Museums Branch from the Department of Records and Archives to the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. There it was placed in the newly formed Cultural Affairs Division. This Ministry had a billion-dollar budget, a minister amenable to increasing the province's support for local museums,⁴⁴ and a Cultural Affairs Division that had been developed to organize and rationalize the province's cultural policies.⁴⁵

Within this aura, the advisors in the Historical and Museums Branch and the OMA joined forces and successfully persuaded the government to increase museum operating grants and provide assistance with collections management. Grants to museums more than doubled from \$113,000 in 1972–1973, to almost \$300,000 in 1973–1974. In 1973, establishment grant maximums increased to \$5000, and a matching capital development grant, also with a \$5000 ceiling, was introduced to assist local museums with upgrading their facilities. In 1974–1975, the operating grant allowed for a dividend based on audience support of the museum. Grants were topped up based on a negative sliding scale of the percentage of the museum's net receipts, to maximum of \$12,000. Also, a new stipulation allowed for museum grants to be paid directly to the agencies that governed museums rather than to municipal councils, and for the first time museums owned by non-profit organizations such as historical societies qualified for museum grants.⁴⁶ Two more advisors were hired for the Toronto office in 1973: Alan Barnes with a speciality in museum administration and facilities, and Dorothy Duncan, an expert in historic restoration and museum interpretation.

In 1974, the Ministry initiated a summer job program for students to catalogue collections in community museums across the province, which proved highly effective in locating and identifying items already existing in museum collections. For instance, in 1977 the museum advisors trained 109 students who recorded 80,000 artifacts in 35 museums. The Youth Secretariat provided funding and the Historical and Museums Branch administered the program. The museums advisors provided a manual for each “Operation Museum Catalogue” team to follow. The advisors, along with museum professionals elsewhere in North America, advocated using a tripartite numbering system using an

⁴² This complaint continued until a policy of standards was introduced. Robin Inglis, OMA to James Auld, Minister of Colleges and Universities 25 September 1974, “Museum Responses to Deconditionalization,” OMA fonds, F 2091-15, accession 24128, box 24. OA.

⁴³ OMA Newsletter No. 1 (June 1972).

⁴⁴ According to Peter Styrmø the increases in the museum section budget during its tenure in the Ministry of Colleges and Universities was due largely to the sympathetic ear of the Honourable Jack McNie. Interview with Peter Styrmø, 11 March, 1994.

⁴⁵ Files, “Smocks and Jocks”: 210.

⁴⁶ Peter Styrmø to Linda Pesando “Memo “Museum Grants” 24 November 1976, RG 47-78, Accession 19909, Box 7, OA and “Museum Grants” in “OMA Council Minutes January-May 1978,” OMA fonds, F 2091-1, box 1, OA.

artifact classification system based on the “Sears List of Subject Headings,” a subject referencing system introduced in the 1920s for small libraries.⁴⁷ Sears classified objects by type and function, such as tools, dresses, or furniture. Bells, for instance, regardless of whether they were from churches, cows, schools, sleighs or “dinner” were a categorical unit. One is reminded of Foucault’s adage, “To catalogue is not merely to ascertain ... but also to appropriate.”⁴⁸ It appears that other methods of classifying materials — especially those used at folk museums in Europe were not considered for use in Ontario’s museums.⁴⁹

For instance, the Museum of English Rural Life, Britain’s premier outdoor museum, used a system much more concerned with the dynamic of objects in traditional rural practice. J.W.Y. Higgs, an academic with the University of Reading, who founded this museum in 1951, argued that objects should be grouped according to the daily life and work patterns of the people whose traditions the museum maintained. The museum’s classification system was based on the ethnological orientation of Scandinavian folk museums. Higgs systematized the museum’s approach to researching, collecting and identifying artifacts within four main areas: agriculture, rural life, domestic material and village life. Artifacts were classified under categories such as “cultivating,” “harvesting,” “crafts,” “employment,” “social life” and so on. Part and parcel of the larger study of folklore, Higgs stated that “a folk museum is not dealing primarily with objects; it is dealing with people and their lives.”⁵⁰ All collecting was done in connection with oral testimony, thus narrative was engaged with collection. Artifact significance was culturally, as opposed to historically, assessed; as he notes, the extremely ordinary materials of the past included pebbles used by shepherds to count sheep. Cultural, rather than historical, significance was assessed in this work, which became the basis for the Museum of English Rural Life cataloguing system (MERL) used elsewhere in folk life museums Britain.⁵¹ Such a system would have suited an Ontario rural life museum village as it was envisioned by Dr. Broome, but was never adopted.

Policy Development

The improvements made by the Government of Ontario in funding and advisory services both benefited museums and underscored the need for a policy to rationalize these increased provincial subsidies. While the advisors internally developed suggestions for programs to improve the operations of local museums,⁵² they recommended the province outsource the formation of a policy for funding community museums to the professional museum organizations.

It is our prime belief that the most prudent method of establishing modern museum standards and criteria would be to enlist the services of museum organizations, both the CMA and the OMA on a contract basis and with financial assistance... The

⁴⁷ Memo V.N. Styrmo to “Museums in Ontario,” re “Ontario Experience 1974 – Operation Museum Catalogue” 15 March 1974. “Correspondence 1974” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 5, DHC.

⁴⁸ Cited in Barthes “The Plates of the Encyclopedia” in Susan Sontag (ed.) *Selected Writings*, (London: Fontana, 1982) 222, cited in Pearce, *Museums, Objects, Collections*, 118.

⁴⁹ I am unable to find any use of Higgs MERL system in North America.

⁵⁰ J.W.H. Higgs *Folk Life Collection and Classification*, (London: The Museums Association, 1963), 39.

⁵¹ See Kavanagh, *History Curatorship*, 38.

⁵² “A Suggested Program for the Development of Local Museums in Ontario” Section 7: “Registration and Records,” “Museum Policy Development Reports 1970-1981. File, “Museum Policy” and “Project Programs and Related Costs for Museums in Ontario.” RG-47-51, Accession 21910 File, “Museum Policy” and File, “Estimates: Historical and Museums Branch.” OA. “Project Programs and Related Costs for Museums in Ontario.” RG 47-51, Accession 20752, Box 10, File, OA.

implementation of resulting museum criteria and standards could be undertaken by this agency through the administration of museum grants.⁵³

In the autumn of 1973, the Honourable Jack McNie, Minister of Colleges and Universities, and a full entourage from the Cultural Affairs Division showed their Ministry's support for community museums by addressing the joint annual conference of the Ontario Museum Association and the Ontario Historical Society Museums Section. Subsequently, the Ministry negotiated a mutually agreeable situation with the OMA and the OHS MS to establish an Ontario Museum Policy Advisory Committee, under the auspices of the OMA.

This strategy of outsourcing was in accord with provincial guidelines for cultural development, which the cabinet had approved in November 1973.⁵⁴ Government departments were instructed to maintain a dual role of encouragement and responsiveness to cultural initiatives from groups and individuals, but to keep the focus of cultural decision-making at the local level. In other words, the province should offer support, but not dictate direction in local cultural development. This line of responsibility was debated and redrawn several times during the subsequent discussions on policy for community museums.

The Ministry of Colleges and Universities provided direct funding to the OMA to set up a policy advisory committee in January 1974. With the \$60,000 contract, the OMA was able to hire an administrative co-ordinator, and cover the cost of operating a secretariat. The Ministry, in turn, would receive essential data on museum operations in the province, a feasibility study of an artifact-cataloguing project, and policy proposals.⁵⁵ Because of from this arrangement, the OMA now had a permanent, staffed headquarters a few blocks away from the Ministry offices. Although it was a professional organization, its chief source of funding came not from members but from government bodies, to assist in administering and developing government policy.

In addition to wanting to ameliorate the catastrophic conditions in museums, the OMA had other strong reasons to push for a provincial funding policy based on meeting professional standards of operation. The OMA was a professional body that had no regulatory powers for either its members or their workplaces. The museum quality-assurance program that the Ministry could develop and administer to rationalize its funding programs would also provide the profession — the OMA — with a tool to professionalize the workplace. Throughout the ensuing discussions, the OMA consistently argued for a policy document that would "encourage and aid the development of museums and a recognizable museum profession in the province."⁵⁶ The OMA's policy committee spent a year formulating a policy document, which it submitted to the province in 1975, and waited for several years more for a response.⁵⁷

In the period when the policy was being resolved, the museums grants and advisory service was transferred in 1975 to the new Ministry of Culture and Recreation, and the policy negotiations between the OMA and the province went into abeyance. The province now internalized the policy-making process, and relegated the OMA to facilitate the outcome. In the meantime provincial funding for museums expanded again, this time it included capital grants from an unexpected source.

⁵³ Suggested Program, "Section One, 8"

⁵⁴ Province of Ontario, "Guidelines for Cultural Development" 31 November 1973.

⁵⁵ R. Inglis to Andrew Lipchak, 28 January, 1974 "Ontario Museums Policy." RG 47-58, Accession 22193, OA.

⁵⁶ R. Inglis to Andrew Lipchak, 28 January, 1974 "Ontario Museums Policy." RG 47-58, Accession 22193, OA

⁵⁷ I discuss in detail elsewhere the museum policy negotiations that spanned four years and produced a number of discussion papers that alternately weighed the roles of the Province and the profession to determine museum standards and assess accreditation of individual museums. Mary Tivy "Ministering History to the Community"

The Ministry of Culture and Recreation had been formed in late 1974 to consolidate Ontario's cultural and recreational programs.⁵⁸ This new ministry developed a new source of provincial funding: returns on legalized gambling.⁵⁹ The Ministry's "Wintario" lottery was designed "to enrich the quality of life" of the province.⁶⁰ When the funds generated far exceeded expectations, this proved to be a windfall for several community groups which used matched monies to build new museums, or renovate existing facilities.

However, the advisors had no control over this funding. Wintario funds were adjudicated and distributed independently through Ministry field offices. If a community could come up with matching funds, the field offices rubber-stamped approval of the project, unlike the museum capital development grants that required museum's advisor approval for funding. Between September 1975 and June 1978, Wintario gave \$1,122,323 in funding to thirty-one museums in matching capital grants.⁶¹ Frustrated that these Wintario museum projects went ahead without their consultation or approval, the museum advisors successfully argued to vet all future Wintario museum applications.⁶² "Places to Grow," a 1978 review of the Ministry of Culture and Recreation's capital funding programs, reflected the advisors' beliefs that lottery funds should be prioritized in order to improve existing facilities under a guiding philosophy of 'community excellence' instead of funding new operations.

In 1977, the museum grants regulations were changed again, allowing for a large bonus of up to \$60,000 based on museum expenditures over the maintenance grant maximum of \$12,000. This change was effected in part, through rigorous lobbying by Russell Cooper, Manager of Black Creek Pioneer Village, who argued that the museum grants needed to be qualified and better reflect the performance of an institution.⁶³ Thus the following year, Black Creek's annual maintenance grant went from \$12,000 to \$72,000, and the overall maintenance grants budget grew from \$493,267 for 156 museums in 1975 to \$1,249,385 for 184 museums in 1977. By 1977, provincial support for local museums contributed over 26 percent of these museums' operating revenues, a jump from an average of 15 percent two years previously.⁶⁴ The same year three more advisors, two of whom were museology graduates were hired to work out of Sault Ste. Marie to assist museums in isolated northern communities. The 'Ministry,' as the advisory and granting service was euphemistically called by its clients, had become an important constituent in shaping Ontario's community museums.

⁵⁸ It was through this Ministry that the Ontario Heritage Act was passed. This legislation was, by far, directed at built heritage and had a minimal effect on the operations of local museums.

⁵⁹ James Files, "Smocks and Jocks: The Establishment of the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Recreation, 1974" *Ontario History* Volume LXXXIII, Number 3 (September 1991): 209-223.

⁶⁰ David Carmichael, Information Services, Ministry of Culture and Recreation, "The Wintario Grants Program" *OMA Newsletter* 7:3 (Summer 1978) 9-12.

⁶¹ *OMA Currently* 2:1 (February 1978), 1. No empirical analysis of Wintario spending on museums has been published, and Wintario records were routinely destroyed by the Province, preventing a further analysis here.

⁶² See for instance, memo Peter Styrmø to Steve Otto, Executive Director, Heritage Conservation Division, 27 October 1976. File "Northumberland," Museums Correspondence RG 47-51, Acc. 22197, Box 1, OA; and memo Debbie Reynolds to Peter Styrmø 7 May, 1979 regarding his concerns about a museum project. "A year ago there was no pre-approval system and it was quite normal for organizations to commence the project once their application was date stamped by our Ministry." File "Markham and District Historical Museum." Museums Correspondence RG 47-51, Accession 21721, Box 1, OA.

⁶³ Russell Cooper to Victor Styrmø 16 May 1977, File "Black Creek Pioneer Village." Museums Correspondence RG 47-51 Accession 21727, Box 1, OA.

⁶⁴ OMA Council to Hon. W. Darcy McKeough, "Deconditionalization of Museum Grants" File "Ontario Government Deconditionalization of Museum Grants" OMA fonds F 2091-15, accession 24128, box 24, OA; *OMA Newsletter*, 7:1 (Winter 1978): 2.

The impact of these new federal and provincial funding and advisory sources on upgrading community museums is illustrated by changes in museums near Doon. Guelph's Civic Museum, a municipal centennial project, was moved from a semi-permanent location in the unheated attic of the city's farmers' market building to a fully renovated historic building in 1977, using federal, provincial and local government funding to renew the institution. The city of Guelph donated a designated building worth \$95,000, a donation in kind that was matched by a Wintario grant. The federal MAP provided \$85,000 for building upgrading and the Ontario Heritage Foundation gave \$16,000 for restoration of the façade of the building, under the direction of restoration architect Peter John Stokes.⁶⁵ At the same time the board reorganized the museum's management structure, and advertised for two new positions both requiring professional credentials that had not existed a decade before: a director with a masters in museum studies, and an assistant director with a diploma in museum technology. Hired in early 1978, the new staff installed a series of narrative-based exhibits to tell the story of the development of Guelph "From Forest Clearing to City Street," by matching the artifact collection to scholarly sources, such as a recently published volume on the history of Guelph.⁶⁶

Likewise, the nearby Wellington County Museum Board, which had been handed the defunct Wellington County House of Industry and Refuge building, was able to take advantage of MAP and Wintario funding to install security systems and environmentally controlled exhibit and storage areas. Federal job creation programs funded personnel to carry out some of these improvements. The total cost of capital improvements to this building from 1974–1980 was over \$344,000, of which \$100,000 was provided by MAP and over \$20,000 by Wintario.⁶⁷ Provincial museum advisors assisted with the interior layout of this large structure, and Wintario funding covered the design and installation of new exhibits. The exhibits were based on a chronological history of the county. Both the Guelph and Wellington County museums used historic room recreations for Victorian parlours, the easiest way to exhibit furniture and decorative accessories without having to devise narrative arrangements.

In spite of this growth at these sites, Doon did not take the same advantage of these grant opportunities as its neighbours. The Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA) had no ties to the Ministry of Culture and Recreation, other than its museum operating grant, and the OPCF seemed neither aware of the opportunity nor skilled in applying for the largesse. They received a relatively small grant for display equipment to be used in the Hall of Fame.⁶⁸ Their other application for Wintario funding for architectural restoration was denied for reasons discussed later in this chapter.

Accreditation

With the promise of a museum policy attached to the principle of professional standards, the OMA moved to provide its members with professional accreditation. Under President Marten Lewis, the OMA received MAP funding in 1977 to develop a structured course of study, leading to a certificate.⁶⁹ The OMA's "Basic Certificate in Museum Studies" was running by 1979. The certificate program was based on the CMA "National Curriculum for Museum Studies" and on a range of

⁶⁵ "Museum ready for move to new home" *Guelph Daily Mercury*, 1 December 1977.

⁶⁶ Author Interview with former Guelph Museum Assistant Director, Michelle McMillan, 10 March 2006. On the history of Guelph see Leo Johnson, *A History of Guelph 1827-1927* (Guelph, Guelph Historical Society, 1977).

⁶⁷ File "Wellington County Museum" Museums Correspondence RG 47-51, Accession 22197, Box 2, OA.

⁶⁸ OPCF Minutes 19 September 1977. OPCF Minutes, OPCF fonds 996.163, box 2 DHC. The grant awarded was \$11,004.20.

⁶⁹ File "Certificate Program," OMA fonds, F 2091-10, Accession 24128, Box 11, OA.

courses offered through national and international institutions and organizations.⁷⁰ This program of eight three-day courses was designed to equip those already working in museums to address the anticipated government-imposed and OMA-endorsed standards of operation for community museums. Dorothy Duncan headed the certificate development committee; she had the inside track on the development of government standards because she was writing them. Within the first year, the program had 135 registrants; the first graduation was in 1982. As before, the exhibit-design course component reinforced the prevailing notions of storyline development using text, graphics and artifacts, while the “historic house as a museum” component stressed historical accuracy in all elements of restoration and interpretation.⁷¹

Threats to Deconditionalize Grants

Throughout the revival of the policy-making process, the spectre of removing conditions from grants haunted both the OMA and the Heritage Administration Branch, which saw it as a serious threat to the government’s ability to apply guidelines and standards of operation for community museums. This was a possibility because the Provincial Grant Reform Committee 1978 (TEIGA) report argued that funding amounts to municipalities for museum grants were comparatively small and un-rationalized, and municipal museums, although culturally important to the province, were essentially local endeavours. The committee’s recommendation was to simply eliminate grants to municipal museums, which made up the bulk of the museums in the Ministry’s museum grants program, and transfer the funds to the municipality without condition. It also recommended limiting provincial support to municipal museums to advisory and technical services, or to special grants where the province wished to promote certain “creative activities.”⁷²

The OMA and the museum advisors protested in letters to the Minister. The OMA submitted a brief written by Ken Seiling to Minister Darcy McKeough, arguing that most municipalities had not developed an understanding of heritage matters and relied on provincial leadership, and recommended that:

Funding for museums become more controlled and based on established qualitative factors which will protect the Provincial interest. ... This Association stands firmly on its publicly stated principle that ... further rationalization is required in museum development in Ontario.⁷³

Those working in the Ministry of Culture and Recreation viewed the funding and advisory program as intertwined and vital in this form to small museums with little other certain sources of support. Like

⁷⁰ Such as the International Council of Museums (ICOM), American Association of Museums, Museums Association of Britain, American Association for State and Local History, Smithsonian Institution, University of Toronto and the University of Leicester. Required courses included: the organization and management of the museum, using an historic building as a museum, museum cataloguing and artifact research, caring for collections, exhibit design, museums and education programs, and the museum and community programs and public relations. Later a course “The history and philosophy of museums” was introduced. File “Report on the certificate development project.” OMA fonds, F 2091-10, Accession 24128, Box 11, OA.

⁷¹ “Certificate programme seminar – Museum exhibits” OMA fonds F 2091-10, Accession 24128, box 29, OA.

⁷² “Synopsis of the Report of the Provincial-Municipal Grants Reform Committee” 1978, p.119.

⁷³ Brief “Deconditionalization of Museum Grants” OMA, March 30, 1978. p.4. Elsewhere in the document it states: “This Association stands firmly on its publicly stated principle that museum grants should be on a more controlled and qualitative basis, and that further rationalization is required in museum development in Ontario.” (p.3).

the OMA, this Ministry also recommended to the TEIGA Policy Paper that some form of museum accreditation be introduced and administered by the province to rationalize all museum grants.⁷⁴

The concept of standards to determine eligibility for funding, which the professional association promoted, ultimately fit well with the government's concern for grant rationalization and its need to limit spending. The latter concern permeated Ministry staff meetings on formulating policy in 1977–1978, where staff talked of "building more fences to discourage the establishment of many more museums," and preventing "the proliferation of museums by imposing higher standards for grants" through a "policy of containment and capital upgrading."⁷⁵ As one committee member acknowledged, "The only meaningful purpose of accreditation is determining who is eligible for grants and who is not."⁷⁶ It was the "common sense and present circumstances" of the late 1970s that invoked qualitative funding for museums, as illustrated in the policy deliberations:

The slow pace of the improvement of standards in many of the Province's community museums is a source of great concern to the heritage community. ... The Ministry has fostered development of institutions and is committed to promoting excellence, but the Ministry, faced with fiscal restraints common across the government today, is limited to devising a system that can be accommodated within present levels of funding. In moving forward in an effort to achieve our objectives, common sense and present circumstances must dictate our rate of speed.⁷⁷

Within the Ministry, those best suited to defining guidelines and operational standards for museums were the museum advisors. Dorothy Duncan became the principal architect of these standards and the resulting museum policy. By autumn of 1978, she and Russell Cooper, manager of Black Creek Pioneer Village, had put together a discussion paper with recommendations on the care and conservation of collections with detailed guidelines for the development of a new community museum, for the restoration of an historical building, and for restoration or recreation of an historical complex. Meetings with the museum community to discuss the new policy proposals were initiated in May 1980. The OMA provided representation at each of these meetings to lend support for the Ministry's policy recommendations. Its council readily agreed to do so as a "show of support for our funding agency" and to further exposure of the association in the community. In fact, the Executive Director reported to council that the feedback from the community meetings endorsed OMA policy positions on museum standards. "The credibility of the OMA, if it ever was in question, has been tremendously endorsed by the meetings."⁷⁸

Following a second round of community meetings, the final policy paper, "Community Museums Policy for Ontario" was completed and announced by Reuben Baetz, the Minister of Culture and Recreation, to the Legislative Assembly on July 23, 1981. It was couched in terms of

⁷⁴ "Comments on the Teiga Policy paper Concerning Provincial-Municipal Relations, 1974, "Museums Deconditionalization of Grants," Records of the Director of the Heritage Administration Branch, RG 47-58 Accession 19362, OA.

