



Historic New Harmony

In Harmony Newsletter

MARCH 2022 Edition

Interim Assistant Director's Update

While names like George Rapp and Robert Owen dominate our historical record, the women of New Harmony played just as an important role. From Gertrude Rapp and Frances Wright to Mary Emily Fauntleroy and Jane Blaffer Owen, this town wouldn't be what it is today without them and others. As we celebrate Women's History Month, I wanted to share with you a few of those women who I greatly admire. [Learn more about the New Harmony women I admire](#)

Museum Shop Update

Welcome back to another season with Historic New Harmony! As we start this new season, there are some new items in the museum shop that are definitely worth checking out. [Read more about what's new](#)

NHGCA Update

Visualizing Spaces opens March 12 (New Harmony's Second Saturday), featuring work by regional and national artists examining ideas around what utopia is, and for whom. [Learn more about the artists including in this exhibition](#)

Adventures through the Archives

As a new manager of the Indiana State Museum's historic sites in New Harmony, it has been my duty for the last four months to inventory, photograph and catalogue the thousands of artifacts the state museum stores in Community House No. 2. [Read more about Jess' favorite artifacts](#)

FEBRUARY 2022 Edition

Interim Assistant Director's Update

We're often asked if things are slow when the tour season ends and winter arrives. The truth is, not at all! The first few weeks of the year are all about preparation for the next tour season and the year ahead. Things have seemed especially busy this time around, as we have so many exciting things happening



Historic New Harmony

Assistant Director's Update

MARCH 2022

Claire Eagle, Interim Assistant Director

While names like George Rapp and Robert Owen dominate our historical record, the women of New Harmony played just as an important role. From Gertrude Rapp and Frances Wright to Mary Emily Fauntleroy and Jane Blaffer Owen, this town wouldn't be what it is today without them and others. As we celebrate Women's History Month, I wanted to share with you a few of those women who I greatly admire.

Known for her devotion to righting social injustice and helping the poor, Frances "Fanny" Wright first noticed the condition of the city's beggars in London, England, when living with her grandfather after her parents had passed. Fanny and her sister Camilla arrived in the United States in 1818, where they spent a year in New York. Upon her return to England, Fanny wrote *Views of Society and Manners in America*. The book was composed of a series of letters to an English friend and dealt with a number of issues including Congress, slavery and women's fashions. While the majority of the book praised the U.S. for its advancements, Fanny criticized the system of slavery and the practice of excluding women from higher education. She arrived in New Harmony in 1825 after learning about Robert Owen's community at a lecture in Washington D.C. Impressed by both the Harmonist and Owen communities and envisioned a similar one for freed slaves, she began such a community, named Nashoba, with approximately 31 slaves, eight of which Wright had bought herself. While Nashoba was not successful, she continued to fight for the abolition of slavery.



I learned of Fanny Wright long before I arrived in New Harmony. When I made the connection that the woman I learned about in my Women's History course in college was the same one of New Harmony, I realized just how important this town really was.

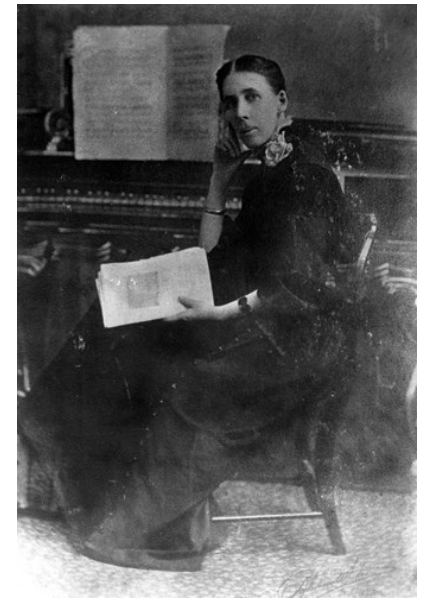
Constance Owen Fauntleroy founded the Minerva Society in 1859. The society was one of the first women's clubs in the United States with a written constitution and by-laws. Every woman had a chance to gain valuable experience with the six-week rotation of the offices of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Members of this society used their weekly meetings to debate current events and ideas and were required to furnish compositions to be presented

before the fellow members followed by critiques of their piece. At one meeting, the society debated which was the greater evil, war or slavery, a pressing topic as the Civil War began.

Jane Blaffer Owen is remembered for her determination to preserve and promote this small town along the Wabash River. Her philanthropic work helped to revitalize New Harmony and make it the cultural town it is today, but her true influence is immeasurable.



