

# CULTURAL MOMENT

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## ONE MOUNT FOREST FACTORY BEFORE AND AFTER THE GREAT WAR

In 1900, the Weir Wardrobe Factory of Winnipeg moved to a furniture factory on Dublin Street in Mount Forest. By 1906, their uniquely constructed wardrobes were outfitting the stores of T. Eaton Co., Hudson Bay Co., and Holt Renfrew.

The standalone photograph was taken from about 1910 and shows employees and bystanders watching a ceremony for the turning of the sod for an extension of the factory. Although the future of the business appears bright, the arrival of World War I will totally change this factory's purpose, its workforce and its future.

The two photographs placed in the wooden frame were taken after the Great War and call attention to a very different group of workers and all the latest modern garment machinery in the factory. Taken in 1924, the factory became the Superior Converters "Overall" Factory – the property was bought from the Weir family after the war and shows how new consumers tastes and new opportunities for women in factories transpired.

On September 27<sup>th</sup> experience Doors Open Wellington North and see an array of artifacts from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including others such as this piece related to the First World War, at the Jean Weber Reading Room in the Mount Forest Museum & Archives. This year's theme for Doors Open Ontario is Remembering the First World War: Ontario in transition, which allows Ontario communities to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War and showcase the people, places and events that helped shape Ontario before, during and after.