⁷⁵ Museums Correspondence, RG 47-51, Accession 27651, Box 22, OA; Meeting Minutes 3 May 1978 and Minutes 16 May, 1978; "Museums Policy (1) 1977-78" "Policy Papers II" RG 47-78 Accession 19909 OA.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ File "Museum Policy:Background," Museums Correspondence RG 47-51, Accession 27651, Box 22, OA

⁷⁸ "OMA Council Minutes" 4-5 September 1980. OMA fonds, F 2091-1, box 2 OA.

organizing Ministry resources “in the best possible way to respond to the needs of Ontario’s community museums in these financially-challenging times.”⁷⁹ Its prologue identified a shift in the Ministry’s interest in local museums, from a past emphasis on growth and development, to a new focus on quality. It stated that intent of the policy was to “enhance museums and improve public service” by setting minimal standards of operation as funding requirements.⁸⁰

Considering the circumstances at the time, the setting of standards of operation for community museums now seems inevitable. The museum profession, of which the senior advisors were leaders, was almost unanimous in its call for standards for museums. The Ministry needed to harness its funding for community museums and without grant rationalization, it risked losing its influence and ability to support these institutions completely through the reoccurring threat of grant deconditionalization.

Common sense and circumstances dictated the scope of this policy. Without the creation of provincially subsidized area museums, local museums continued to evolve independently, using lottery funds to upgrade according to the new museum guidelines and standards. An analysis of the policy making process illuminates its gains and losses. The policy provided for a new provincial conservation service for local museums, and training seminars for boards and workshops on upgrading the museum’s physical plant, but contained few other initiatives from the province. Other policy recommendations important to the museum community did not survive the cycle of policy approval as government funding tightened throughout the late 1970s. A glance at these recommendations reveals the limits of the policy of standards and containment that was produced. For instance, early in the process the advisors argued that museum operating standards could best be implemented through a new model for organizing local museums across the province. They recommended consolidating them into regional museum networks. Each network would feature a subsidized parent institution with satellite museums. Collections management, exhibits preparation and education programs could be coordinated through the museum nucleus in each network thereby reducing “redundancy and a treadmill of mediocrity.”⁸¹ The policy developers discounted this recommendation for a number of reasons, although it was regarded by the advisors as vital for a “policy of planned development” for local museums. Not the least of these reasons included the perceived costs to the province, and its interference in local institutional governance.⁸² Although the advisors insisted that in the case of local museums, the province bore the responsibility for leadership; such direct intervention conflicted with the Ministry’s wider policy for cultural funding, based on the principle of local initiative and local responsibility. Advisors also argued for the Ministry of Culture and Recreation to provide special program and capital grants, in addition to those provided by Wintario, to assist museums in implementing these standards. For the most part, these funds did not materialize.⁸³

The policy did not provide for the development of a provincial history museum, which the OMA had long recommended be developed because it was important for helping address the uneven and disorganized collection of material history in Ontario. The recommendation was ignored, in part,

⁷⁹ Ministry of Culture and Recreation, “Community Museums Policy for Ontario,” 1981.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Suggested Program” Section Six, p.2

⁸² Author interview with Peter Styrmo, 11 March, 1994. A precedent for this system operated in Nova Scotia where local museums operated under the umbrella of the Provincial Museum of Nova Scotia. Likewise the federal government had identified several “associate museums” which qualified for extra MAP funding to assist in promoting the causes of the national museums policy.

⁸³ Funding for capital projects continued to be bolstered by the MAP and other federal-provincial initiatives.

because the province was already heavily committed to funding several historical museums such as Old Fort William, Ontario Agricultural Museum, Upper Canada Village, Sainte Marie among the Hurons, and Old Fort Henry, whose combined budgets for 1973 (when these initiatives were first proposed) were in excess of \$2,375,000. The policy also ignored the OMA recommendation that some special museum funding should be made discretionary and be adjudicated by the profession itself. Moreover, and much to the indignation of the OMA and the museum advisors, the final form of the policy removed an earlier requirement that any Ministry-funded community museum have a curator with an OMA certificate, or the equivalent. Apparently, museum workers with experience, but not certified qualifications, had protested mandatory certification.⁸⁴

Instead, the profession accepted that government-imposed museum guidelines and standards served to apply a process of workplace accreditation that the profession itself had been unable to create but desperately wanted. With the Ministry, it turned its attention to municipalities and museum governing bodies to persuade them to implement the tenets of the community museums policy.

Thus while maintaining decision making in the form of guidelines and standards for funding these museums, the government was not able to apply a strategic plan for the co-ordinated development of local museums. Without a centralized provincial museum of history, the province's material past would continue to be preserved piecemeal by these museums without any overall collecting plan.

The policy for community museums in Ontario and its accompanying standards formed a response to the museological arguments within the province regarding the need for collections management and audience development that had circulated for over three decades. The initial standards that museums were required to meet included the creation of a statement of purpose to outline the focus of the museum and its related functions (the minimum of which included the activities of collection, preservation, research, exhibition and interpretation). This was to be followed by a statement on collections limitations by subjects, geographical area and historic period. Following this, museums were required to submit a collections policy designed toward “the all-important task of controlling its collections efficiently.”⁸⁵ Museums were told in the accompanying guidelines that they were to collect only objects deemed historically significant, as determined by their provenance and historical period. The exhibition standard required a community museum to use “the museum’s collection or other sources to stimulate interest in and promote attendance at the museum.”⁸⁶ Exhibits were to have a narrative theme, be based on research, and be limited in scope to the museum’s statement of purpose and collections management policies.

With the issuing of the Community Museums Policy in 1981, the profession and the museum advisors achieved their goal of instituting qualified funding for museums to, as the Minister of Culture and Recreation said, “enhance museums and improve public service.” It was now up to the local museums to meet the mark.

⁸⁴ Peter Styrmö, interview with author, 11 March 1994.

⁸⁵ Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, “Standards for Community Museums in Ontario,” 1981.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

Chapter 9: Reconstructing the Past at Doon to 1985

Introduction

While the 1960s was a period of growth for Doon, as it was for many museums in Ontario, the 1970s became a period of rationalization of the work of the previous decade. The continued weight of operating a historic village with limited funds circumscribed Doon's ability to collect and present the past. By the 1970s, Doon had a backlog of unfinished buildings, thousands of uncatalogued collections and a management system that seemed incapable of rectifying the situation. The pressure of meeting the growing expectations of government funding, advisory bodies and museum professionals, forced changes as Doon entered its third decade. This chapter examines the operational practices at Doon, the perceived need for its revision, proposals to accomplish this work, and the consequences.

Doon Misses the Mark 1972–1983

While “Meeting the mark” was the theme of the Ontario Museum Association's (OMA) tenth annual conference, held in Kitchener-Waterloo in 1981, Doon Pioneer Village was nowhere near hitting the mark. The “mark” was the “emerging standards being established by grants programs and professional bodies.”¹ The president-elect of the OMA that year was Ken Seiling, who had risen to the top of his professional museum association through his efforts on its training committee and his effective lobbying of the province for qualitative funding for community museums. At the local level, he was involved in another vital museum project: to rescue Doon Pioneer Village from “tottering into the grave as a dead museum” as the local newspaper suggested.² By 1981, Doon, with the largest museum in the region and the earliest historic village in the province, was considered to be in desperate condition, and unlikely to meet the newly required standards for provincial funding. Compared with Black Creek Pioneer Village, or with the nearby Joseph Schneider House Museum in downtown Kitchener, Doon appeared to be in a museological backwater. A consultant's report, released in 1980 condemned the village, and blamed its condition on chronic mismanagement of the site. This unhappy image of Doon was broadcast into the community by the local media.³ The Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation (OPCF) protested that it had been branded by the report as “incompetent bunglers,” when its members were civic-minded businessmen and women with long records of public service, who had worked “beyond the call of duty” to preserve the past at Doon.⁴ Just a few years earlier, W.H.E. Schmalz of the OPCF had chronicled the history of Doon Pioneer Village as “A Dream Come True.” How had Doon become a nightmare?

Doon's descent from dream to nightmare lay in the changing context of museum development in Ontario. In fact, the OPCF and staff at Doon had not been incompetent; they had worked hard with the resources available to them, but their operating limitations did not allow for the levels of expertise which both the profession and the public expected.

¹ As stated in OMA *Currently* 5:3 (June/July 1981):5.

² “Doon Village setup rapped by architect” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 15 May 1980.

³ “Report condemns Pioneer Village,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 1 March, 1980.

⁴ OPCF Minutes, 17 March 1980, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 2, DHC.

Expanding Governance and Management: The GRCA

By 1972, Doon was an operation run by the Grand River Conservation Authority (GRCA), but its historical activities were still controlled and financed by the OPCF. The OPCF board managed the historic interpretation of the site, owned the artifact collection, and determined most of the village public programs and exhibits, all on a very limited budget. Its work was assisted by the management structure of the GRCA, and by the industry of curator Alf Schenk, who was earning professional certification through the Canadian Museum Association (CMA). In 1973, the GRCA appointed a superintendent to manage the village and grounds; Schenk stayed on as curator and Mel Moffat, formerly the site manager, was relegated to the position of foreman.

Superintendent Harry Collins had limited experience in historical restoration, but like Schenk, joined the OMA and participated in seminars to become familiar with the field. As a newcomer to the practice, and the manager of a budget that had small amounts for “historical improvements,” he was sceptical of the expectations for collections care and historic restoration espoused by the OMA seminar leaders. He regarded them as too idealistic for the resources of small-budget museums such as Doon.⁵ He advised the board that with minimal staff (himself, Schenk, two carpenters, a mason and a painter), and a budget of \$7000 for “historical improvements,” they did not have the luxury of producing historically accurate restorations at Doon. The GRCA quickly realized the limits of the operating budget at Doon and in 1973, only two years after taking over Doon, it appealed to the Regional Municipality of Waterloo for more funding, despite having promised to neither engage in large capital projects nor ask for funding increases. Doon’s levy increased from \$.15 to \$.20 per capita and the Region became progressively more invested in Doon.

With the creation of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo on January 1, 1973, funding for Doon now came from the regional government rather than the local city councils because the Region was responsible for providing services and programs that crossed municipal boundaries. Its first chair, Jack Young, argued that heritage was a regional concern and convinced the regional council to create and fund an advisory body to administer grants for heritage projects with a levy of \$.25.⁶ This newly formed Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation took on a major project: the restoration of the family home of Kitchener’s founder, Joseph Schneider, but had little involvement with the activities of Doon.

Alf Schenk and Professionalism at Doon

During this time, Schenk worked with an enormous mandate: he managed and cared for the collections of the village and museum approximating eighteen restored or reproduced structures open to the public and over twenty-five thousand artifacts. He researched and installed exhibits, interpreted these exhibits and the village to the public and school groups, and with a board committee, produced a series of special event weekends during the months the village was open.⁷ He was assisted by volunteers and federal and provincial employment programs that provided interpreters and cataloguers, usually over the summer months. Other federal job creation plans provided funding for off-season researchers in the early 1970s and a year long textile conservation team in the latter part of the decade. Occasionally, interns from programs such as Algonquin College’s museum technician

⁵ “Seminar: Care and Handling, Sudbury, 1974,” OMA fonds, F2091-11, Accession 24128 Box 12, OA

⁶ “Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation: Memories of Founding Members,” 1993, Kitchener Public Library, 971.3440006, Oral History Tape.

⁷ Schenk’s monthly and annual curator’s reports are filed under “Report of the Curator,” OPCF fonds, 996.163 Box 17, DHC.

program assisted with exhibits. Schenk managed these extra employees and in his spare time, earned his CMA diploma, which was awarded to him in 1976.

Schenk's growing professional concerns for the museum's collections reverberate through the records from this period.⁸ Through his CMA and OMA courses, he knew that artifacts needed controlled temperature and humidity levels; he requested heaters, humidifiers and fumigation to stabilize the museum environment. He sent objects off-site, such as the prized Eby Bible whose condition he considered imperilled by the circumstances at Doon.



9.1 Alf Schenk at left , cleaning Santa Sculptures. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.*

He appealed to the provincial museum advisors to support a Canada Works application for a conservation team to address the vast and decomposing textile collection at Doon.⁹ With the

⁸ "Curator's Report 1972," "Proposed Exhibits and Suggestions for 1972" OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 17, DHC.

⁹ "Correspondence, 1977, 3 of 3," Undated handwritten copy of letter Alf Schenk to Dorothy Duncan, thanking her for endorsing this project, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 6, DHC.

introduction of cataloguing assistance from the province in 1974, Schenk attempted to establish a uniform method of identifying and cataloguing the expansive and chaotic collections at Doon.

Re-Cataloguing the Past: Provincial Guidelines for Ordering Collections

As noted in the previous chapter, the province took responsibility for introducing cataloguing standards to community museums in Ontario. Prior to 1966 when Schenk arrived, Doon had used several different systems of cataloguing artifacts. The WHS had numbered their artifacts sequentially as they acquired them. Using examples of other museums in the province, in the early 1960s museum advisor James Gooding suggested that museums could catalogue artifacts by a coding system of letters and numbers. A letter was assigned to indicate artifact class (e.g., B= books), and numbers proceeded sequentially as items were added to the collection. Since many museums displayed everything by object class, as Boyle had done fifty years earlier, this system paralleled the interpretive framework of the period. A circular describing this format was sent to local museums in 1960, the year that the WHS materials were transferred to Doon. None of these letter prefixes was fixed, nor were the artifact categories, so each museum applied an idiosyncratic code. For example, although Gooding suggested using “F” to indicate textiles, the OPCF used “F” to indicate farm objects, “H” for household artifacts, “W” for weapons, “L” for large objects and “S” for small objects.¹⁰ As in many museums, this coding became troublesome as more and more artifacts, and potential sub-groupings were amassed; moreover, the cataloguing job often fell to volunteers as it did at Doon.¹¹

The tripartite numbering system had become the standard for museums throughout North America by the mid-1960s. The tripartite numerical code was based on the year of acquisition and donor. It rooted the object to accession (source) rather than typology. All old systems (usually a register book and catalogue lists) had to be revised and data re-entered into card files. For instance, in the early years of gathering artifacts for the village museum, members of the OPCF also attached their initials to the piece, and a number related to how many pieces they had individually collected for the museum that year. This system was outlined on the back of the gift form. Thus an item collected by Frank Page was temporarily numbered FEP 60-44. Eventually an artifact at Doon, such as a “pitch fork” had this type of number, plus three permanent different numbering systems “0-20; 10-9-0-F-2, and 57.1.1.”¹² One could no longer know from reading a tripartite accession number what the object was. Similarly, one would not know whether a “chair,” for example, was intellectually connected through this number to any other chairs in the collection.

One indirect value of this tripartite system was that applying it helped to de-classify museum categories based on function, and possibly widened the latitude for narrative development in museum presentation. Working through the cataloguing process also allowed museums to re-evaluate and reshape the collections by culling them of objects whose significance was questionable. This process of deaccessioning allowed redundant objects to be removed from the museum collection and returned to public circulation. Having had only a volunteer registrar working on Saturday mornings to catalogue the collection, Schenk was pleased to report to the board that at the end of the 1974 cataloguing project, three students had catalogued approximately 30 percent of the museum’s artifacts. This work, Schenk said would help bring the museum up to the standards set by the profession and the province.¹³ Supplemented by help under a Ministry of Natural Resources

¹⁰ “Policies and Procedures,” “Doon Registration,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 17, DHC.

¹¹ Doon had a volunteer Saturday mornings to catalogue artifacts.

¹² “Museum Registration,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 25, DHC.

¹³ “Curator’s Report, 1974,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 17, DHC.

“SWEEP” program, Doon, for the first time, was able to conduct an inventory of artifacts stored outside of the museum building in various parts of the village. The inventory turned up more than nine thousand unrecorded objects. Seventy percent of the artifacts were still uncatalogued, and as noted above, at least 40 percent of the museum collection had no records that could be used to identify the objects.¹⁴ Schenk informed the board this situation had been caused by the rapid acquisition of buildings and artifacts in previous years, which had not allowed enough time for recording and research into their use and origins.¹⁵ With such a large cataloguing backlog and without extra staff, he advised the board that future donations should be accepted only if they were worth viewing in displays.¹⁶

Communicating with the Visitor: Collections, Displays, and Narratives

Schenk tried to apply the exhibit design and interpretation advice disseminated by the museum profession and the museum advisors. He worked on developing narratives for the museum exhibits and for the village itself, saying he had redone some of the exhibits to present a “tour style traffic flow.”¹⁷ Redesigning all the museum exhibits was unaffordable, so Schenk prepared two guided tours for visitors of the display cases and room vignettes, a history tour and a life style tour. As earlier, the theme of progress underscored the history tour, as visitors were taken from displays of the fossils and archaeological material, Native settlement, to the arrival of settlers (Conestoga wagon exhibit) and to the Victorian period. The lifestyle tour examined daily life over the nineteenth century based on the artifacts on exhibit. Visitors were guided by a script underwritten by the idea of primitivism in the settlement period shifting into civilized culture of the late Victorian times.¹⁸

Schenk relied largely on volunteers for assistance in interpreting the village. Guide maps and conducted tours were vital to visitor communication, because the museum and village presented parts of the past, however haphazardly juxtaposed.¹⁹ By 1978, Schenk had devised a number of thematic tours for the village dealing with early agricultural processes and industry: pioneer survival, logging, harvesting, haying, transportation, energy, dairying, butchering and milling. Added to this was a village-wide tour called transition periods and lifestyles, plus a tour of the Hall of Fame, Township Hall and a guide to the natural history of the Doon area. The latter brought into use the large collection of stuffed birds in the museum basement.²⁰

Volunteer interpretive help was supplied by OPCF board members and local enthusiasts. Emily Seibert offered guided tours of her old home, the Gingerbread House, when it opened in 1972. She had no historical script per se, but drew on her personal relationship with the house to interpret it to schoolchildren and other visitors. They inadvertently received a message on the limits of historical restoration as she pointed out how different the re-creation was from the house when she occupied it.

They were always interested in the fact that the kitchen wasn't big enough [as the original]. Also, the fact that the wood box sitting in the kitchen was made by my father when he was 12 years old. He made this wood box, grandmother Seibert declared it was too small, never used it as a wood box; she used it as a blanket chest.

¹⁴ “Curator’s Report, 1975,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 17, DHC.

¹⁵ Author interview with Alf Schenk, 5 October 1989, Waterloo, Ontario.

¹⁶ “Curator’s Report, 1975,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 17, DHC.

¹⁷ “Curator’s Report, 1977,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 17, DHC.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ This term is used by Eugenio Donato, in “The Ruins of Memory: Archaeological Fragments and Textual Artifacts,” *MLN*, 93 (1978), 595

²⁰ “Exhibits master plan” (signed Schenk, 1978), OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 14, File 31, DHC.

And that is what my mother used it for too, a blanket chest. But when I gave it to the village, Alf Schenk turned it back into a wood box. . . . Some of them were quite interested in the fact that the furnishings were not the furnishings of my house.²¹

As before, several community groups including the Women's Institute, and local potters, spinners and weavers assisted with crafts and demonstrations, especially during the 'standard favourite' (as they were called) special events: the Scottish weekend, Pennsylvania-Dutch days, and Rural Corn Festival. These festivities enlarged to increase attendance figures and gate receipts. Wintario monies were matched to funding from Kitchener Chamber of Commerce and GRCA for the production of an extensive pioneer festival held over the Canada Day long weekends in 1976 and 1977, when the village became a flurry of traditional performance. Visitor numbers and gate receipts exceeded six times the numbers for the same weekend in previous years.²²

During the 1970s and early 1980s, local history museums in Ontario tightened their interpretation narratives to link to the themes of the school curriculum. This scheme was in wide use by many community museums by the late 1970s, serving to fulfill the museum purpose to educate and to augment attendance figures. In many museums, this involuntary participation of schoolchildren formed a significant percentage of annual visitors, especially in the off-season spring and fall months. Museums that were being developed at this time, such as the neighbouring Joseph Schneider Haus in Kitchener, specifically planned the interpretive narrative of the museum to merge with the school curriculum, guaranteeing an audience and practical community purpose. In 1982, its first full year of operation, approximately 4,000 school children participated in one of almost 200 school visits, comprising about 20 percent of Schneider House annual attendance. At the end of 1983, this figure had increased by 40 percent to over 5,500 children.²³ The bread and butter of many museums, planning and designing museum programs for school groups based on the museum collections and exhibits was a required course for the OMA Basic Certificate in Museum Studies. Such programs required a level of planned interpretation that Doon had not yet achieved.

