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.

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