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Sommario/riassunto	This volume argues that a small, loosely connected group of men constituted an informal museum movement in America from about 1740 to 1870. As they formed their pioneer museums, these men were guided not so much by European examples, but rather by the imperatives of the American democratic culture, including the Enlightenment, the simultaneous decline of the respectability and rise of the middle classes, the Age of Egalitarianism, and the advent of professionalism in the sciences. Thus the pre-1870 American museum was neither the frivolous sideshow some critics have im