The local school board initiated programs at Doon that were designed to interface with the school board curriculum. In 1979, the Waterloo County School Board conducted a pilot project investigating Doon as the site for a structured school program for its pioneer studies unit. Over a hundred busloads of schoolchildren had visited Doon each year previously, and although the GRCA had hired a booking receptionist for large groups, their visits were otherwise random and self-guided by their teachers or by Schenk when he was available. The village had no hired interpreters for this purpose. Neither did it have dedicated space for school groups during the winter months, as did other historic village museums such as Black Creek Pioneer Village, or local history museums like the refurbished Wellington County Museum. Planning for better audience development was a key component of the process of redesigning Doon that began in the 1970s.

²¹ Kitchener Public Library, Oral History Collection, Tape Number 168, pt. 1 Emily Seibert.

²² OPCF Minutes, Attendance at 1976 and 1977 July 1 Pioneer Festival Week ends was approximately 5300 and 6000 respectively; in 1975 attendance over the same weekend without special events was 785 OPCF funds, 996.163, Box 2, DHC.

²³ Memo Director of Historic Sites to Historic Sites Committee (HSC), 31 January 1984, HSC Minutes, RMW Archives.

External Pressures Begin

Making Sense of the Village: A Master Plan

The process of redesigning Doon began in 1973 and continued for a decade. As it had at the time of Taylor and Jones, the problem of classifying and arranging historical remnants on a large scale to present a concise narrative was central to these plans as they unfolded. However, unlike the internal pressure from Taylor for a master plan, the planning process in the 1970s and early 1980s was driven by external forces.

After operating for over a decade without a master plan for the village, the board was asked in 1973 to produce one for the planning department of the City of Kitchener; who wanted to know how changes in the village would affect city development. An initial plan was volunteered and submitted in 1973–1974 by George Rich, a professor in the Planning Department at the University of Waterloo who had participated in discussions around the architectural propriety of locating the Hall of Fame at the village. He assigned the task of developing a master plan to his senior planning students.

Subsequently referred to as the Rich Plan, the final document was directed at making sense of the confusion of materials in the museum and the lack of thematic structure in the village. Working with models of existing buildings, the planning students reorganized the village into thematic units separated by roads and landscaping: a museum area consisting of museum, township hall, railway station and hall of fame. It had a living farm of the last century centred on the Peter Martin House; a pioneer village with millpond (1820–1870); an Indian village; a Victorian village (1870–1890) and an open and separate village green. The report included planting recommendations and additions to augment each thematic area.²⁴

Opposition to this plan came from Schenk, and most eloquently from his contract research assistant, Terry Olaskey, a university history graduate. He argued that the pioneer and Victorian components should not be separated; and that a village would naturally incorporate these elements as it developed, saying it was unfeasible to establish two areas within the village that show different periods within Waterloo County.²⁵ Schenk and Olaskey suggested instead that the site as a whole be consolidated to represent a Waterloo County village from 1800 to 1900. Schenk compiled a list of buildings from Waterloo County that should be included such a plan, and called in Dorothy Duncan to speak to the board on the matter. She confirmed that at this point, it be “virtually impossible” to divide the village into different periods.²⁶ Such a plan went against the grain of thematic unity that prevailed in museum development at this time.

Notably, these objections were directed at the very ideas that had originally shaped the collecting of these buildings. Since the village had no overriding terminal date, buildings had been collected and characterized by the era of their original construction, such as the Victorian gingerbread house, a replica Victorian fire-hall, a pioneer log cabin, and an Indian encampment. In response to these reports, the board asked Schenk to delineate the dates, periods and lifestyles depicted by the buildings. The resulting list represented an attempt to schematize the otherwise uncharted historic

²⁴ “Report-Development Concept and Proposal for Doon Pioneer Village (U of W Student Plan), 1974,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 15, DHC.

²⁵ Terry Olaskey, “Proposals and Suggestions for the Planning of Doon Pioneer Village,” OPCF fonds, 996.163, “OPCF Papers,” Box 15, DHC.

²⁶ Correspondence 1976, Dorothy Duncan to Alf Schenk 4 August 1976, OPCF fonds, 996.163, “OPCF Papers,” Box 5, DHC.

resemblances portrayed by the buildings at Doon, but the categories created retained the same broad notions such as pioneer and Victorian. The groupings were idiosyncratic; buildings were classified as “most primitive, progress primitive, early pioneer, late pioneer, pioneer transition, Victorian influence, mid Victorian, late Victorian,” and so on. Added to these designations were the ethnic influences indicated in the architecture, history and reuse of the building, so that the recently acquired Peter Martin house was identified as early Pennsylvania German, while the Clan Donald house was late pioneer Scottish.²⁷ The Rich plan was not adopted, but planning ensued in response to capital funding requirements.

External Pressure: Wintario Approvals and Historical Accuracy

In 1977, the GRCA and OPCF jointly applied for \$88,500 in Wintario funding for the restoration of two historically significant buildings at Doon: The Peter Martin House, and Sam Bricker’s barn.²⁸ The GRCA and the Region of Waterloo provided the bulk of the matching funding to meet the total expected costs of \$177,000 for historical improvements on these two buildings, plus the Erb House, which had remained closed and onsite since the mid-1960s, and a gatehouse. The Wintario grant was denied, pending a study for this work by a restoration architect, and further delayed by yet another master plan study for the village and museum.²⁹

The restoration architect engaged to study the restoration of the Martin house, Bricker Barn, and Erb House was Peter John Stokes, who had consulted on the Guelph Museum building and was Ontario's foremost architectural historian at the time. He gave an uncompromising and uncomplimentary assessment of the work done on these buildings and on others he had seen, saying that the restoration work showed little preparation, no guidance, an absence of professional expertise and no coherence within a master plan. His observation was that Doon had grown “not entirely like Topsy, for there is a purpose to each part of the display, but with each new acquisition, not to mention memorial donations, the tangle impends.”³⁰

Simply put, Doon needed to be re-arranged toward a harmonious, historically authentic, whole. Stokes summarized his assessment of Doon by suggesting it was at a crossroads. He said it could maintain the status quo and consider the collection of buildings as entertainment without historical authenticity, or it could adopt a historical context for the village and set off in a new direction, in his words by “being true to history” both in physical restoration and interpretation. 31

Faced with this challenge, the OPCF retreated. It voted to maintain the status quo. Steering away from Stoke’s recommended path of historical authenticity, they passed two motions in response.

That the concept of the Village be thought of as a living outdoor pioneer community depicting the lifestyle of an early Waterloo County rural village and not as a restored

²⁷ Alf Schenk, untitled list of cut-off dates and lifestyles represented by the buildings at Doon, c. 1975, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 15, DHC.

²⁸ The Peter Martin House was an Old Order Mennonite House, built in 1813, and continuously occupied by the same family until purchase by the OPCF and GRCA. It was in the way of northern expansion of the City of Waterloo.

²⁹ Norm Oldfield of the GRCA asked Russell Cooper of Black Creek Pioneer Village for a copy of its terms of reference for such restoration projects, Russell Cooper to Norm Oldfield, 27 January 1978. “Correspondence, 1978 1 of 3,” OPCF fonds, 996.163 Box 6, , DHC.

³⁰ Peter John Stokes, "Doon Pioneer Village: A Preliminary Report," 1978, p.1, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 15 DHC.

³¹ Ibid.

historical pioneer village which would have to be terminated at a set date [and] That no-cut off date for the selective acceptance of artifacts be set. If necessary, commercial storage of these be arranged.³²

However, maintaining the status quo was overruled by a force greater than the OPCF: the province of Ontario.

A Master Plan for Doon: Order and Discipline

In 1978, the Ministry of Natural Resources announced that all conservation authorities had to prepare five-year master plans for the sites in their jurisdictions. The GRCA engaged a consultant firm with a consortium of historians, including architectural historians and other experts, to consider the future of its Doon Conservation Area. The final product, the *Doon Master Plan Study* (1979), was directed at managing the past and planning for the future of Doon. Stokes' report on the Martin House was a component of the document.

The report endorsed the museological philosophy that had developed in Ontario over the previous two decades, that of containment and control toward a clear narrative, and the perfection of historical verisimilitude. Thus the need to correct the lack of historical authenticity, narrative control and collections care at Doon was the guiding theme throughout the master plan document. Like Stokes' report, the *Doon Master Plan Study* was unremitting in its condemnation of the preservation and presentation of the past at the site, placing the responsibility on the OPCF board and staff for failing to define and control of Doon's historical identity and attendant goals and activities. The study's chief historical and museological experts included Kenneth McLaughlin, a public historian and professor in the History Department at the University of Waterloo, and Dorothy Duncan who advised the consultants on the operating standards that soon would be expected of all museums expecting provincial museum grants.

McLaughlin was familiar with current practices in the museum field through his work with the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation's Joseph Schneider Haus. He reasoned that Doon had to be assessed through the critical perspective of new standards in museology and architectural restoration, the expectations of government museum advisors and funding programs, and the state of other heritage resources in Ontario including historic villages.³³ Having done so, he charged that Doon had suffered so severely from misdirection that its viability as an historic site was in question. It had fallen behind in the rapid growth of professionalism in the museum field, and thus did not meet the expectations of either its professional or public audiences. In fact, he observed that Doon existed for the sake of its collections—"that all things were there" rather than for their interpretation.³⁴ The metaphoric spectre of the museum as attic clung to Doon: McLaughlin's experience of it was like "rummaging through an attic where good and bad, old and new," have no "perceptible difference in quality or quantity."³⁵

Coupled with the relative meaninglessness and disarray of the artifact collection was the collision of village components. Described by the consultants as a "melange of features that confronted, rather than invited, the visitor; the sum of Doon was regarded as considerably less than its

³² OPCF Minutes, 17 July 1978, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 2, DHC.

³³ *Doon Master Plan Study*, 8.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 17 "It can fairly be stated that the justification for Doon's existence has ceased to be for its educational, interpretive or restoration program; rather it is for the sake of its collections."

³⁵ *Ibid*.

parts.³⁶ Immediate action was called for to “improve, revise, rearrange and delete” many displays ... [for] “new and more appropriate displays.”³⁷ Equally important, was the removal of all incongruous displays and objects from the historical restorations, such as the tool display located in the general store and the telephone exhibit in the Post Office. The historic buildings could not promote historical veracity if they were housing incompatible materials.

In effect, the plan directed Doon to shift from the object-centred style that informed the museum exhibits and historic buildings. They called for the historic buildings to become authentic containers of living history with appropriately costumed interpreters. The Bricker barn, for instance, was to become an “operating” barn with historic livestock, not a place to display farm equipment. The Mohawk Encampment, singled out for being particularly egregious, was to be dispensed with entirely, since it comprised “a lack of historical research ... not compatible in an historical setting,³⁸ “inappropriate ... everything is wrong!”³⁹

The Report concluded that the diverse collections and buildings at Doon should be reordered to make a visit to the site more enjoyable and worthwhile for the visitor.⁴⁰ On presenting the report to the GRCA, the lead architect Don McIntyre summed up Doon’s greatest need: “order and discipline.”⁴¹ In attempting to reconfigure the existing “mélange” at Doon, the consultants produced a plan that echoed the Rich design of historic zones. It listed another nineteen buildings that would be needed to complete these zones; among them a gristmill, inn, pottery, and several more houses and shops. Stating that the label “pioneer village” was misleading, they recommended that the name of the site be changed, and that it become identified as a regional heritage centre. The report also recommended that new staff with museology degrees and OMA certification be hired to oversee these changes. The estimated cost to do this work was \$1,583,000. Attached to the report was the Ministry of Culture and Recreation planned “Standards for Community Museums.”

Audience levels were regarded as a constant measure of excellence by the OPCF, the GRCA and the consultants who produced the master plan study. The latter reported that declining attendance was symptomatic of the historical decay at the site, and that an annual average of 54,000 was extremely low for a centre with Doon’s resources. Actually, the study’s analysis of Doon’s falling attendance was imprecise. Citing a 10 percent decline in attendance between 1977 and 1978, it neither acknowledged the role of the 1977 pioneer festival in buoying figures for that year, nor competing attractions, nor bad weather. Nonetheless, the discussion on Doon’s “market” insisted that without high attendance figures, especially from school groups, Doon could not be considered to be fulfilling its purpose by ignoring such a large and important market.⁴² Marketing heritage was the corollary to salvaging it and justification for costs incurred with its preservation.

The receipt of the *Doon Master Plan Study* immediately resulted in a name change for the site, to address the historical dualities of the place. Within a year the OPCF appended “and Heritage Community” to “Doon Pioneer Village.” OPCF President, Peter Denis-Nathan explained that the expanded title would acknowledge the non-pioneer artifacts and activities already present at the site and would permit flexibility in accommodating future historical and demographic change in the

³⁶ Ibid, 3.

³⁷ Ibid, 22.

³⁸ Ibid.78.

³⁹ Ibid. 38.

⁴⁰ Ibid. 3.

⁴¹ “Doon Village setup rapped by architect” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 15 May 1980.

⁴² *Master Plan Study*, 21.

community.⁴³ Thus the idea of Doon embodied in this first official name change since its founding, reflected the past, current and potential historical positions.

The master plan submission coincided with the retirement of Schenk, and perhaps he was reassured that despite their criticisms, the consultants acknowledged the effort the OPCF had made to collect valuable historical materials at a time when no other individuals or organizations were prepared to do this.

Eleanor Currie filled Schenk's position in February 1980; she was the former curator of the Guelph Civic Museum, unseated when that museum restructured in 1978.⁴⁴ Her job description was extensive, calling for her to be responsible for "the authenticity of all Village activities," and in charge of the collections, exhibits, staff and artisan training. She had no assistant, although Schenk stayed on in a volunteer capacity as curator emeritus.⁴⁵ Although Currie had no professional certification in museum work, she had extensive work experience in local history museums, and was an expert on historical textiles. She voiced concerns about the state of the museum building and the need for the village to have a terminal date.⁴⁶ Along with the OPCF, she tried to address both the issues in the master plan study, and in the provincial standards for museums introduced in 1981.⁴⁷ To this end, the OPCF developed terms of reference for its seven working committees: planning and development, finance, programme, publicity, education and interpretation, volunteers, and a display and artifacts committee to further assist the curator and village operations.⁴⁸ However, Currie's job was short-lived; her position was eliminated in 1982 in the turn of events consequential to the master plan report.

Between 1980 and 1982, the village occupied an institutional purgatory while its future was considered in light of the *Doon: Master Plan Study*. The GRCA assisted more directly with school programs, but the OPCF found itself unable to get special grants from the Region to address some of the directives in the master plan. In 1980, the regional chairman refused a request for \$10,000 in funding from the Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation to buy, as the master plan recommended, some heritage livestock "to put some life" into the Sam Bricker barn. The chairman said there would be no "back-door funding" for Doon until its governance issues had been resolved.⁴⁹ Since the master plan had not addressed in detail the institutional structure and governance necessary to accommodate the extensive upgrading it recommended; these issues were addressed in a sequel consultant study.

Re-Framing Doon: Doon: an Institutional Plan

In 1981, the OPCF and the GRCA commissioned an institutional plan. *Doon: An Institutional Plan* was⁵⁰ prepared by David Scott, the author of *The Royal Ontario Museum: Guidelines for Planning*.⁵¹

⁴³ "New pioneer village name is a step toward the future" *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 24 September 1980.

⁴⁴ She felt unfairly dealt with at Guelph, and launched a media campaign to support her case.

⁴⁵ Job Description "Curator – Doon Pioneer Village" in OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 2, DHC. GRCA staff assisted with programs on some occasions, as did the OPCF committee members. Most of the other staff at Doon were contract employees hired through seasonal job creation programs.

⁴⁶ OPCF Minutes 1980- 1982, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 2, DHC.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ "Terms of Reference for Doon Pioneer Village and Heritage Community Committees," OPCF Minutes 1980-1982, OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 2, DHC.

⁴⁹ "Waterloo Regional Heritage Foundation Minutes, March 25, 1980, RMW Archives.

⁵⁰ David H. Scott Consultants, *Doon: An Institutional Plan* (Guelph, Ontario: David H. Scott Consultants Limited, 1981.) in OPCF fonds, 996.163, Box 14, DHC.

The Doon plan's core objective was to recommend structures, programs and policies to revise Doon to become a museum that would in Scott's terms, "couple museological integrity with popular appeal."⁵²

A New Purpose: Seeking Museological Integrity and Popular Appeal

In his proposal, Scott followed the provincial museum's advisors guidelines and standards. He began by writing a new statement of purpose for the newly named "Doon Pioneer Village and Heritage Community" and outlined the basic principles, policies and programs for the site. No longer was Doon to be a memorial to the pioneers of Ontario; its new purpose was:

To preserve and explain the cultural heritage of the Waterloo Region from the time of the first settlement to the First World War through the collection, preservation and display of buildings and artifacts, and through activities designed to heighten public understanding of this heritage.⁵³

Scott's "basic concept principles for Doon" were based upon the public attitudes toward museums reported in *Museums and the Canadian Public*, the study the Federal Government had commissioned in 1972 to direct its National Museum Policy of making heritage more accessible. The best mix for attracting the public was, reportedly, one that combined diversity, authenticity and learning. Thus Scott recommended that Doon become both a museum experience, "in which authentic artifacts highlight exhibits ... to provide an integrated picture," and that the village setting become a "sensory experience," offering a wide range of participatory and family recreational opportunities.⁵⁴ The shift from object to public as the museum client was becoming complete at Doon, at least on paper.

Scott prepared policy statements for every operational area of Doon, in keeping with his revised statement of purpose and operating principles. His policy for the museum collections stated that Doon would upgrade these through judicious acquisition of artifacts of "intrinsic quality and historical or cultural value," and disposal of items deemed redundant or inappropriate to the new statement of purpose. Scott went on to reinforce the current principles of museum communication in his exhibits policy: exhibits must convey a clear message or story, be informative and stimulating, address multiple levels of knowledge, be understandable and coherent, and be historically accurate. The education policy stated that the site would aim for 25,000 student visits per year. His plan called for a new interpretive centre/museum based on Ministry guidelines, and which, with the inclusion of the costs recommended in the master plan for the village, would cost about \$7,460,000. He also provided a scaled-down version at \$3,960,000.⁵⁵ Regardless of option, he stated, Doon needed a system of governance, a new Board and a new director. He stated confidently that, if Doon fulfilled the recommendations of the report it could draw about 100,000 visitors per year.⁵⁶

⁵¹ David H. Scott Consultants, *The Royal Ontario Museum: Guidelines for Planning*, (Guelph, Ontario: David H. Scott Consultants 1975)

⁵² *Doon: An Institutional Plan*: 17.

⁵³ "Ibid. 20.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid. 48-51.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 27.

The Regional Municipality of Waterloo Response

Scott maintained that Doon's new governing authority should be neither the GRCA nor a municipality; he preferred the model of a non-profit organization, and he held that position during the subsequent discussions of his report. His chief opponent to this idea was Ken Seiling who argued that Doon should be rehabilitated and operated by the Region of Waterloo. As OMA president, director of the Wellington County Museum, mayor of Woolwich Township, and a member of Waterloo Regional Council, Seiling was uniquely placed professionally and politically to assess the situation and to lobby for a future for Doon. In fact, Seiling had prepared a discussion paper in the spring of 1980 for the Regional Council supporting recommendations, which were made in the 1979 Report of the Waterloo Region Review Commission that the Region assume responsibility for the ownership and operation of Doon.⁵⁷ In the discussion paper, he listed the reasons for municipal responsibility for Doon: the inadequacy of the current operation; the current risk to the collections at Doon, perceived to be of national significance; and the impending community museums policy for Ontario.

The lack of adequately trained staff and funds has resulted in an operation which is viewed as greatly inadequate by provincial staff, museum personnel and many people interested in heritage matters. ... The Village and Museum clearly will not meet the criteria expected to be published in the new museum policy and will require heavy capital outlays.⁵⁸

To support his case on the advantage of municipal museums, Seiling cited the operation of the historic sites department by the City of Hamilton, under an innovative director and former president of the OMA, Marten Lewis. Seiling proposed in detail a similar organizational structure and a timeline that would transfer ownership of the collections and buildings to the Region. The transfer would result in the OPCF becoming an advisory committee to the operation. A new department would be created with several staff positions to fill the responsibilities formerly held by Doon's curator and administrator. He was forthright in his assessment that the costs of such a change would be high, but also demonstrated that Waterloo Region currently had capacity to raise the funds. Its per capita levy for museums of \$.35 was much lower than those of six other municipal areas in Ontario, which ranged from \$.51 to \$1.85. Moreover, by 1980, the Region provided almost half of the operating revenue for Doon, and Seiling argued that the Region should have some control over this investment.⁵⁹ His recommendations were endorsed by the six other mayors in the Region who were unanimous in their agreement that the "only way to assure adequate funding and a continuing commitment to Doon was to have Regional Council in direct control."⁶⁰

With GRCA agreement, and the OPCF accepting an advisory role, the ownership of the artifacts, buildings and land at Doon Pioneer Village and Heritage Community were sold to the Region of Waterloo on January 1, 1983 for \$2.00. The village was on the threshold of change, literally and figuratively.

⁵⁷ Ken Seiling, "Discussion Paper: Waterloo Regional Historic Sites" April 1980, OPCF fonds, "OPCF Papers," "Discussions with Region re Takeover," Box 2, DHC.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* 1

⁵⁹ The Region provided \$80,000 in 1980; the GRCA \$30,540, and the Province, \$8,000.

⁶⁰ "Chairman's Report to Regional Council" Minutes, Regional Council of Waterloo, 13 May 1982, RMW Archives.

Perfecting the Past: Changes at Doon to 1985

Perfecting the Past

If the world were perfect there would never be the need of historic site redevelopment ... Well, the world is not perfect.⁶¹

Perfecting the imperfect world of Doon was the mission undertaken by the Region of Waterloo and its staff, when the Region purchased Doon in 1983. The Region sought to restore it to a form of museological dignity that “would meet modern standards and increase the programming potential of the site.”⁶² This work required a revision of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo Act by the Ontario Legislature, the creation of a new municipal department of historic sites with qualified staff, a large infusion of money and the continued use of outside consultants.⁶³

The site became part of a large municipal government system and now had two historic sites committees to oversee it and direct recommendations to council. One was a standing committee of elected councillors—Historic Sites Committee (HSC)—and the other was an advisory committee of members drawn from the OPCF and the WRHF—Historic Sites Advisory Committee (HSAC). The standing committee was responsible for forwarding recommendations on policy formulation, departmental organization, staffing, and budgeting, while the advisory committee dealt with matters such as formulating basic philosophy, objectives, programs, operations, public relations and so on.

The staffing structure followed the organizational model proposed by Seiling: a director of historic sites, and three curators, one for Joseph Schneider Haus (which the Region had taken over from the WRHF at the same time) and two for Doon. The curatorial positions at Doon consisted of a curator of collections and a curator of interpretation and public programs reflecting a “two-pronged” approach to its development.⁶⁴ All of these positions were filled by individuals from outside the Region, but from within the museum profession.

In February of 1983, Marten Lewis began work as the Region’s first director of the Historic Sites Department. He had held the same position for the city of Hamilton, where he oversaw the operations of Dundurn Castle, the Hamilton Military Museum, and Whitehearn historic house. As a former president of the OMA, he was also versed in the expectations of local museums from both the province and the profession. In this capacity, he knew Ken Seiling well, because they had worked ‘hand-in-glove’ on the OMA executive during the 1970s to further the interests of community museums and their workers.⁶⁵ Even his personal interests supported this work; he and his wife owned a theatre production company, and he was familiar with audience development and niche marketing. They also restored old houses. Lewis’s mission was to bring Doon up to expected museum standards.

⁶¹ Carl Benn, “Transforming the Past: Redevelopment and Re-restoration at Doon Heritage Crossroads” *Museum Quarterly* 15:1 (March 1986): 16-22.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 17.

⁶³ In addition to Carl Benn’s essay cited above, Alison Jackson has given a brief history of the site explaining the transfers of authority from the OPCF to GRCA to Region of Waterloo, “Progress at Doon Continues” *Waterloo Historical Society Annual Report Volume 71* (1983), 11-14. I have discussed the differing historical and museological approaches of the OPCF and the professional staff at Doon, subsequent to the Region of Waterloo takeover in 1983. Mary Tivy, “Dreams and Nightmares: Changing Visions of the Past at Doon Pioneer Village” *Ontario History* XCIV:1 (Spring 2002), 79-99.

⁶⁴ Term used by Martin Lewis. Memo, Director of Historic Sites to HSC, 2 October 1984, RMW Archives.

⁶⁵ Term used by Ken Seiling, author interview with Ken Seiling, January 27, 2006.

He informed the HSAC that Doon was years behind Joseph Schneider Haus and every other open-air museum in the province in its museological achievements, and would need a substantial commitment to improvement.⁶⁶

Toward this end, Lewis hired extremely capable and complementary curators to develop the historical and public operations of Doon. Carl Benn, hired as curator of collections, was an historian, former head of interpretation at Montgomery's Inn, and past editor of the OMA journal, as well as a theologian. An intelligent and assiduous crusader for historical integrity in museum restoration and interpretation, his articles on the re-restoration of Doon and the need for social history frameworks for living history sites convey his principles for restaging Doon.⁶⁷ His counterpart was the curator of interpretation and programmes, Patricia MacDonald. An art historian, MacDonald had experience with the public, the arts, and museums in her previous roles as director of the Guelph Arts Council, education officer at Guelph Civic Museum, and interpreter at the Grange, Toronto. While Benn focused on the village restoration, MacDonald worked on developing interpretation programs and exhibits. Assistants for these positions were hired in 1984. As a team, they attempted to resurrect Doon.

Doon: A New Agenda; A New Past; A New Market

Setting an agenda for Doon to meet its museological, historical and public responsibilities was the centre of sessions with the historic sites advisory committee and museum staff in 1983 and 1984. An immediate moratorium was placed on acquiring buildings in order to assess the existing situation.⁶⁸ Carl Benn identified the areas that would require capital and attention: lack of focus, confusing mix of restored, unrestored and mixed-use buildings, improper and inadequate vegetation, visitor circulation and amenities, public areas, public perception and the need for a new museum building. Addressing these called for a re-organization of the site into conceptual areas, as previous reports had recommended. These areas were now identified as "a passive history" area (picnic facilities), Willow Green (performance and events area), a museum envelope and a typical Waterloo County Village, re-staged to the year 1914.⁶⁹

1914: A New Past

Benn arrived at 1914 as a preferred cut-off date for the village, a date that was four years earlier than that of 1918, which Scott had recommended. Benn produced a detailed report in September 1983 arguing the appropriateness of this date in historical, symbolic, and practical terms. Historically, it was apogee of the "unique: German character of Waterloo County. The date allowed for the inclusion of new technologies of the early 20th century "in contact and in competition with the old."⁷⁰ Ever the historian, Benn added that "issues centred on the meaning of nationhood make 1914 a critical time in the region's history."⁷¹

⁶⁶ Memo, Lewis to HSC, 15 November 1983, HSC Minutes, RMW Archives.

⁶⁷ Carl Benn, "Transforming the Past" and "Living History Lies and Social History" *Museum Quarterly* 16:2 (Summer 1987) 3, 28.

⁶⁸ HSAC Minutes, 26 July 1983, RMW Archives.

⁶⁹ Memo Marten Lewis (Prepared by Carl Benn) to HSAC, 11 December 1984, RMW Archives.

⁷⁰ Carl Benn, "Discussion paper on a restoration date for Doon Pioneer Village," 4, "Curator's Files," DHC.

⁷¹ Ibid.

He wrote that symbolically 1914 represented the maturation of the Canadian identity and the shift from a predominantly rural country to an urban one. Parallels could be drawn, Benn suggested, between the trauma, upheavals and technological changes of 1914 and the present day, making the site more meaningful to the public. Practically speaking, 1914 allowed more of Doon's non-pioneer collection to be maintained, including the steam engine and train station. It was also more accessible for research needs. And as Benn put it, "Showing life during a period of tension and anxiety such as 1914 can lead to a more sophisticated presentation for the museum and a more mature learning experience for the public."⁷² As he noted later, in tandem with these altruistic concerns was the necessity of marketing the site.⁷³

Its marketing strengths, Benn argued, lay in the time frame, which would be unique in Ontario's historic village museums. It would prevent overlapping with Joseph Schneider House, which had an interpretive period lodged in the 1850s, and would stress the pre-industrial pioneer. He identified the pre-World War 1 era as evocative, romantic and as having a strong draw for people whose family memories went back that far. He said that the poignancy of the era could be exploited to excite people's imaginations and be more easily tied to their personal histories than a comparably "neutral period."⁷⁴

Benn listed seventeen programming possibilities based on 1914 as a terminal date, including theatrical minutes such as a temperance meeting, an army recruiting office scenario and a hydro show. He summarized his proposal, stating that by adopting a strict approach to this focused cut-off date the site could become a leader in historical research and present the past without ambiguity or confusion providing the "best museum experience possible."⁷⁵ In terms of audience development, staging the past to 1914 would avoid duplication with other sites.

Benn's intellectual approach to the village re-creation contrasted with the moral imperative of pioneer preservation that had characterized the work of the early members of the OPCF and their staff. He was an uncompromising and stalwart advocate for historical integrity at every level as the principle for redeveloping Doon, stating that Doon's development program was aimed at rectifying a "severe lack of historical integrity in the past."⁷⁶ Benn preferred to speak of the re-restoration not as a village, but as a "village environment," since the buildings would not be placed in their exact original context nor would they be fully representative.

It would be false to suggest that we are presenting a 'recreated village.' This is perhaps a fine distinction, but it is important that museums avoid misleading the public. In a way, Doon's historical area could be considered to be a very large outdoor exhibit.⁷⁷

Reconstructing the Recreated Village

Implementing Benn's plan required making deletions and additions to the current complement of buildings at Doon. Contingent on funding, building availability and the programming needs of the site, Benn suggested the following as village components: two farms (the Martin House, depicting an

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Benn, "Transforming the Past": 18.

⁷⁴ Benn, "Discussion paper on a restoration date for Doon Pioneer Village":4.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 7.

⁷⁶ Memo, Carl Benn to Marten Lewis, 8 November 1984, HSC Minutes, 29 November 1984, RMW Archives.

⁷⁷ Benn, "Transforming the Past," 18.

Old Order Mennonite farm) and the Pennsylvania-German House (showing “progressive farming”); four houses to represent the ethnic and social diversity of rural Waterloo County in 1914; commercial buildings consisting of a hotel, general store, post office/harness shop and perhaps a shoemaker (they could reuse the Detweiler weavery for this purpose); and artisan shops such as a blacksmith shop and cooper’s shop. If it were moved to a better location beside Schneider’s Creek, Benn argued that the sawmill could be left closed to demonstrate the problem of industrial decline in early twentieth century rural Ontario. Finally, he recommended that the institutional influence of church and state be represented by the Freeport church, a school and the Township Hall, which needed to be brought into the village proper. A hotel or large building would also have to be moved on site, as would a school, and a new blacksmith’s shop and cooperage. Buildings of questionable merit and doubtful future included the McArthur cabin, the fur trader’s cabin, and the butcher’s shop and the print shop, which were to be deaccessioned. This tentative plan required further historical research to re-dress the village properly. A researcher’s position as an assistant to Benn was budgeted for 1984.

Elizabeth MacNaughton,⁷⁸ hired as researcher that year, was given the task of preparing reports on several aspects of life in Waterloo County in 1914, to provide a historical basis for future restoration and interpretation.⁷⁹ The first of these studies examined the architecture, contents and function of general stores in Waterloo County during this time, and guided the re-restoration of the 1840 store, which the OPCF had moved to the site and restored in 1960.

Benn argued that even with an accurate physical re-restoration of the store, historical integrity could be put at risk by the questionable interpretive activities performed within. Selling goods to the public in the store, as the OPCF had done, would disrupt visitors’ experience of the past because the goods would appeal to their more immediate desires of the present “to purchase goods.” This would compromise Doon’s main purpose, that of interpreting Waterloo Region’s history to its best ability by interfering with the fulfilment of its museological responsibilities.⁸⁰ Benn’s experience indicated that schoolchildren especially would be distracted from the historical lesson by their anticipation of buying souvenirs or candy.⁸¹ Retailing in the general store ceased.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth MacNaughton is referred to in other places in the thesis as Liz Hardin.

⁷⁹ Elizabeth MacNaughton, *Preliminary Report on the General Store Re-restoration, Doon Pioneer Village* (Kitchener: Regional Municipality of Waterloo, 1984).

⁸⁰ Memo, Carl Benn to Marten Lewis, 28 November 1984, HSC Minutes, 29 November 1984, RMW Archives.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*



9.2 Marten Lewis, Elizabeth MacNaughton, Carl Benn, General Store re-restoration 1984.
K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library.

The funding to do this intensive re-working of Doon came largely from the Region. When the Region took control of Doon, the site's operating budget immediately jumped by almost 30 percent from \$284,000 in 1982, to over \$364,000 in 1983, \$469,000 in 1984 and \$520,000 in 1985.⁸² Capital budgets ballooned from slightly over \$40,000 in 1982 to \$250,000 in 1984.⁸³ Initial costs for work in 1984–1985 on the re-restoration of the general store and Clan Donald house were estimated at \$94,000, with an additional \$25,000 for refurbishing the landscaping. Other improvements included the cost of new parking lot at \$40,000.⁸⁴ However, by mid-1984, the general store capital costs for re-restoration were almost double the original budgeted amount of \$47,000, and the advisory and standing committees were beginning to realize, as had both the GRCA and the OPCF before them, that restoring and re-restoring Doon to standards of historical exactitude was an expensive undertaking.⁸⁵

⁸² Based on figures in, OPCF funds, 996.163, Box 10, DHC, and “General Ledger Historic Sites Summaries” RMW Archives

⁸³ It is difficult to pinpoint the exact amount in capital expenditures during the GRCA period, since some operations and expenses were subsumed under other categories, such as “maintenance.” The line item “historical improvements” showed a 1981 actual expense of less than \$2500; it appears that the increase in the 1982 budget was linked to a \$50,000 donation from the OPCF. At the time of this writing these GRCA records were not available for review. HSC Minutes, 23 February 1984, RMW Archives; OPCF funds, 996.163, Box 10, “Budgets 1961- 1982,” DHC.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ The cost of re-restoring the general store was about \$88,000. See for instance, Memo, Commissioner of Finance to Regional Council, 13 September 1984; HSC Minutes, 23 February 1984, 4 September 1984, RMW Archives.



9.3 Re-restored General Store at Doon, c.1985.

Confirming a terminal date for Doon required three levels of approval, and it took two years before Benn's proposal received consent from Regional Council. Some committee members were confused by dual museum/village nature of the site and worried that limiting the past would likewise limit its attraction to tourists.⁸⁶ Despite Benn's suggestion that the cut off date would allow war issues to be part of the interpretive program, this subject was vetoed by the historic sites committees, which decided that the site would portray a village only up to the eve of the First World War.⁸⁷ Memories were long regarding the civic dissent in Waterloo County when the loyalties of ethnic Germans were questioned at the outbreak of the war, and the name Berlin changed to Kitchener to put such doubts to rest. It was decided that it was impolitic to portray or discuss issues such as these with the public, many of whom, were descendents of local German immigrants. Thus the terminal date for Doon was actually July 28, 1914, and the cyclical year represented in seasonal interpretation programmes was August 1913 to July 1914.⁸⁸

Re-Naming the Past

Redefining Doon called for re-naming the site, as it was patently no longer a pioneer village. Renaming the site to capture this new 1914 image was a lengthy process because the name needed to reflect the purpose of the site, to attract visitors, and to meet the criteria of the various levels of approval. Some members of the WHRA wanted to retain the name "Doon Pioneer Village" despite the rationale for its removal.⁸⁹ At one point, the Advisory Committee proposed "Doon 1914" but this

⁸⁶ HSC Minutes, 18 June 1985, RMW Archives.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Tom Reitz "On the eve of a war that never happens: the museum's role in historical myth-making and debunking," Paper presented at OMA Annual Conference, 18 October 2002.

⁸⁹ 21 February 1984, HSAC Minutes, RMW Archives.

suggestion was vetoed by the Historic Sites standing committee; a committee member said the name had no tourist appeal. This committee decided it did not want a date attached to the site name.⁹⁰ A columnist for the *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* brought the problem before the public by suggesting non-starters: “Doon-Not-Quite-Pioneer-Village” and “Doon-Just-Before-the-War-Settlement.”⁹¹ Finally, in 1985, the name “Doon Heritage Crossroads” was accepted by all levels of approval: staff, both historic sites committees, and regional council.

As chair of the Historic Sites Advisory Committee, Alison Jackson explained to the Historic Sites Committee, that this name was chosen to “improve Doon’s identification.”⁹² She and Lewis deconstructed its components for the standing committee: “Doon” was retained because of its history and familiarity, the term “heritage” for its inclusive meaning and commitment to the multicultural and architectural heritage of Waterloo Region. “Crossroads” signified the physical location of the site at the crossroads of the Grand River, the Huron Road and the Grand Trunk Railroad. She said that symbolically, the term crossroads represented a place where “the visitor of the present meets the people and places of the past.”⁹³

The Past in the Museum Building

Deliberations over what past should be presented in the village were paired with discussions on the need for, and components of, a new regional museum building. Lewis explained that such a building would collect and exhibit “the gamut ... from the natural history of the area right through to 1914 and beyond.”⁹⁴ Benn spelled out specifically how the museum would create social history narratives in chronological exhibits on Native culture, immigrants, settlement, urban development, industrialization, commerce and social life, following the now-accepted supremacy of narrative over artifact. “The new museum building will cover the history of the Region over a longer span of time and will, like the village, normally use artefacts to tell rather than be the story” (the emphasis is Benn’s).⁹⁵ This was the standard structure of gallery narrative redevelopment in other communities, such as the Guelph Civic Museum, discussed in the previous chapter.

Anticipating the eventual demolition of the existing museum building, in 1984, Lewis and his wife made stopgap improvements in the museum exhibits to show to both the historic sites committees and the public that the face of Doon was changing.⁹⁶ The Voice of the Past Native exhibit was dismantled and replaced with the Leroy automobile. A new central exhibit in the museum gallery focused on early agriculture equipment used in Waterloo County throughout the annual farming cycle. It echoed the exhibit The Farmer’s Year installed at the Farmer’s Museum in Cooperstown in 1958, designed by Per Guldbeck under the direction of Louis C. Jones. Reviewers of The Farmer’s Year described it as “one of the most brilliant evocations of the past ever achieved in an American

⁹⁰ HSAC Minutes, 27 March 1984, HSC Minutes, 3 April 1984, 7 May 1985, 18 June 1985, RMW Archives.

⁹¹ “Pioneer Village needs a new name,” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record* 23 May 1985.

⁹² HSC Minutes, 2 July 1985, RMW Archives.

⁹³ HSC Minutes, 2 July 1985, RMW Archives, “So long Village: Hello Crossroads” *Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 12 July 1985.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Benn and MacDonald, Undated memo “Areas of interest at Doon Pioneer Village,” Curator’s files, DHC. It read: Galleries could be divided in a sequence such as: native culture in Waterloo Region, arrival of immigrants, settlement, the development of urban centres, industrialization and commercial activity and society in Waterloo County.

⁹⁶ Since this exhibit was designed to be impermanent, there are no photos of it in the DHC archives.



museum,”⁹⁷ and the first interpretive history exhibit that went “well beyond the appeals of Arthur Parker.”⁹⁸ Whether coincidental or purposeful, the exhibit that the Lewises installed at Doon also showed the Waterloo County farmer’s year in a narrative of seasonal cycles, based on clusters of agricultural machinery and accessories.⁹⁹

A New Visitor Market

9.4 Capturing a new market. Black Powder Rendezvous, at Doon c. 1984. *K-W Record Negative Collection, University of Waterloo Library*

Throughout this period of costly reconstruction at Doon, attendance figures were regarded as a vital indicator of the site’s improving performance, and a rationale for the incurring costs in its overhaul. To target an untapped audience, Doon informed schools that education programs had been reassessed and

revamped, to present “more accurately and authentically” a past organized around 1914.¹⁰⁰ A Christmas program introduced to schools in 1983 drew almost 1,000 children and their teachers. Other village school programs brought in over 3500 students, resulting in a 68 percent increase in school attendance during the 1983–1984 school year.¹⁰¹ A new roster of programs was designed for phasing in over three years. As well, the curator of interpretive programming at Doon revised the special events portfolio, in an attempt to integrate it more historically with the village re-creation. The 1984 opening festivities of Doon, and subsequent summer activities stressed the new Edwardian character of Doon.¹⁰²

In another effort to attract more visitors, staff attended bus and consumer shows in the eastern United States and across Ontario to further develop Doon as a destination for tour buses, and day-trippers.¹⁰³ Despite these initiatives, overall attendance continued to drop in 1984 to 29,764 and in 1985 to 29,373.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Wilcomb Washburn, cited in Kulik, “Designing the Past,” 23.

⁹⁸ Kulik, *ibid.*

⁹⁹ Tom Reitz, interview with author, 23 February, 2006.

¹⁰⁰ “Education Programs Brochure” c. 1985, DHC.

¹⁰¹ “1983/84 “Educational Report,” HSC Minutes, 20 November 1984, RMW Archives.

¹⁰² Patricia MacDonald, interview by author, Guelph, Ontario, 7 May 1990.

¹⁰³ Memo Marten Lewis to HSC, HSC Minutes, 2 October 1984, RMW Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Data provided by Liz McNaughton, DHC, 25 May 2006.

Regional Commitments and Future Promises

The Region's investment in Doon continued to increase as the province's commitment flagged. In June 1984, provincial cutbacks forced a change in the subsidy formula for local museums. From that point forward, provincial grants to community museums were reformulated to be a percentage of the previous year's grant. This move not only disassembled the qualitative basis of standards funding, it also put Doon, whose expenditures were expected to rise exponentially over the next four years, at a distinct disadvantage. As the Region of Waterloo's Commissioner of Finance noted, compliance with the Ministry's standards had contributed to the Region's decision to operate Doon, and had necessitated sizeable increased expenditures. "It is rather ironic that the Ministry should force, in some cases, major upgrading of facilities and programs while at the same time virtually stagnating the grants which are now conditional upon this upgrading."¹⁰⁵

Building a new museum was especially critical for collections care; it was thought that without this facility Doon would lose its (now limited) provincial grant. In 1984, the five-year capital development plans included a new museum building of approximately 40,000 square feet with construction beginning in 1986, at a cost of 4.5 million dollars.¹⁰⁶ By 1985, this construction date had been pushed back to 1988.

Despite these funding drawbacks and delays, by 1985, Doon was poised for a reincarnation as an astutely accurate historic site and regional museum complex. With an operating budget that had almost doubled in the three years since the Region had assumed the site, it now ranked second only to Black Creek Pioneer Village in funding dollars of all the museums on file in the provincial grant program.¹⁰⁷ Its capital plan allocated funding for the re-restoration of a building every year, and the opening of a new museum and orientation centre in 1988. With this financial support, a master plan at hand and professional museologists at the helm, and a full-time staff position assigned to historical research,¹⁰⁸ Doon seemed ready to be transformed into a regional museum and historic village that successfully met the standards of museological integrity with the expectations of popular appeal.

These changes at Doon were the product of a new professionalism in local museums that raised the expectations of institutional performance in collections care and historical interpretation, enforced through a funding program that advised and funded museums toward improving their operating standards. The Ministry's goal of furthering municipal responsibility and lessening provincial dependence was achieved quickly at Doon, because the Region's local politicians fully supported rehabilitating Doon under the leadership of Ken Seiling. As the province's contribution to Doon's operating budget began to decrease in comparison with the Regional allotment, the heritage conserved and expressed at Doon became primarily both sustained by and vulnerable to this local authority, rather than the province.

¹⁰⁵ Memo Commissioner of Finance to HSC "Museum Operating Grant Regulations," "Museum Operating Grant Regulations, HSC Minutes, 2 October 1984," RMW Archives.

¹⁰⁶ HSC Minutes, 24 January, 1984, RMW Archives.

¹⁰⁷ 1985 Museum Operating Grant Files RG 47-41, box 2, AO

¹⁰⁸ The only one of its kind in the museums in the provincial operating grant program.



9.5 Doon's iconic Conestoga wagon replica now with municipal logo. *K-W Record Negative Collection*
University of Waterloo Library.

Conclusion

In 1938, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics pointed out the potential of Canadian museums in the text of its report on museums in Canada. "I believe that the public museum...has before it today an opportunity for educational service which, if accepted, will revolutionize its position in the community and the functions of its staff."¹⁰⁹

This thesis addresses the changing nature of the local history museum model in Ontario and fills a void in the understanding of the intellectual and institutional milieu of local history museums, also called, community museums, in Ontario. It demonstrates that like museums elsewhere, the local history museum in Ontario was indeed revolutionized in the last half of the twentieth century, through the growth of a professional body and increased federal and provincial government funding for these local endeavours. The Province of Ontario in particular, continually supported local history museums through funding and advisory services, while declining to consolidate museum efforts into a provincial museum of history, or a network of area history museums.

This revolution had a major outcome. Funding and professionalism permitted the upgrading of these small institutions from 'community attics' to historical experiences, and collections and exhibits were reconstructed as the museum shifted its emphasis from the historical object toward the response of the public to its interpretation. As the local history museum professionalized, the costs of its operation expanded, and many of these museums changed governance from volunteer organizations to local authorities.

The literature review establishes the place of local history museums within the wider discourse on the historical and philosophical foundations of these institutions. In the initial phases of this study; the second half of the 19th century to 1945, a scientific model for assessing museum collections dominated in Ontario as it did elsewhere in the West. The reductionist method that underscored the scientific approach had a limited application for history museums even though collecting in both these types of museums was shaped by ideas of linear progress.

Local history museums in Ontario developed largely from the energies of local historical societies, such as the York Pioneers, bent on collecting the past to honour local heroes, Loyalists and community founders. Completely voluntary, these societies and their museums were heavily influenced by their leaders such as Henry Scadding and others who played key roles in the success of these organizations.

Standards for museum work developed in the large science museums that dominated the museum world in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While science museums such as the Canadian Institute and the Ontario Provincial Museum, under the direction of David Boyle used taxonomy and classification to mirror the natural state of the world, history museums had no equivalent framework for organizing collections as real-world referents. As this thesis has shown, although Boyle had an international profile as a museum curator, his adherence to the scientific method was less useful for the local history museums he advised. Often organized without apparent design, by the early 20th century a deductive method was used to categorize and display history collections into functional groups based on manufacture and use.

¹⁰⁹ *Museums in Canada*, Dominion Bureau of Statistics (Ottawa: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Education Branch, 1938), 2.

By the mid-twentieth century an inductive approach for interpreting history collections in exhibits was promoted to make these objects more meaningful and interesting to museum visitors, and to justify their collection. This approach relied on the recontextualization of the object through two methods: text-based, narrative exhibits; and verisimilitude, the recreation of the historical environment in which the artifact would have been originally used.

These exhibit practices became part of the syllabus of history museum work as it professionalized in Ontario during the mid-twentieth century, almost a full century after the science museum. Recontextualizing artifacts eventually dominated the process of recreating the past at local history museums. Objects were consigned to placement within textual storylines in order to impart accurate meaning. At its most elaborate, artifacts were recontextualized into houses, and buildings into villages, wherein the public could fully immerse themselves in a tableau of the past. Throughout this process, the dynamic of recontextualization to enhance visitor experience subtly shifted the historical artifact from its previous position in the museum as an autonomous relic of the past, to one subordinate to context.

Although presented as absolute, the narratives and reconstructions formed by these collecting and exhibiting practices were contingent on a multitude of shifting factors, such as accepted museum practice, physical, economic and human resources available to the museum operation, and prevailing beliefs about the past and community identity. This thesis exposes the wider field of museum practice in Ontario community history museums over a century while the case study of Doon Pioneer Village shows in detail the conditional qualities of historical reconstruction in museum exhibits and historical restoration.

Epilogue: Acts of Curators, God, the Province and Regional Council

The *Doon Master Plan Study* identified a crisis and set in motion a series of actions that signify a turning point at Doon. Since then Doon has been reconfigured in name and almost every aspect of its operation. From a nineteenth century Ontario pioneer village, Doon Pioneer Village was re-thought, re-designed and re-named into Doon Heritage Crossroads, "where the 20th century begins in Waterloo County."¹ Instead of a national historic shrine about rural Ontario pioneer life Doon has become "a typical, rural Waterloo County crossroads village of 1914" depicting "people in transition as they face social problems such as rural depopulation and WWI."² With secure governance and first-rate museologists, Doon seemed poised for complete redevelopment by 1988.

However, the changes at Doon did not unfold completely as anticipated. Personnel changes occurred: Carl Benn returned to live in Toronto in 1985 and Tom Reitz, a heritage professional with a graduate degree in historical restoration, extensive experience in historical archaeology, and a Waterloo County pedigree, filled his position. Martin Lewis left in early summer of 1988 and was subsequently replaced by David Newlands, a visionary with an international background in museum work in Canada, Britain and Africa. He had both feet placed squarely in the museum profession: in this capacity, he had been executive director of the Ontario Museum Association, and co-ordinator of the Museum Studies program at the University of Toronto. His Canadian historical expertise included several years as curatorial assistant in the Canadiana Department of the ROM and he was a published expert on early Ontario potters and Canadian archaeology.³

Even heritage professionals can simultaneously have many views toward the same collection of buildings or objects as revealed in contrasting opinions about the village re-restoration expressed by Benn, Reitz, Newlands and Schenk, who continued to volunteer at the village throughout the 1980s. While Benn and Reitz assayed buildings and landscapes to try to rework the village at Doon into a creature of historical merit, Newlands privately viewed the village idea at Doon as an outmoded style of heritage preservation whose intellectual basis was tenuous. Dislocating buildings from their original settings to form a pastiche village was neither practical nor appropriate, he said, and he argued that optimally; buildings such as the general store should be returned to the context of their original communities. Better, he maintained, that Doon do one or two living historical restorations well, such as the Peter Martin farm, than attempt a full village re-restoration.⁴

Schenk's suggestions for the protection of built heritage at the village site were completely at variance with Benn, Reitz and Newlands. As noted above, Schenk was primarily a folklorist and folk artist, and he considered one of the most important buildings on the site to be the Petersburg Railway Station, because it had four legends associated with it. He also considered the artifacts and architecture associated with the Gingerbread House important, because of their relation "to some of the oral history of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo."⁵ In a 1985 memo to the staff at Doon, he

¹ Region of Waterloo, Historic Sites Department, Brochure, "Doon Heritage Crossroads," 1987.

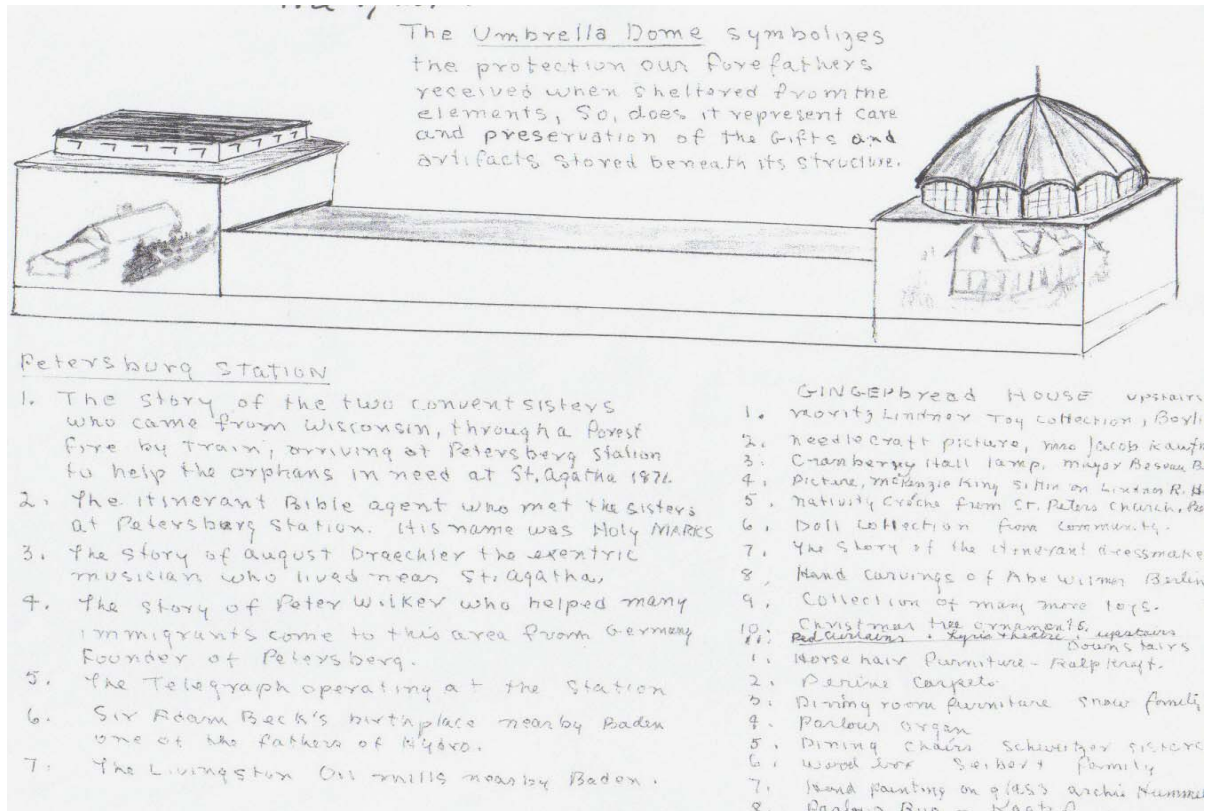
² Ibid.

³ David L. Newlands, *Early Ontario Potters: Their Craft and Trade* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1979), David L. Newlands and Claus Breede, *An Introduction to Canadian Archaeology* (Toronto: McGraw Hill, 1976).

⁴ Author interview with David Newlands, Kitchener, Ontario 10 April, 1990.

⁵ Author interview with Alf Schenk, Waterloo, Ontario, 5 October 1989.

reported on the value of these buildings and their contents in this context, concluding, "The above is as I remember it to be."⁶ The degree to which he valued the significance of these buildings to represent the past was illustrated in a proposal and drawing attached to this memo. It suggested placing these buildings under separate domes connected by an underground tunnel, so that they would not suffer further deterioration from the weather. The domes were meant to "symbolise the protection our forefathers received when sheltered from the elements. The domes were meant to "symbolise the protection our forefathers received when sheltered from the elements."⁷



E.1 Schenk's vision for Doon. *Doon Heritage Crossroads.*

Staff at Doon Heritage Crossroads did not follow this advice. Structurally, it was unfeasible due to the location of these buildings at opposite ends of the village; moreover, they did not share Schenk's sense of the significance of these buildings to the site at Doon. The historical integrity of the Gingerbread house, or Seibert house, as it renamed again, was considered inconsequential due to the large-scale and ersatz renovation that took place on its relocation at Doon. Both Benn and Reitz viewed the railway station, as something of an anomaly, partly because it was furnished with

⁶ Ibid. Alf Schenk, Memo "Preservation of Our Heritage" 25 April 1985, OPCF fonds, 996.163, file "Gingerbread House" box 19, DHC.

⁷ Ibid.

materials ranging into the mid-twentieth century.⁸ It was eventually refurbished to 1914 and opened to the public in 2000.

In the wake of Marten Lewis's departure, the village was severely flooded. Buildings within the high-water mark were damaged, and it became clear that in the future, additional buildings could not be placed on what had constituted the major streetscape in the village.⁹ Reitz conducted an inventory of existing buildings at this time, and the extensive re-working needed for almost every building on site was portentous.¹⁰ [See Appendix "B" "Historic building assessment: Doon Heritage Crossroads, 1989"] A fire later broke out in the Erb House that had remained closed to the public, pending restoration. It was instead, deaccessioned, as was the schoolhouse and blacksmith shop, both of which were assessed as having too little historical integrity to rationalize any further investment in their future at Doon.¹¹

Collections Care at Doon: From Worst to First

A new museum for Doon was never built, due in part to uncertainties regarding flooding risks and more significantly, to diminished funding from upper levels of government. Yet another consultant's study conducted in 1987, projected costs for this project to be upwards of 8.4 million dollars.¹² Newlands suggested a different tactic. Based on the separation of the collection and the public he conceived of the museum as two facilities: a curatorial centre for artifact storage, conservation work, curatorial research and other activities, and a separate orientation centre/museum building. This idea was similar in concept to the ROM expansion completed in 1984. A curatorial centre by itself would prove less costly to build, and would address the continued concern over the sub-optimal collections facilities at Doon. The Region agreed, and proceeded with the building of the curatorial centre in 1994 when the Canada/Ontario Infrastructure Works Program provided matching funds for the \$3.8 million cost of building and outfitting the 32,000 square foot structure above the flood plain at Doon.¹³ Completed in 1995, the new curatorial centre surpassed the standards of collections care in most community and living history museums in the country, and the Region received awards of merit for excellence in collections management from the CMA, OMA and the Archives Association of Ontario.¹⁴

Currently, a planning study is underway for the second component of that plan: a new museum exhibit/village orientation centre. At this time projected costs for the finished building are estimated at 21 million dollars.¹⁵ Unlike the previous museum erected by the OPCF in 1960, the process of planning this one has been opened to the museum's new stakeholders – the tax-paying

⁸ Reitz, "Historic building assessment: Doon Heritage Crossroads" c.1989. DHC files

⁹ Minutes, Heritage Resources Committee 4 July 1989, Region of Waterloo Archives. The Historic Sites Department was re-named the Heritage Resources Department in 1989 on Newlands recommendation that the Region broaden its concerns for local heritage beyond historic sites.

¹⁰ Tom Reitz "Historic building assessment: Doon Heritage Crossroads" Curator's Files, Doon Heritage Crossroads.

¹¹ Author interview with Tom Reitz, Kitchener, Ontario, 17 May, 2006.

¹² Minutes HSC and HSAC joint meeting 24 January 1989. RMW Archives,

¹³ Author interview with Tom Reitz, Kitchener, Ontario, 17 May, 2006; see also <http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/region/nsf>; accessed 25 May 2006.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Author interview with Tom Reitz, DHC, Kitchener, 17 May 2006.

community. Consultants have surveyed community residents to ask them what stories they think should be told in the new museum, and what historical periods should be represented.¹⁶

As the Doon Heritage Crossroads website presently explains, planning for the new museum is fundamentally concerned with communicating a ‘main message about community identity.’¹⁷ In contrast to the work of the 1960s that seemed a ‘mélange’ of the past, Doon’s new approach fulfills the objectives that the museum profession espoused since the 1950s: to communicate a cohesive narrative, and one that engages the community:

The proposed main message is intended to provide a cohesive experience for visitors, whether they are exploring the living history site, the contextual exhibits in an orientation centre for the village, or a wider range of exhibits in a Regional museum. This overall message serves two functions. It links all these potential exhibits in a meaningful and clear way and it enables each separate exhibit to evolve from the main message.¹⁸

If this final plan comes to fruition, the curators, researchers and exhibit designers at Doon will not simply lay out relics of the past for the gaze of the visitor as their predecessors in the museum did. Artifacts will be matched to support these narratives, and the curators will, as Thomas Breen suggests, create meaning from:

everyday objects, investing bits of glass and ceramic, scarred furniture and faded cloth, with special properties of interpretation...by their very arrangement, and their exclusion or juxtaposition, [they will] become highly charged texts”¹⁹

Until this time, the Weber Conestoga wagon remains in protected storage awaiting a new position in the new museum building. Its narrative potential continues to be great although it is unlikely to be placed in an exhibit area designated “court of honour.”



¹⁶ TCI Management Consultants Regional Museum and Doon Heritage Crossroads Orientation Centre Study March/April 2005, “Region of Waterloo Museum Feasibility Study Interview Guide” Curator’s Files, DHC.

¹⁷ <http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/web/region.nsf/>; accessed 29 May 2006.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ T.H. Breen, *Imaging the Past: East Hampton Histories* (Reading: Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1989).

E.2 The Conestoga wagon is in vehicle storage, one of 40,000 artifacts currently stored in the curatorial centre at Doon. Its companions include a 1989 Toyota Corolla owned by the mayor of Cambridge, and the eighth vehicle off the assembly line at the Toyota plant when it opened in 1989. (*Accession: 995.092.001 DHC*).

Shifting Responsibilities

Nor is it likely that the Provincial museum advisors will assist with the design for these exhibits, as they once did for the museum Schmalz designed in 1960. The Province's museum advisory and funding services diminished during the 1980s and 1990s with the provincial pro-rating of operating grants, and with the relative increase of expertise among the museum workers in the province through the OMA and other professional courses of study. Museum advisor positions were reduced to five, one of which is specifically targeted toward historical societies and another toward conservation advice. A review of the Ministry 1989-90 operating grants conducted by the OMA in 1992, showed clearly that by this time municipalities supplied the bulk of funding for local museums, and that the provincial contribution toward operating costs of municipal museums had slipped from an average of 25% at the beginning of the 1980s to about 13% in 1989.²⁰ By 1997 this figure had fallen further to 9%, while municipal budgets stumped up 70% of the operating revenues for museums under their jurisdiction.²¹ Federal sources contributed 2% and the remaining 19% was self-generated income through admissions, sales and services. While these figures applied to the 123 municipal museums in the provincial museum operating program, the budgets of non-profit and conservation authority operated museums relied on self-generated revenues to cover 65% of their income, while the province and local municipalities provided about 8% and 20% respectively.

This need for generating revenue to cover rising costs caused by a number of factors, including the expectations of operating standards has had an impact on the historic villages in closest proximity to Doon, whose governing authorities have had difficulties committing the resources necessary for their continuance. The turn of events for these museums underscores the contingent nature of preserving the past, and of the past that is preserved.

Just as Doon was being reborn in 1984, Westfield Heritage Centre, (re-named from Westfield Pioneer Village in 1981 because its holdings were mainly post-pioneer), was closed for lack of funding. Its collection of buildings was historically superior to those at Doon, but its owner, the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth, was unprepared to invest the one million dollars required to upgrade the site at that time to meet Ministry standards. The Region considered redevelopment options in the late 1980s, first as a museum complex centering on woodworking and later as a \$10 million dollar historical amusement park. At this point, operations were assumed by the Hamilton Conservation Authority. Reopened in 1990, the site was instead scaled back as a 'special events theme centre.' It is open only when visitors are guaranteed; during Sundays, statutory holidays and school programme bookings. Revenue-generating events such as civil-war re-enactments, "Anne of Green Gables Day" and "Twas the night before Christmas" are held during these days and are aimed at target groups: families, bus-tours, corporate events, and weddings. The village serves primarily as a stage, and its

²⁰ Ken Doherty "Through the funnel: where our money comes and goes" *Currently* 15:4 (August/September 1992), 6.

²¹ <http://www.culture.gov.on.ca/english/culdiv/heritage/mugrant1997.htm>. Accessed 29 May 2006.

museum functions are reduced to props.²² Its current brochure invites visitors to “Discover the magic... recapture the moment.”²³

In 1991, Fanshawe Pioneer Village in London, Ontario, was taken over from the Thames Valley Conservation Authority by a non-profit organization called "The London & Middlesex Heritage Museum." Funding cutbacks by the City of London who had provided supplementary funding, coupled with other grant reductions, forced the museum to cut its budget from \$675,000 to \$400,000 leaving the board of directors and staff unable to continue the operation. Closing the village, they computed, would have a negative economic impact on the region in the amount of \$5,000,000 dollars due to the costs of dispersing the collection, re-housing artifacts, and loss of tourism and other grant revenue. With this information, the city of London rescinded its decision to cut its grant to the museum for a period of six years, on the basis that the museum meets certain performance markers in the future: markers that are based on visitor statistics and earned revenue.²⁴

Closer to home, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture closed its doors on its Ontario Agriculture Museum at Milton in 1997, transferring management and operation of the museum to a non-profit organization, “Country Heritage Experience,” who renamed the museum “Country Heritage Park.”²⁵ By 2005 ownership of the museum was transferred as well to this organization, whose stated mission is to preserve and interpret the history of rural life and food production in Ontario “through living history, interactive exhibits and special events.”²⁶ It has struggled financially, and was rescued from deficits in 2005, by a special grant from the Ontario government, who, paradoxically, announced to the media, “Ontario Government Acts to Preserve Province's Agricultural History: Not-for-Profit Agricultural Organization to Take Over Milton Museum.”²⁷

During the 1990s Black Creek Pioneer Village also faced financial cut-backs and staff considered site closure as perhaps the “only humane” option.²⁸ The manager attributed this financial slump to a period of recession, decline of grants, sharp drop off in tourism, and changing local demographics, that compounded to negatively affect attendance. Once surrounded by farm land north of Toronto, the village site is now encroached by high density low-rent housing, in a neighbourhood of recent immigrants who seem to find little connection to the village.²⁹

Rising infrastructure costs have meant that the village has to operate at a reduced level of interpretation, compounded by health and safety regulations that closed demonstrations of the apple cider mill due to the risk of e-coli, reduced the public’s sampling of historical recipes and processes because of the risk of improper food handling by staff, and eliminated some of the historic livestock due to the risk of foot and mouth disease in Canada.³⁰

Besides Doon, the only other historic village interpreting the early 20th century in Ontario is the Cumberland Heritage Village Museum near Ottawa. The village is set during the 1930s. Like

²² <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/wentworth/westfield.htm>. Accessed 29 May, 2006.

²³ Westfield Heritage Village brochure, Hamilton Conservation Authority, 2006.

²⁴ http://www.museumsontario.com/publications/whatsnew/mar17_05.shtml. Accessed 29 May 2006. e-correspondence, Cathy Cherry, Fanshawe Pioneer Village to author, 22 February 2006.

²⁵ <http://www.countryheritagepark.com/>. Accessed 29 May 2006

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ News release: December 02, 2005, “Ontario Government Acts to Preserve Province's Agricultural History: Not-for-Profit Agricultural Organization To Take Over Milton Museum.”

²⁸ Marty Brent, “Black Creek Pioneer Village” OMA Conference Paper, 18 October 2002.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Doon, the museum originated as a pioneer village. Initially named the Cumberland Township Museum, it was also renamed and refocused in the 1990s. Its renewal in the 1990s saw the use of social historical narrative to its buildings and collections, exploring the effects of industrialization, mechanization and the Great Depression on the community. By the late 1990s, operating costs outpaced the municipality's ability to cover expenses and it outsourced the management of the site to a private firm in 1997.³¹ A study of this process identified the factors contributing to this situation: large capital grants from upper levels of government for new facilities effectively raised operating costs that needed to be provided locally, while the province reduced its funding ratios:

This [financial] problem was only compounded by a provincial museum operating grant program, that while enticing the municipality to improve standards, and thus incur higher costs, found itself unable to keep pace with those very costs it was encouraging. For Cumberland, the provincial operating grant's contribution towards the Museum's budget tumbled from a high of 16% in 1988 to just under 7% in 2002. As a result, the Museum found itself in the odd predicament of actually growing, thanks to provincial and federal [capital] funding, at the very time that its operating budget was under pressure due to dramatic cuts and the downloading of services from the provincial government to the municipality.³²

Responses to a 1992 OMA survey on the impact of the Provincial museum standards on community museums were overwhelmingly positive on the effect they had in aiding these institutions to operate better. In more than half of the respondent's museums, these expected improvements have led to increases in operating funds from governing authorities since their imposition. However, when asked if more standards should be imposed on community museums, respondents noted that since municipalities effectively "paid the piper" now, the Province could no longer expect to "call the tune."³³ Reitz agrees with this assessment, noting that with Doon's current (2006) operating budget of \$1,535,463, the Province's contribution is less than 3%.³⁴ One is reminded of Dana Porter's warning in 1950 that a provincial grant "would seem worth little more as the municipalities found that they had to spend more and more money to maintain local museums."³⁵

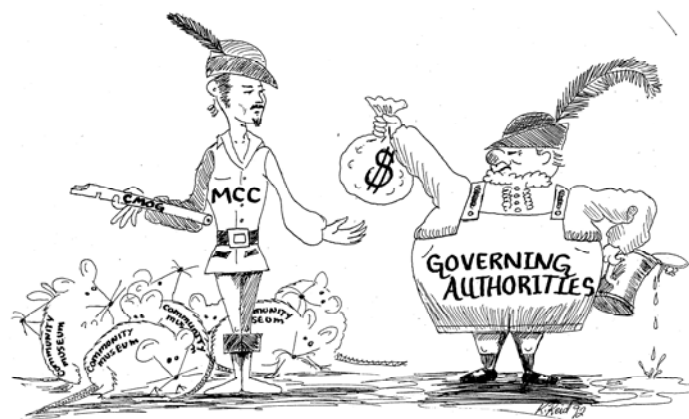
³¹ Kevin Kitchen, "The Cumberland Experience: The Struggles of One Municipality to Maintain its Museum." (<http://www.museums.ca/Cma1/publications/articles>) Accessed 10 May, 2006.

³² Ibid. 15.

³³ "Community museums standards and you: OMA survey results" *Currently* 15:5 (October/November 1992), 5.

³⁴ Tom Reitz, Interview with author, 23 February, and 17 May 2006. DHC Kitchener, Ontario.

³⁵ Memo Dana Porter to Leslie Frost, 1 September 1950, Museum Grant Transfers, Premier Leslie Frost General Correspondence, File "Frost – General Correspondence," RG 3-23, Box 115, AO.



"The Rat Race"

E.3 Ontario Museum *Currently* October/November 1992-3.

In fact, because it simply did not have the resources to do so, the Province was never able to effectively monitor the application of its standards for community museums, outside of the testimonials and written policies accompanying annual operating grant applications. Nor was it able to maintain leadership in museological expertise. It was the OMA who facilitated the most important contribution to heritage management in Ontario since "Operation Museum Catalogue" of the 1970s. With the assistance of the federal government, the OMA coordinated the "Trillium" network for computerized collections management to community museums in the province during the 1980s, and offered courses on this subject. This innovation signaled a change in the balance of power in museological leadership in the province. The supervisor of the museum advisory service and the architect of the standards, Dorothy Duncan, left in 1982, to assume the position of executive director of the Ontario Historical Society. Through her influence, this organization continued to promote its museum workshops and related activities, but in view of the overshadowing of this work by the OMA, the Museum Section was deemed to have lost its function and was reduced to a committee status in 1985.³⁶

Despite the misfortunes of the historic villages described above, other community museums prospered during the 1980s with the support of federal-provincial capital funding, and provincial standards and guidelines to shape new construction and new interiors.³⁷ For instance, Ken Seiling received funding for another major renovation at the Wellington County Museum; consequently, the museum interior and exhibits were completely redesigned for a second time in a decade.³⁸ Catalyzed by a building made unsafe from dry rot, Claus Breede at the Huron County Museum managed a four million dollar overall of its buildings in the late 1980s. In the process, Herb Neill's object-centred displays of everything in the museums collections were transformed into to a series of chronological

³⁶ Ian Kerr-Wilson, 1.

³⁷ The Canada-Ontario Cultural Development Agreement (1986) provided \$50,000,000 for capital project funding "designed to ensure the continued excellence and growth of Ontario's cultural sector." Province of Ontario, Ministry of Citizenship and Culture Annual Report 1987-1988.

³⁸ Interview Ken Seiling with author, 27 January 2006. Kitchener, Ontario.

and thematic galleries, including a streetscape.³⁹ Breede maintained some of Neill's interactive exhibits (now considered pieces of 'folk art') and displays to show the public how objects such as the two-headed calf had been presented in the old museum.

Doon's future appears secure for the present. The total attendance to the site in 2005 was 39,548.⁴⁰ Over half of these visitors came as part of organized education programs for schools, youth and adult groups. Doon now has two full-time positions to manage 23 interpreters, including people designated as head of trades, head of domestic merchandising, and head of agriculture. Over 800 people volunteer at Doon each year in some aspect of its operation.

Ken Seiling is in his 21st year as Chair of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, and still supports the extensive restructuring of Doon. However, in his first elected run for this seat in 2003, one of his opponents claimed that as a former museum administrator Seiling was "serving his own priorities" by permitting wasteful capital expenditures at Doon in the pursuit of historical authenticity. The candidate cited the expected cost of \$300,000 for a new 1,000 square foot blacksmith shop, which he claimed was excessive for "a historically accurate reproduction of a structure that never existed."⁴¹ Indeed, a gross calculation shows that the cost of preserving and presenting the past per visitor at Doon has risen from less than \$.60 in 1965 to over \$38.00 in 2005.⁴²

In Ontario, the open-air museum may become as obsolete as the buildings it contains. At the 2002 Annual OMA Conference, a panel presentation on historic village museums in Ontario questioned the continued viability of this museological model. They forecasted that it may become an unfeasible form of heritage preservation, due to the rising costs of this form of museum and competition from other tourist destinations.⁴³

³⁹ Keith Walston "Huron's antiquities get a modern show place" *Townsmen* October 1989, 12-20.

⁴⁰ E-correspondence Carol Jumis, Doon Heritage Crossroads to author 2 June 2006.

⁴¹ "Seiling under fire at first all candidates meeting in North Dumfries" Verdun noted that would-be contractors and tradespersons had to be "pre-qualified" before they would even be allowed to bid on building . <http://www.bobverdun.com/WhatsNew/SeilingUnderFire.htm>. Accessed 29 May 2006. This building cost \$280,227 to construct.

⁴² Based on relative operating budgets of \$41,665 in 1965 with attendance that year at about 70,000.

⁴³ OMA Conference Session "Myths, Reality and the Future at Ontario's Living History Museums" 18 October 2002.

Appendix A: "A Dream Come True"

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A chronological story of
Doon Pioneer Village

Compiled by:

W. H. E. Schmalz

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A Chronological History
of the
Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation

- 1952 Dr. A. E. Broome, on a trip to Europe, became fascinated with an historic village in Arnhem, Holland. On his return to Kitchener on 8 August he made up his mind that there should be such a museum in Waterloo County and in the following months he missed no opportunity of talking on this subject to anyone who was at all interested. One of the organizations to whom he broached the matter was the Waterloo Historical Society with the results which follow.
- 1953 - 3 July - Extract from W.H.S. minutes:
Mrs. T. D. Cowan, president, proposed (after telling of a visit to her by Dr. Broome) that he be asked to prepare a circular to be sent to the executive members of the society to interest and acquaint them of his scheme to found a rural museum in Waterloo County. It was also suggested that Dr. Broome be contacted about appearing at an executive meeting in September personally to present his plan.
- 1953 - 21 Sept - Extract from minutes:
The Council of the W.H.S. met on the above date to hear Dr. Broome outline his plans for the proposed pioneer museum which were fully discussed and the following resolution was moved by W. C. Barrie and seconded by F. E. Page - "Resolved that the executive committee of this society, which has operated for forty-one years, strongly support the establishment of a Pioneer Village in Waterloo County; that we offer to such Pioneer Village articles in our possession which may be deemed suitable in any of the buildings proposed in the project." Carried.
- 1953 - 1 Oct - Doon School of Fine Arts Meeting.
Representatives of Provincial Departments, the two County Legislative Members, Provincial historical and agricultural groups, Waterloo County Council and mayors of the cities of the county met at the Doon School of Fine Arts to make a tour of the proposed village site and to discuss the establishment of such a village. This meeting was made possible by the assistance given by the City of Kitchener represented by Mayor Bruce Weber, Aldermen Fred Breithaupt, Donald Weber, John Wintermeyer and city-treasurer, Louis Dahmer. At 6:30 the City of Kitchener acted as host at a dinner at the School. The following were elected to prepare a brief to the Minister of Agriculture. Dr. Broome acted as chairman.

Warden T. Stock, Messrs. H. B. Distrowe, Dr. G. E. Reaman, Frank Bauer, Fred Snyder, W. C. Barrie, O. J. Wright, R. R. Barber, E. H. Freer, W. H. E. Schmalz, R. Myers, M. L. A., Dr. S. F. Leavine, M.L.A., C. Werstine, D. Hilborn, L. Hagey, Miss Lillian Snider, Miss K. Hansuld, Mesdames T. D. Cowan, F. Sudden, Helena Feasby and Dr. A. E. Broome.

Others present were - V. B. Millburn, Ont. Fed. of Agr., C. R. Milligan, O. F. A., H. V. Shantz, O. F. A., Lloyd Hagey Wat. Co. F. of A., J. Johannes, Reeve of Wat. Co., Miss E. Seibert, G. E. Moore, Dept. Trade and Pub., Mrs. A. Hughes, Mrs. J. H. McCullough, Ont. Women's Inst., J. S. Knapp, Ag. Rep., J. F. Clark, Dept. of Ag., H. Goos, H. C. Elliott, Mayor A. White, Galt, Sandy Forsyth, C. Currie, John Root, H. Schofield, E. G. Christelaw, A. W. Sandrock, C. Stager, Miss D. Shoemaker, H. Shantz, J. Schmidt, W. Geissel.

- 1953 - 22 Oct - First meeting of the committee appointed at the 1 Oct. gathering was held in the Kitchener City Hall. The entire time was taken up studying the brief to be presented to the Hon. F. S. Thomas, Minister of Agriculture.
- 1953 - 4 Nov. - Meeting held with Minister at the Parliament Building, Toronto to present brief. The reception of the delegation composed of Ray Myers, M.L.A., Dr. S. F. Leavine, M.L.A., Mrs. T. D. Cowan, W. C. Barrie and A. W. Taylor was most satisfactory. Dr. A. E. Broome was the spokesman. It was recommended that the Cressman Woods area be chosen, it being without parallel for a museum site.
- 1953 - 9 Nov. - Annual Meeting of the W.H.S. at Ayr. Dr. Broome, chairman of the Waterloo County Pioneer Museum Committee, gave a report on the proposed museum which is to be located next to the Homer Watson Memorial Park near Doon. He read the brief presented to Premier Frost and concluded by presenting the signed document and the press clippings to the Waterloo Historical Society.
- 1954 - 22 May - Mr. Culp was approached about selling his land along Schneider's Creek but he was not interested.
- 1954 - 15 Mar. - Finance Comm. of the County Council went on record approving the establishment of a Pioneer Village but took no action on request for \$12,000.00 grant for 1954 and 1955. The matter was to be brought up later.
- 1954 - 19 Jul. - Survey group composed of L. R. Gray, G. E. Reaman, Walter Rutherford and A. W. Taylor and John Middleton, looked over Cressman Woods site and approved of it.

- 1954 - Oct. - Exploratory meeting at Kitchener City Hall.
Present - Dr. Broome, W. C. Barrie, W. H. E. Schmalz,
Mrs. T. D. Cowan, F. E. Page, F. Breithaupt, Miss E.
Seibert, representatives of the Waterloo Historical
Society, Ontario Historical Society, Waterloo County,
Grand Valley Authority, Kitchener, Waterloo, Galt,
Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Junior Farmers,
Federated Women's Institutes, Kitchener Chamber of
Commerce and the Ontario Liberal Association.
- 1954 - 8 Dec. - Meeting at Kitchener Public Library. L. R. Gray, chairman.
Present - Mrs. T. D. Cowan, Galt; Mrs. R. M. Lamb, Bridgeport;
Miss Lillian Snider, St. Jacobs; Miss L. Harinna, Guelph;
Mrs. H. Feasby, Kitchener; Ald. Anna Hughes, Waterloo;
Mayor F. Bauer, Waterloo; Ald. D. Preston, Waterloo; Ald.
F. Breithaupt, Kitchener; Ald. F. Dreger, Kitchener; H. C.
Elliott, Galt; W. Witmer, Baden; C. Pickert, Breslau; Dr.
S. F. Leavine, M.L.A., Kitchener; D. Shantz, New Hamburg;
C. T. Graham, Kitchener; L. R. Gray, London; W. H. E. Schmalz,
Kitchener; Dr. G. E. Reaman, Guelph; Dr. A. E. Broome,
Kitchener; Miss E. Janzen, Kitchener.

Election of First Board

Honorary Presidents - H. C. Krug, G. A. Forbes, J. E. F.
Seagram, M. N. Hancock, G. H. Bobbie, G. Chaplin, G. Hacey,
Rev. J. Arnold, W. A. Bean, P. Putherford, Dr. M. Dunham,
Miss L. Snider, Dr. S. F. Leavine, M.P.P., R. Myers, M.P.,
N. C. Schneider, M.P., A. W. White, M.P.P.

President	- Dr. A. E. Broome
V. Pres.	- A. W. Taylor
Hon. Secy.	- Miss E. Janzen
Hon. Treas.	- C. T. Graham
Comm. Chmen.	- A. E. Broome, Incorporation
	- G. E. Reaman, Constitution and By-Laws
	- F. Breithaupt and Rep. Kitchener, Galt and Waterloo, Property
	- C. T. Graham, Finance
	- W. C. Barrie, Building
	- W. H. E. Schmalz, Item Selection
Directors	- Mrs. T. D. Cowan
	- F. E. Page
	- Miss E. Seibert
	- F. W. R. Dickson
	- H. W. Wagner
	- F. M. Snyder
	- C. M. Snider

- Directors - continued - representatives of organizations
- J. M. Moffatt - Galt
 - F. Dreger - Kitchener
 - F. Breithaupt - Kitchener
 - D. Douglas - Waterloo
 - J. Johannes - County of Waterloo
 - R. Barber - County of Waterloo
 - Mrs. G. McPhatter- Federated Women's Institute
 - Miss D. Shoemaker- Ont. Library Association
 - Dr. G. E. Reaman - Penna German Folk-lore Society
 - J. P. Lovekin - United Empire Loyalists
 - D. J. Hynes - Teachers' Federation
 - Miss E. Janzen - Kit. Horticultural Society
 - To be named - Ont. Fed. of Agriculture
 - S. Jones - Kitchener C of C.
 - D. Middleton - Junior Farmers
 - Miss D. Shoemaker- Ont. Educational Association
 - F.W.R. Dickson - Waterloo Historical Society
 - L. R. Gray - Ontario Historical Society
 - Wilf Rick - Junior C of C.

The name of the organization is to be ONTARIO PIONEER
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION.

1955 - 28 Jan. - The Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation and the City of Kitchener asked the Grand Valley Conservation Authority to lend its prestige in acquiring land for the project.

1956 - 15 Jan. - Paid \$15,000.00 for 13.5 acres (Ermel property). This area includes approximately 1 acre on the East side of Cressman Road with house and barn and about 6 acres of woods adjacent to Homer Watson Memorial Park.

- 31 Jan. - First meeting of the 1956 board. Present were Dr. Broome, F.W.R. Dickson, Mrs. T. D. Cowan, W. C. Barrie, Otto Hauck, W. Rick, L. R. Gray and Mrs. Gray, Dr. G. E. Reaman, W.H.E. Schmalz, H. B. Dishrowe, C. T. Graham, Miss E. Seibert, F. Breithaupt, F. E. Page, Jas. Johannes, Miss D. Shoemaker, A. W. Taylor and Miss E. Janzen.
All Committees reported progress.

- 30 Apr. -W.H.E. Schmalz had located one of the first cars built in Canada and H. C. Schneider bought the LeRoy car, which was built by the Good Brothers, for the museum.

Expropriation proceedings started to obtain Culp property.

Planning Committee appointed with W.H.E. Schmalz as chairman. Professional help was required and Dryden and Smith assisted without charge.

Raising of additional funds suggested by utilizing the business connections of honorary presidents.

All committees reported making excellent progress.

- 1957 - 5 Mar - Charter received. We are still in the formative stage.
- June - Barn and two sheds moved from the Shuh (now Old Peoples' Home) property. Work started on barns before expropriation on proceedings completed.
- 19 June - Barn raising; the Village was officially opened by the driving of the first peg for the barn frame by the Honorable Mr. Nickle, minister for planning. Rev. A. Lewis offered dedicatory prayer.
- Culp property finally bought for \$19,000.00 after much negotiation - approximately 43 acres.
- 30 July - LeRoy car officially accepted from N. C. Schneider by W.H.E. Schmalz on behalf of the Village. Ceremony took place at the TV studio.
- 5 July - Dr. Broome resigned due to ill health. Resignation accepted with great regret.
- 31 Aug. - A. W. Taylor resigned as vice-president and was appointed administrator.
- Oct. - At annual meeting the constitution was presented and approved part by part. Large interested group present at Suddaby School.
- Buildings suggested for immediate action: -
- Lumbermen's church, Port Severn - refused by bishop because of objection by church neighborhood - burned the following year.
- The Priory, Guelph - a few logs of an addition were moved to the Village; they were in poor condition; it was decided that the rebuilding was not feasible and that it was too costly.
- Peter McArthur house near Appin - a fund is being raised by the family to pay for moving.
- Delaware store - due to highway location this store had to be moved; this was carried out.
- Slides shown by A. W. Taylor on Plowing Match and a film on barn raising by W. C. Barrie.
- Final report on expropriation submitted.
- F. E. Page agitated for the erection of a museum building.

1958 - 17 Jan. - Expropriation on 44 acres of Floyd Culp property.

Budget for year set at \$6,000.00.

Committees appointed practically all of which contained several men other than directors.

Many discussions on suggested sponsors for various future buildings.

19 Aug. - Dr. Carl Gothe, American Historical Association addressed meeting

Railway station	-	C.N.R. and C.P.R.
Blacksmith shop	-	
Pond	-	Seemiller
Store	-	Simpsons
Carpenter Shop	-	Krug Furniture Co.
Sugar Camp	-	
Pottery Shop	-	
Inn	-	Carlings or Seagrams
School	-	
Printery	-	
Doctor's Office	-	County Medical Association
Law Office	-	County Legal Profession

1959 - 29 Apr. - This year the Village expected to receive a government grant of \$70,000.00 but obtained only \$2,000.00.

Sept. - Junior Farmers brought loads of pine stumps.

Museum building started with help with a grant of \$30,000.00 from Grand Valley Conservation Authority before the board had title to the property.

20 Oct. - Annual meeting was addressed by Dr. Louis C. Jones of Cooperstown Museum.

Budget set at \$6,000.00 for 1960.

Dec. - Fire in Janzen building - charter and all records lost.

Exhibits arranged in museum during the winter because the Waterloo Historical Society, which had donated all its exhibits and cases, had to vacate its quarters in the Kitchener Library. A flood of other valuable and interesting material was constantly being received.

We received a most welcome acquisition in the form of 18 display cases from the Royal Ontario Museum.

This year and the 3 previous years were formative and much was accomplished.

- 1960 - Jan. - A. W. Taylor's resignation was accepted.
- 30 Mar. - Howard Groh was named Administrator.
- 15 June - Museum officially opened. Dr. Broome cut the ribbon and gave an address (see p. 21). Doon and Blair Women's Institutes served lunch. Rev. C. F. Derstine gave the invocation.
- Part of road built during summer and some fences erected.
- Parking lot for over 100 cars levelled and gravelled.
- Bridge built.
- Delaware Store (L840) rebuilt.
- Small gate-house erected.
- 1961 - 12 July - Store opened with fine display; many people in costume. Ceremony conducted by Mr. Stewart Goudie. This wonderful start in the Village was made possible through a most acceptable donation of \$10,000.00 by the late Mr. A. R. Goudie.
- 9 Aug. - Tecumseh plaque unveiled in museum - Indians from all the reservations of Western Ontario were present to the number of 60 to do honour to the famous Chieftain. A large mural was donated by Ralph Ashton, artist; it depicted an Indian encampment.
- 16 Aug. - Dr. Broome honoured at Village as First Citizen and presented with a certificate.
- Parking lot extended and improved.
- Waterloo Coin Club donate fine exhibit.
- Well drilled and barbecue built.
- Two barns filled with exhibits opened to the public.

1962 - 28 Mar. - \$6,000.00 debt faces Village - management committee appointed.

Circular road built by G.V.C.A. at East corner of property.

27 June - Saengerfest held.

4 Aug. - Plaque to Joseph Brant unveiled - no Indians showed themselves other than Mrs. Montour and Mrs. Edwards.

Entrance to Village changed to point above the highway bridge.

Freeport church moved - cut in halves. Donated by the United Church. It is 100 years old.

Excavating for pond completed. It is a wonderful adjunct to the Village. Smallest barn moved across stream to serve as a woodworking shop and cooperage.

28 Sept.- Small barn moved from Scott property in Hespeler and located behind store.

Dam built with flood gate.

Water laid to store and picnic area.

McArthur house material moved from near Appin.

4 Dec. - Dr. A. E. Broome died. 'Dusty' was a most dedicated man and will be sadly missed.

1963 - 11 Jan. - Fire in Janzen building - lost second charter, minutes and all records.

Gypsy Fair held.

Bridge covered.

Another effort made to procure Provincial assistance without success.

Made effort to have Hydro Museum locate here. Jones and Schmalz interviewed Chairman Kennedy without success.

1963 (continued)

Freeport Church Dedicated - (1861) United Brethren
(1889) Congregational
(1925) United

- 19 July - First wedding celebrated in church

Blacksmith shop moved from Williamsburg and erected.
Donated by Frank Newbury and fitted by donation of Mr.
and Mrs. A. G. Colvin of Preston.

First live exhibit - George Redpath, Blacksmith.

- 19 Aug. - McArthur (1855) opened - Mr. Dan McArthur of Ottawa
performed the ceremony.

1964 -

Harness shop and Printery opened - equipped by
W. Fehrenbach and Bean Printing Co. - wood type from
Louis Kaiser printing office at Roseville.

Cheque for \$100.00 received from Frank English of
Farmington, Michigan.

5 June - Military exhibit started.

17 June - Hamilton Women's Press Club made tour of Village.

15 July - Log building to be used as school brought to Village.
Donated by Mr. Ronald Reid of Blair.

20 July - C.P.R. locomotive placed on track - donated by City of
Kitchener - \$5,000.00.

Second bridge built near Huron Road.

12 Aug. - Drive for \$100,000.00 initiated - Galt fell by the roadside.

31 Aug. - Eby house moved to Village - Lackies made this donation.

9 Oct. - Galt donated Bickle-Seagrave pumper.

11 Nov. - New Hamburg old fire engine on loan.

Gallery installed in Barn #2.

1965

Butcher Shop donated and furnished by J. M. Schneider Ltd.

Snack bar built

Educational programme suggested by H. Groh.

Water led across stream to cottage.

- 1967 Addition to museum built and opened without ceremony.
 Chief Pale Moon came to the Village - great attraction.
- 19 Aug. - Limerick Cemetery moved.
- 5 Sept.- Frank Page died - great loss - a man to be remembered.
- Sept.- Miniature railway opened - Carl Hoffman.
- 14 Oct. - Sawmill built and presented by Mr. Wes Baechler.
 Reception at Holiday Inn following the ceremony.
- 22 Oct. - Township Hall, donated by Waterloo Township as Centennial
 project, opened with fine program.
- 1968 22 Jan. - J. M. Moffatt appointed manager.
- 16 Feb. - Admission fee raised to \$1.00.
 Easter sunrise service in church.
 First attempt to live exhibits - weaving and spinning.
 Threshing exhibition.
 Drawing contest for children arranged by Miss Seibert.
 Won by Marion Martens, Hespeler.
- 4 Sept. - Corn Festival - soap making, fun and fritters.
 Agreement signed with Grand River Conservation Authority;
 that organization will, in future, have control of the
 property but the Village Board will have jurisdiction
 over the running of the Village.
 Last Sunday in October was a free day.
 Deficit for the year was \$10,000.00.
- 1969 3 May - Post Office opened - first day covers for philatelists.
 Millstones from Breslau moved to Village.
 Lower part of Shantz Barn renovated.
 Simeon Martin wagon shed built. Gate house started.
 Donation by Mr. J. Stauffer made possible the printing of
 the Ezra Eby booklet.
 Horseshie pitching contest.
- 23 Aug. - Petersburg railway station opened.
 Financial difficulties due to exorbitant assessment increases.
 Antique car show and threshing demonstration.

- 1970
- Diversity of live exhibits.
- Steam show; antique car show; hobby show; corn festival.
- Pennsylvania-German Day - Sam Bricker came to the Village.
- Horseshoe pitching contest.
- Decided that the large barn should be called the Shantz Barn and the smaller one the Shuh Barn.
- Agreed to have the Hall of Fame located on Village property, the exact site to be decided later.
- Published the Ezra Eby Booklet - to sell at \$1.00.
- Pennsylvania-German Folklore Society is prepared to move an early farmstead at no cost to the Village.
- A plaque is to be placed on the wagon-shed - "Framed and erected by Simeon Martin".
- Budget for this year set at \$62,700.00.
- 1971
- Attractions during the year - Church services, bands, car show, crafts, Schneider Male Chorus, steam show, youth day, heritage days, corn festival. Many clubs and societies have helped with programs.
- Controversy with planning body and Thompson re the location of the Hall of Fame. After the board refused to submit the planners withdrew their objection.
- Mr. Marsland present Erb House (\$15,000.00). Material moved to Village.
- Pioneer farm house started by Folklore Society.
- Bird cases fumigated.
- McArthur House raised.
- In future the Village will be open to public 10:00 to 5:00.
- Installed Hydro service throughout Village \$25,000.00.
- Canadian National Railway donated a caboose.
- Miss Laureen Zimmerman continues to give valuable service in cataloguing and filing.
- Annual Meeting - Breslau Hotel - 29 Nov.

1972 Special displays and exhibits included spinning, weaving, pottery, rug-hooking, flailing, shingle making, broom making, soap making as well as the usual Scottish Day, car show, steam show, bands and choruses.

Entertained the members of the Ontario Historical Society while on tour of the County, during their annual meeting sessions.

- 14 June - Opening of Waterloo County Hall of Fame. Mrs. A. E. Broome cut the ribbon.

Gatehouse finished at cost of ??

Projected new buildings - fire hall, doctor's office, apothecary shop, bank, law office, inn.

Stauffer reunion held at Village.

7 May - Opening of Gingerbread House.

Season pass to cost \$15.00 - good for all G.V.C.A. recreation areas.

Old snack bar to be used for demonstration of crafts.
Snack bar moved to Gatehouse.

Waterloo Township Council met for last time in the township hall before the township was absorbed.

Budget for the year - \$81,700.00.

1973 Budget - \$94,700.00.

End of mini steam railway.

Suggested city water main to Village would cost \$23,400.00.

Discussions with Prof. Rich and students of U. of W. re Village development.

Excellent Scottish and Pennsylvania-German Folklore days.

Easter sunrise service.

Crafts, quilting, soap making, etc.

Dinner for staff.

Addition to museum for office.

Gate built.

1974 Scottish Day great success - excellent antique car show.
Heritage Foundation authorized \$8500.00 for purchase and moving Peter Martin House (1821).
Visit of board to Black Creek Village.
Heritage Foundation asked to underwrite cost of Bricker (Steckle) barn.
Spinning, weaving and quilting demonstrations.
Inventory of artifacts prepared by students.
Micro-oven installed in snack bar.
Constitution amended.
Prof. Rich and his students submitted excellent design for Village development.
Firehall, donated by Economical Mutual Insurance Co., officially opened. Cost - \$38,000.00.
Terminal dates set for buildings; Martin house - 1873; Detweiler house - 1845; Erb house - 1820, addition - 1891.

OFFICERS

Presidents

Dr. A. E. Broome	1954 - 1957
W. H. E. Schmalz	1957 - 1958
J. A. Johannes	1959 & 1974
O. J. Wright	1960 - 1961
F. E. Page	1962
H. Ziegler	1963 - 1965
J. M. Moffatt	1966 - 1967
F. M. Snyder	1968 - 1969
G. Loney	1970 - 1971
Elvin Shantz	1972 - 1973
W. D. Smith	1974 - 1975

Vice-Presidents

A. W. Taylor	1954 - 1957
J. A. Johannes	1957 - 1958
O. J. Wright	1959
F. E. Page	1960 - 1961
H. Ziegler	1962
J. M. Moffatt	1963 - 1965
F. M. Snyder	1966 - 1967
G. Loney	1968 - 1969
Elvin Shantz	1970 - 1971
J. Johannes	1972 - 1973

Secretaries

Miss E. Janzen	1954 - 1963
Mrs. H. C. Elliott	1964 - 1973

Treasurers

C. T. Graham	1954 - 1960
R. Hodgson	1961 - 1962
A. Underhill	1963 - 1965

Secretary - Treasurer

Mrs. H. C. Elliott	1965 - 1973
	1974 -

Administrators

A. W. Taylor	1957 - 1960
H. Groh	1960 - 1967
J. M. Moffatt	1968 - manager during 1968

DIRECTORS

L. Aberle	- 1962 - 1964	A. W. Sandrocl	- 1956
J. R. Adare	- 1966 - 1969	W. H. E. Schmalz	- 1954
W. C. Barrie	- 1954	N. C. Schneider	- 1954
R. Barber	- 1954 - 1954	Miss E. Seibert	- 1954
Mrs. L. Bergey	- 1971	E. Shantz	- 1967
F. E. Breithaupt	- 1954 - 1957	Miss D. Shoemaker	- 1954 - 1954
A. E. Broome	- 1954 - 1961	W. D. Smith	- 1966
Cowan, Mrs. T. D.	- 1954 - 1958	C. M. Snider	- 1954 - 1954
E. M. Carter	- 1970	Mrs. D. M. Snider	- 1975
F.M.R. Dickson	- 1954 - 1955	F. M. Snyder	- 1954
H. B. Disbrowe	- 1954 - 1956	A. W. Taylor	- 1954 - 1960
H. Dennis-Nathan	- 1967 - 1968	J. Taylor	- 1970 - 1971
	- 1974 -	A. W. Underhill	- 1962 - 1963
Mrs. R. Donaldson	- 1965 - 1966		- 1969 - 1972
D. Douglas	- 1954 - 1954	H. W. Wagner	- 1954 - 1954
F. L. Dreger	- 1954 - 1955	L. Weber	- 1973
W. G. Edgar	-	O. J. Wright	- 1954
H. C. Elliott	- 1956	H. Ziegler	- 1957
C.M. Fellows	- 1968 -		
R. G. Ford	- 1968 - 1970		
	- 1972 -		
A. Gillies	- 1967 - 1969		
	- 1973 -		
Mrs. R. Gramow	- 1975 -		
L. R. Gray	- 1954 - 1954		
C. T. Graham	- 1954 - 1959		
O. Hauch	- 1956 - 1965		
D. W. Hare	- 1968 - 1970		
F. Higgins	- 1971 - 1972		
G. V. Hilborn	- 1963 - 1965		
A. Hodge	- 1961 - 1962		
R. Hodgson	- 1961 - 1962		
Mrs. A. Hughes	- 1961 - 1964		
D. J. Hynes	- 1954 - 1954		
Miss E. Janzen	- 1954		
C. H. Janzen	- 1960 - 1962		
J. A. Johannes	- 1954		
S. Jones	- 1961 - 1966		
Mrs. L. Keener	- 1964 - 1966		
P. C. Klaassen	- 1965 - 1968		
J. E. Kraemer	- 1966 - 1968		
G. Loney	- 1967		
J. P. Lovekin	- 1954 - 1954		
Mrs. G. McPhatter	- 1954 - 1954		
R. McLeod	- 1969 - 1970		
E. I. McLoughry	- 1967		
J. M. Moffatt	- 1954 - 1967		
F. E. Page	- 1954 - 1968		
G. E. Reaman	- 1954 - 1957		
A. H. Richardson	- 1962 - 1963		

Acquisitions to Village

- 1 - 1957 - Barn Shantz - from House of Refuge
- 2 - 1957 - Barn
- 3 - 1957 - Shed - moved across stream to be used for #8
- 4 - 1960 - Museum
- 5 - 1960 - First Gate House
- 6 - 1960 - Bridge
- 7 - 1961 - Store - A. R. Goudie - moved from Delaware
- 8 - 1962 - Woodworking Shop and Cooperage
- 9 - 1962 - Excavation for Pond
- 10 - 1962 - Barn behind store - Scott from Hespeler
- 11 - 1963 - Church moved from Freeport - United Church of Canada
- 12 - 1963 - Dam Built
- 13 - 1963 - McArthur House - Moved from Appin - McArthur Family
- 14 - 1963 - Smithy, Newburn - from Williamsburg - A. G. Colvin
- 15 - 1963 - Bridge Covered.
- 16 - 1964 - Bridge near Huron Road
- 17 - 1964 - School from Blair.
- 18 - 1964 - Printery - Bean and Kaiser
- 19 - 1964 - Harness Shop - W. Fehrenbach
- 20 - 1964 - Locomotive - City of Kitchener
- 21 - 1965 - Butcher Shop - J. M. Schneider Ltd.
- 22 - 1965 - Snack Bar near Museum
- 23 - 1967 - Museum addition
- 24 - 1967 - Cemetery from Limerick
- 25 - 1967 - Saw Mill - Pannill Veneers, W. Baechler.
- 26 - 1967 - Township Hall - Waterloo Township
- 27 - 1967 - Indian Exhibit with Chief Pale Moon
- 28 - 1969 - Station - Canadian National Railways
- 29 - 1971 - Caboose - Canadian National Railways
- 30 - 1969 - Post Office from Wellesley
- 31 - 1970 - Shed - Simeon Martin
- 32 - 1971 - Gate House - Kitchener Parks Board
- 33 - 1972 - Hall of Fame
- 34 - 1972 - Eby House opened (Seibert House)
- 35 - 1974 - Fire Hall - Economical Mutual Insurance Co.
- 36 - 1975 - Farm House - Pennsylvania German Folklore Society
- 37 - 1975 - Scottish House - Clan Donald

Budgets

1954	\$ 13,835	
1955	\$ 8,000	
1956	-----	
1957	\$ 11,300	
1958	\$ 9,300	
1959	\$ 16,000	- \$3,000 G.V.C.A. for Administration Building(Museum)
1960	\$ 6,800	
1961	\$ 31,000	
1962	\$ 19,400	
1963	\$ 35,600	
1964	\$ 36,500	
1965	\$ 33,000	
1967	\$ 46,900	
1968	\$ 44,100	
1969	\$ 54,000	
1970	\$ 62,700	
1971	\$ 76,428	
1972	\$ 81,700	
1973	\$ 90,740	
1974	\$112,000	
1975	\$129,400	

Gate Receipts

1960	\$ 3,600
1961	\$ 3,749
1962	\$ 4,500
1963	\$ 6,992
1964	\$ 13,437
1965	\$ 12,768
1966	\$ 11,020
1967	\$ 13,064
1968	\$ 22,362
1969	
1970	
1971	\$ 22,816
1972	\$ 27,000
1973	
1974	

Attendance

1971	49,692
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KITCHENER PUBLIC LIBRARY

Speech by Dr. A. E. Broome on the occasion of the opening of the Museum.

ONTARIO PIONEER COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

PLEASE DO NOT RELEASE BEFORE - 2:30 P.M., Wednesday, June 15, 1960

R. R. 2, Kitchener, Ontario, June 15, 1960..... The following address was given by Dr. Albert Ernest Broome of Kitchener at the opening of the Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation Museum and Administration Building this afternoon. Dr. Broome originated the project eight years ago and was the first president of the Foundation. He is a pioneer in the medical field of radiology who became interested in pioneer historical activity during a visit to Europe in 1952. His speech tells the story of how his interest was aroused and how the project at Doon, near Kitchener, was started.

"Mr. President, Directors of the Ontario Pioneer Community, Directors of the Waterloo Historical Society, Honoured Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen:

The privilege and honour of being asked to participate in the official opening of this property is one that I prize very highly.

White it is true that I proposed the establishment of a site for perpetual care of pioneer buildings in this district, much of the spadework in organization has been done by many of those who are here today. To name a few I would mention Mr. W. C. Barrie, Mrs. T. C. Cowan, Mr. Wm. Schmalz, Mr. F. E. Page, Miss Elizabeth Janzen, Mr. C. T. Graham, and the very interested and industrious historian, Mr. Andrew Taylor.

Following a visit to the Pioneer Museum in Arnheim, Holland, in 1952 I realized that the Museum gave me more information on Dutch cultural history than could be obtained by any other method, independent of the time involved.

On my return to Canada I decided that institutions of a similar type should be visited elsewhere and the Directors interviewed as to the aims and objects of such institutions, the measure of public support and the possible influence of such an institution on the community.

I then visited Williamsburg, Virginia, Old Sturbridge Village, Mass., and Cooperstown, New York and interviewed officials at these sites. I learned that these museums, as in Arnheim, had rapidly become cultural and tourist attractions far beyond the dreams of their founders.

Blair, in Waterloo County, where the old stage coach lines forded the Grand, was the natural point of entry to the western portion of the Province for prospective pioneering settlers.

This site, at the beginning of the Huron Road appealed to those of us who were interested in the project, as the natural site for such a museum in Ontario.

This group then organized and sought a Provincial Charter under the title "The Ontario Pioneer Community Foundation". The Charter was granted and moral support was obtained from the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario whose aims were similar to ours but did not offer perpetual care for pioneer buildings if removed to a suitable site.

The Pioneer Community was given favourable press, radio and T.V. publicity which was of great assistance in obtaining yearly financial grants from the County and the incorporated communities for the purchase of property and beginning operations. The first purchase was the old coach house at the ford - a few hundred yards from where we now stand.

The road on which this property faces is the old "Huron Road" leading to all settlements north and west of here and ends in Goderich on Lake Huron.

Purchase of the property was difficult as the former owner was a dairy farmer and this was his pasture land. Active proceedings to acquire the land, because of its historic value, were started in November 1955 and were not completed for over a year. The purchase depleted our Treasury considerably and until further grants were made physical changes were not possible. Recently considerable has been done and the Museum built. In the interval we have accumulated and removed to the site, completely dismantled and ready for immediate reconstruction, several other buildings of historic interest. Among these are the old Priors buildings from Guelph, for the rebuilding of which we still seek financial sponsorship; also an old pioneer store, for the removal and rebuilding of which we are grateful to the late Mr. A. B. Goudie of Kitchener. The funds for this project are now available and the building will be proceeded with this summer.

We are planning to dam our small stream and place thereon a water-wheel operated grist mill with authentic pioneer grinding stones.

We are hoping to obtain from Indian descendents, an authentic Indian long-house. The Indian representative, Mrs. Ethel Brant Monture, is here today. Mrs. Monture is the well-known author and transcontinental lecturer on Indian lore and is the granddaughter of the historic Joseph Brant who provided the name Brantford, and who acted as guide for the first Amish settlers into Waterloo County.

The building of this Community will probably never be complete. Items such as a grist mill, shingle mill, blacksmith's shop, harness and shoemaker's shop, maple sugar camp, and many others will be built as such items become available and are sponsored.

In the meantime many articles which will eventually be moved into such buildings are now in the Museum for your enjoyment.

Unlike such places as Sturbridge and Cooperstown, which did not open for ten years after the sites were available, this Museum is opening in only four years. This is largely because of extreme local interest in the project. We all know that as the project progresses such interest will increase manifold.

Let us try to visualize some of the rather immediate activities of this institution.

I can see the re-enactment, on occasions, at the Indian longhouse, of a tribal conclave with ceremonial procedure, or as we of the uninitiated would say, a "pow-wow". I can see the ceremonial filmed for posterity.

At the church, which should have a broad dedication and sanctification for use by any religious group, I can visualize the occasional baptism or marriage ceremony. The church building could serve our visitors also as a place for rest and meditation.

At the pioneer school-house, I can see groups of school children being instructed in pioneer history by the items of early household management and early industrial development. These lessons, so illustrated, would create a permanent impression on the children, of the difficulties under which their antecedents lived.

Due to our fortunate location, with close proximity to Highway 401 we are more than ever on a tourist route. The same type of culture-conscious individual who visits the Stratford Drama Festival will be interested in our exhibition. The dual attractions to this portion of the Province will be mutually helpful. The Stratford Festival authorities have shown a friendly interest in our project, and the feeling is reciprocated.

Ladies and gentlemen, I now declare this section of the major project, the Museum and the Administration Building, open."

NOTE: Dr. Broome died in December, 1962 having lived long enough to see his dream come to reality and able to visualize what the future years might bring.

Appendix B: Reitz, Evaluation of Buildings at Doon, 1989

A selected listing of buildings and artifacts assessed by Curator Tom Reitz, in 1989.

Railway Engine:

Brief History:

The engine was a gift from the City of Kitchener and the Canadian Pacific Railway, having been brought from their Montreal yards. The caboose was a gift of the Canadian National Railway. Caboose opened at Doon, 1971; Engine, 1964.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

These two artifacts are static outdoor exhibits. The train is discussed in school programs. The caboose's date of construction places it outside of the living history village's restoration date.

Soundness:

The engine needs repair to both its wood and iron members. An asbestos jacket surrounding the boiler should be removed. It is impossible to protect these artifacts from the weather in their present location, making their long-term preservation doubtful. The caboose is badly deteriorated, in particular its wood exterior, and it will not be possible to preserve this artifact much longer without major repairs and wood placement.

Peter Martin House

Brief History:

This house was built c. 1820 by Pennsylvania-German Mennonite Peter Martin in Waterloo Township. The building served as a Mennonite Meeting House until the 1830s. The building was brought to Doon in 1974 but it was not restored until 1988, to represent an Old Order Mennonite home in 1914. Opened at Doon in 1988.

Interpretation:

Interpreted as an Old Order Mennonite home of 1914. In the course of the restoration it was possible to clearly differentiate hands-on use areas and artifacts from rooms which are strictly static exhibits. There is a high level of interpretive integrity in this restoration.

Detweiler Weavery

Brief History:

Built 1845, by Jacob Z. Detweiler on Lot 4, Beasley's New Survey, Waterloo Township; remained in family until 1886; historic significance seen to be tie through Detweiler family to D.B. Detweiler, advocate for Hydro-Electric power in Ontario, although there is no direct lineage. Caryndale Congregation of Swedenborgian Church made the house available to the OPCF. Opened in 1975.

Assessment (1984):

Apparently some of the first floor logs are original but most of the rest of the building is new or constructed of materials from elsewhere.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

Currently interpreted as a weaver of utilitarian products having to compete with the industrial textile mills; an example of a 19th century trade in decline. By 1914, few rural weavers remained in Waterloo County as they could not compete with the large mills; weaving as a represented trade in the village is an anomaly.

Dry Goods and Grocery Store**Brief History:**

The Dry Goods and Grocery Store was moved from Delaware, Ontario and reconstructed with a donation of \$10,000 from the late A.R. Goudie (Goudie's Department Store). Opened in 1961.

Assessment:

This building was chosen to be the first restoration following the Region assuming control of the site. As of 1989, the building is structurally sound.

Interpretation:

Currently interpreted as a 1914 Dry Goods and Grocery Store, with a mix of reproduction artifacts, product packing and original artifacts. Although the product line is not as complete as required, it is adequate to portray a commercial establishment. As this building has been restored since 1984, the furnishings, interpretation and background research material has been completed with a high degree of accuracy and attention to detail. A Dry Goods and Grocery Store is an important component in a re-created Waterloo County Rural Community.

Harness Shop and Print Shop**Brief History:**

This building was constructed from new materials to house existing collections, and portray two additional trades in the village.

Assessment (1984):

To make this building useable, structurally sound, and historically appropriate, more money would have to be spent than the building is worth. Therefore it may be better to replace it with a proper building (original or reconstruction) at an appropriate time.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

The east half of the building is interpreted as a print shop and the west half of the building as a harness shop. The majority of the artifacts were donated by the Fehrenbach (harness) and Bean Printing Co. Although this building has not undergone restoration since 1984, the furnishings of the harness shop are acceptable. Including a harness maker/repair shop in the village is appropriate, although a boot/shoe maker and repair shop would be an even more appropriate trade. The print shop lacks interpretive integrity due to the inappropriateness of the equipment (an early press) which represents non-mechanised printing. Further printers and presses were not common in rural Waterloo County communities.

Sawmill

Brief History:

Gift of the Pannill Vener Co. – bechler Family. Equipment from British Columbia, but moved to Bruce County during W.W.I. Building composed of timbers and siding from a barn originally in Stratford. Opened in 1967.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

Currently a static exhibit building with no power source for equipment for mill equipment. Equipment not necessarily set up appropriately. Has become a neglected building on site. While it would be an attraction to visitors, should the mill equipment be made operational, it poses a potential hazard to staff.

Blacksmith

Brief History:

This building has a few logs from an old blacksmith shop, however most logs are old telephone poles, recycled wood. Opened in 1963.

Assessment (1984):

This building cannot be saved nor does it possess enough integrity to bother saving it.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

Currently interpreted as a blacksmith who repairs rather than manufactures. Comprehensive research underway (1989). A blacksmith shop was a key service in a rural Waterloo County community. While this structure lacks any integrity, its contents are fairly complete.

Butcher

Brief History:

Corporate donation of building and some contents by J.M. Schneider Ltd. of Kitchener. Opened in 1965.

Assessment (1984):

No integrity. A building of this size would never have been made with the size or variety of building members used. This building possesses no historical integrity whatsoever and would cost more to correct than would be the cost of erecting a good reproduction.

Interpretation and Interpretive Activity:

Currently a static exhibit of butchering equipment. Butcher shops were not common in rural Waterloo County communities, and by 1914 J.M. Schneider Ltd. had already relocated to a factory. No interpretive integrity.

Post Office and Tailor Shop

Brief History:

Originally the Wellesley Post office, the building served many different functions throughout its life and in 1914 was a Post Office and public library. The building was restored a second time, subsequent to extensive research, and opened as a Post Office and tailor shop at Doon in 1986.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

This building is currently being interpreted as a Post Office and tailor shop, based on research into both functions. Although the Post Office is basically a static exhibit (which can be discussed by an interpreter) while the tailor shop offers the opportunity for a tradesman to ply his trade. As this restoration was completed since 1984, there was extensive research undertaken prior to installation.

McArthur House

Brief History:

The McArthur House was moved to Doon from Ekfrid Township, Middlesex County. Writer Peter McArthur was born in the house in 1866 and returned to live here from 1908 to 1922. The house nor its history holds any connection to Waterloo Region. Opened in 1962.

Assessment (1984):

When it was reconstructed, little attention was paid to proper building techniques or historical accuracy. Asbestos present in roof. The building requires massive corrective measures to make architectural sense plus a summer kitchen, outbuildings and a new roof.... The cost involved to “get to ground zero” may be so great that serious consideration should be given to removing the building and replacing it with another possessing more historical integrity to Waterloo County.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

Currently interpreted as the home of a tradesman. No specific mention is made of Peter McArthur.

Donald House (formerly Clan Donald House)

Brief History: This house was moved and reconstructed at Doon under the auspices of the Clan Donald Society, to represent a Scottish home. The house was moved from Puslinch Township, Wellington County. Opened in 1976.

Assessment (1984): The Clan Donald House is so bad as a restoration and possesses so little integrity and would cost such a large amount to restore that serious consideration should be given to removing the building from the site.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity: This building is not open to the public due to sever rot in the floor, posing a potential hazard to staff and visitors.

Seibert House (formerly called the Gingerbread House)

Brief History:

The Seibert House was constructed on Eby family property on what is now Madison Street, Kitchener. When the house was moved to Doon, the gambrel roof collapsed, and rather than replacing the roof as it had been, a peaked roof with bargeboard trim was installed. The existing rood line has no integrity to the history of the building. Opened in 1972.

Interpretation and Interpretive Activity: This building is interpreted as a middle class home. The building is actively used in education programmes and special event programming.

School Building

Brief History:

This log building is originally from Puslinch Township, Wellington County (although moved to Doon from Blair), however it was originally a home which was brought to Doon and latered significantly to accommodate a school, ie, doors moved, new window openings cut. Hence, the building maintains no historical integrity as either a school or a home. Log school buildings are better representative of the early nineteenth century, there were no longer in use in Waterloo County by 1914. Opened in 1964.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

The building is not currently interpreted no staffed, although it is open to the public.

Sararas House (formerly called the Pennsylvania-German House)

Brief History:

The restoration of the Sararas House was a project of the Pennsylvania-German Folklore Society. It was originally intended to represent a Pennsylvania-German home ca. 1850. The house was built by the Sararas family of Huguenot descent and moved from Wilmot Township. Opened in 1975.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

With the opening of the Peter Martin House in 1988, the Pennsylvania-German focus for this house was shifted. It currently is a confusing mix of early nineteenth century interior details and late nineteenth century furnishings. In the context of a ca.1914 village, the building poses interpretive problems.

Firehall

Brief History:

Replica of the 1880 brick fire hall at Baden, made possible through funds from Economical Mutual Fire Insurance Co. Opened in 1974.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

This building is not staffed however there is fire equipment on exhibit. The equipment dates to various periods from the mid-nineteenth through the early twentieth century. The building materials are inappropriate for the date associated with the structure.

Bricker Barn

Brief History:

Barn built for Abraham and Mary Thoman (Mary was a daughter of Sam Bricker) on Strasburg Road. Donated by John Steckley. Opened in 1984.

Assessment (1984):

The authenticity of the appearance of the foundation is wrong. Some adjustments may be required.

Interpretation and Interpretive Integrity:

The barn serves as the major outbuilding to the Sararas House, the interpretation of which is currently unclear. The barn is the only structure used to house animals at Doon, and hence serves as an integral part of education programs.

Appendix C: Doon Exhibits c. 1972

Preservation *Side 5, Box 16*
D - DISPLAY CASES *"Display Cases"*

BUILDING 2 B-2

- D - 1 CAMERAS
- D - 2 SHOW TOWELS, QUILTS etc.
- D - 3 LADIES' HATS & ACCESSORIES
- D - 4 TOYS
- D - 5 DOLLS
- D - 6 LEAD SOLDIER COLLECTION
- D - 7 PIONEER - INDIAN INFORMATION
- D - 8 HOUSEHOLD GADGETS
- D - 9 ANCESTRAL LIGHTING
- D - 10 PHOTOGRAPHS - GALT, PRESTON, HESPELER
- D - 11 ABSALOM SHADE COLLECTION
- D - 12 SCOTT MEDALS, J.B. BOWMAN SNUFF BOX, THIBADEAU COLLECTION
- D - 13 GENEVA BIBLE AND COMMENTARY, 1610
- D - 14 SCHREIDER BIBLE, BIBLE-KOLB
- D - 15 SPECTACLES
- D - 16 SPECTACLES
- D - 17 SILVERWARE
- D - 18 GLASSWARE
- D - 19 SOUP TUREEN, TEA SETS (CHINA)
- D - 20 BRICKER FAMILY DISHES
- D - 21 IRONSTONE DISH COLLECTION
- D - 22 ~~KITCHENER~~ WATERLOO PHOTOGRAPHS - *see filing ALONG THE GRAN*
- D - 23 HOMER WATSON DISPLAY CASE
- D - 24 (SHOW CASE TAKEN TO FIREHALL)
- D - 25 (SHOW CASE TAKEN TO FIREHALL)
- D - 26 INDIAN ARTIFACTS: ~~MARTIN~~ COLLECTION *WOODLAND ARCHAIC - PALES*
- D - 27 DOCUMENT CASE - INDIAN STUDY *display*
- D - 28 INDIAN ARTIFACTS: ~~STROH~~ COLLECTION *INDIAN - THE NEUTRALS*
- D - 29A INDIAN ARTIFACTS: JENKINS COLLECTION
- D - 29B ~~FOSSILS FOUND IN WATERLOO COUNTY~~ *been removed*
- D - 30 HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS, FRACTUR ART (glass table)
- D - 31
- D - 32 SURVEYORS' EQUIPMENT
- D - 33 COIN CASE
- D - 34 CLOCKS AND WATCHES
- D - 35 BARBER SHOP
- D - 36 IRONS
- D - 37 STUFFED BIRDS
- D - 38 STUFFED BIRDS
- D - 39 STUFFED BIRDS AND SMALL ANIMALS
- D - 40 POSTCARDS AND PICTURES
- D - 41 BAPTISMAL AND CHRISTENING GOWNS
- D - 42 PHOTOGRAPHS
- D - 43A HISTORIC ARTIFACTS
- D - 43B BIRDS' EGGS AND NESTS
- D - 44A BEADWORK
- D - 44B BIRDS' EGGS
- D - 45 SHOES
- D - 46 APOTHECARY SHOP
- D - 47 GUNSMITH & LOCKSMITH
- D - 48 WAR WEAPONS AND ARTIFACTS
- D - 49 SPINNING DISPLAY - Miss Minerva Shantz
- D - 50 JING STAND
- D - 51 MILITARY DISPLAY
- D - 52 LEDGERS AND ACCOUNT BOOKS
- D - 53 CLERICAL EQUIPMENT
- D - 54

D - 29A INDIAN ARTIFACTS: JENKINS COLLECTION
D - 29B FOSSILS FOUND IN WATERLOO COUNTY *been removed*
D - 30 HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS, FRACTUR.ART (glass table)
D - 31
D - 32 SURVEYORS' EQUIPMENT
D - 33 COIN CASE
D - 34 CLOCKS AND WATCHES
D - 35 BARBER SHOP
D - 36 IRONS
D - 37 STUFFED BIRDS
D - 38 STUFFED BIRDS
D - 39 STUFFED BIRDS AND SMALL ANIMALS
D - 40 POSTCARDS AND PICTURES
D - 41 BAPTISMAL AND CHRISTENING GOWNS
D - 42 PHOTOGRAPHS
D - 43A HISTORIC ARTIFACTS
D - 43B BIRDS' EGGS AND NESTS
D - 44A BEADWORK
D - 44B BIRDS' EGGS
D - 45 SHOES
D - 46 APOTHECARY SHOP
D - 47 GUNSMITH & LOCKSMITH
D - 48 WAR WEAPONS AND ARTIFACTS
D - 49 SPINNING DISPLAY - Miss Minerva Shantz
D - 50 WING STAND
D - 51 MILITARY DISPLAY
D - 52 LEDGERS AND ACCOUNT BOOKS
D - 53 CLERICAL EQUIPMENT
D - 54 BUTTON DISPLAY (MACHINERY)
D - 55 SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS
D - 56 MILLINERY SHOP
D - 57 TYPEWRITERS & OFFICE EQUIPMENT
D - 58 TOBACCO PIPES & CIGAR MAKER
D - 59A BLAIR MILL
D - 59B EBY POTTERY FROM CONESTOGO
D - 60 WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

D - DISPLAY CASES

Building # 2 -B2

D - 61 BERLIN HYDRO
 D - 62 HESPELER
 D - 63 BRIDGEPORT CASINO
 D - 64 FASHION
 D - 65 FASHION
 D - 66 FASHION
 D - 67 FASHION
 D - 68 FASHION
 D - 69 CHAMBER TOILET SET
 D - 70 FASHION
 D - 71 FASHION
 D - 72 COVERLET DISPLAY
 D - 73 HAWKESVILLE
 D - 74 SOUVENIR AND MISCELLANEOUS DISHES
 D - 75 PICKLE CRUETS, CUTLERY
 D - 76 CORNER CUPBOARD
 D - 77 ASSORTED BUTTONS
 D - 78 LIGHT AND FASHIONS
 D - 79 TRADE TOKENS
 D - 80 PROJECTORS
 D - 81 GUN CASE (Wilks)
 D - 82 FORBES' BIRDS' EGG COLLECTION
 D - 83 GRAMOPHONE DISPLAY
 D - 84 SCOTTISH HERITAGE
 D - 85 RADIO SHOP
 D - 86 STORY OF LEROY CAR (under E3 Leroy car) including car
 D - 87 CAR ACCESSORIES AND LEROY PARTS
 D - 88 MODEL CARS
 D - 89 CAR CLOTHING & APPAREL
 D - 90 SHOW CASE - COURT OF HONOUR
 D - 91 SHOW CASE - HOMER WATSON (formerly 63)
 D - 92
 D - 93
 D - 94 DISPLAY CASES ADDRESS IS MAP CASE

B2 E-1 Shantz Wagon and tools on shelf on wall, and trunk on floor
E-2 Music
E-3 LeRoy car - D.Bo
E-4 Beaver cutting
E-5 Voice of the Past
E-6 Indian mural, canoe, dugout
E-7 Stroh collection, Dug-out (1967)
E-8 Victorian parlour
E9 Settler's cabin
E-10 End wall maps
E-11 Hair wreaths and wicker baskets
E-12 Hair wreaths on wall and pictures
E-13 Hair wreaths on outside wall
E-14 Homer Watson
E-15
E-16
E-17
E-18 Separate School exhibit
E-19 Stove exhibit
E-20 Trunk and chest exhibit
E-21 Berlin street lamp
E-22 Photography exhibit
E-23 Loom and weaving
E-24 Picture exhibit post
E-25 Picture exhibit post
E-26 Picture exhibit post
E-27 Exhibits on door of Storage 11
E-28
E-29
E-30 Grandfather clock
E-31 Cast iron stove
E-32 D.B. Detweiler bicycle
E-33 Eskimo dog whip
E-34 Birch bark canoe
E-35 Three pictures of Preston
E-36 Barber's chair
E-37 Three pictures: Victoria Park, Seagram House, Boehmer's Store
E-38 Very old quilts
E-39 Pictures and maps of Preston & Berlin (on wall)
E-40 Exhibit area on walls and stairwell
E-41 Court of Honour
E-42
E-43
E-44
E-45

Appendix D: Doon Budgets, 1960-1985

Year	Operating Expenses
1960	\$18,600
1961	\$31,016
1962	\$24,900
1963	\$35,600
1964	\$36,500
1965	\$33,000
1966	\$41,666
1967	\$46,900
1968	\$44,100
1969	\$54,000
1970	\$62,700
1971	\$76,428
1972	\$81,700
1973	\$90,740
1974	\$112,000
1975	\$129,400
1976	\$169,778
1977	\$144,583
1978	\$150,341
1979	\$167,997
1980	\$180,979
1981	\$287,287
1982	\$284,000
1983	\$364,340
1984	\$469,256
1985	\$520,000

Appendix E: Province of Ontario Operating Grants to Community Museums, 1953–1985

Year	Number of Museums	Total Grant Allocation
1953	5	\$3,000
1954	5	\$3,000
1955	8	\$4,560
1956	8	\$4,800
1957	13	\$8,650
1958	18	\$12,515
1959	27	\$16,974
1960	32	\$26,427
1961	40	\$32,264
1962	52	\$37,995
1963	55	\$46,770
1964	58	\$45,901
1965	60	\$48,177
1966	60	\$46,577
1967	70	\$60,736
1968	90	\$73,771
1969	94	\$87,174
1970	101	\$95,707
1971	116	\$96,000
1972	132	\$112,796
1973	143	\$187,094
1974	164	\$500,901
1975	156	\$1,060,000
1976	175	\$1,265,115
1977	184	\$1,544,964
1978	187	\$1,629,647
1979	187	\$1,840,444
1980	187	\$1,678,698
1981	188	\$1,884,369
1982	188	\$2,126,182
1983	189	\$2,390,418
1984	189	\$2,575,405
1985	191	\$2,649,936

The Province's fiscal year is April 1– March 31.

Development grants ceased in 1980, but these grants were included in the aggregate totals of grants until then.

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