In 1941, Jane Blaffer married Kenneth Dale Owen, a descendant of Robert Owen. Soon after they married, Kenneth brought his new wife to New Harmony. She fell in love with this community and began her work. She helped to bring some of the greatest minds, architects and artists of the time to New Harmony including Phillip Johnson, Paul Tillich and Richard Meier. I encourage you to watch [“Who Was Jane Blaffer Owen?”](#) a [Virtual Community Conversation](#) held in the summer of 2020 to hear from the people who knew and worked with her.



Finally, I wanted to bring attention to an incredible grant opportunity. In November 2020, New Harmony lost another amazing woman. Ms. Arlene “Lena” Feiner dedicated her life and career to the advancement of women’s rights. She was a poet, librarian, feminist and New Harmony resident who shall be remembered for her compassion and advocacy of women. In dedication of Lena, the Working Men’s Institute (WMI) established an annual research grant made possible by the generosity of the Efroymsen Family Fund. Each year, \$2,500 will be granted to one recipient who shall conduct research at the WMI and plan and deliver a presentation. The subject of the research should honor her pursuits by highlighting women’s issues, efforts and accomplishments. This first step in this year’s application process is due April 16. Visit the [Working Men’s Institute’s](#) website for more information.

I hope you’ll take this opportunity to think about the women in your life that you admire and perhaps read more about the women who shaped New Harmony.

FEBURARY 2022

Claire Eagle, Interim Assistant Director

We’re often asked if things are slow when the tour season ends and winter arrives. The truth is, not at all! The first few weeks of the year are all about preparation for the next tour season and the year ahead. Things have seemed especially busy this time around, as we have so many exciting things happening at HNH.

- Late last year, we received an exciting grant opportunity from Lilly Endowment Inc. As a part of Lilly’s Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative, HNH received a planning grant totaling just under \$100,000. The funds will provide support for the application of an implementation grant which would offer up to \$2.5 million for a multi-year project focused on fostering public understanding of religion. Check out [this recent press release](#) for more information.



Historic New Harmony

Historic New Harmony News

MARCH 2022

Museum Shop Update

Paul Goodman, Experience Coordinator

Welcome back to another season with Historic New Harmony! As we start this new season, there are some new items in the museum shop that are definitely worth checking out.

We have some amazing new jewelry from Scout Curated Wears. They specialize in designing modern, multi-use jewelry with a bohemian flare and many of their pieces convert from wrap bracelets to necklaces. All their items are beautifully displayed and packaged to brighten your day or make the perfect gift. As a company founded and led by women, they highly value promoting women and families. They believe all women have the right to reach their full potential. When women have the tools to succeed, everyone benefits. That's why they pledge to give 10% of net profits to organizations that help support and promote women.

We also have restocked pieces from Bee Tree Pottery. These artisan pieces showcase not only sgraffito and sponged techniques but also slip trail designs. For the younger generation, we have many new animal friend puppets joining us this year as well. Finally, you can find the April edition of Early American Life magazine. New Harmony has an eight-page feature and you can find it on our shelves while supplies last. We hope to see you all in the Atheneum this year either for a program, the museum shop or a tour!



FEBRUARY 2022



Historic New Harmony

New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art Update

MARCH 2022

Iris Williamson

Visualizing Spaces opens March 12 (New Harmony's Second Saturday), featuring work by regional and national artists examining ideas around what utopia is, and for whom. Artists include Robert Burnier, Su A Chae, Nasreen Khan, Diego Morales-Portillo, Brenda Mallory, SaraNoa Mark, Deb Sokolow and Janie Stamm.

The exhibition is being presented in conjunction with Big Car Collaborative's Social Alchemy Symposium, April 10-13, 2022, in New Harmony and virtually.

Social Alchemy Symposium conversations—led by more than 20 notable authors, artists, designers, researchers and philosophers from Indiana and around the world—will look at the role of utopian thinking today and tomorrow while connecting with the past. Speakers include:

- Emily St. John Mandel, author of the 2015 utopian/dystopian novel "Station Eleven" among other books and essays. "Station Eleven" has been translated into 33 languages and was adapted into an HBO series premiering in 2021 (virtual talk).
- Maurice Broaddus, author of fiction centered on utopian and dystopian ideas through the genres of science fiction, urban fantasy and horror.
- Darran Anderson, author of "Imaginary Cities" (2015), an Irish writer focused on the intersections of urbanism, culture, technology and politics (virtual talk).
- Cara Courage, executive director of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, scholar and author in the realms of art and placemaking, and formerly of the Tate Modern in London.

V I S U A L I Z I N G S P A C E S
MARCH 12–APRIL 23 | NEW HARMONY GALLERY OF CONTEMPORARY ART



Other guests include Indiana writers Susan Neville, Adrian Matejka and Matthew Graham (current poet laureate); Indiana artists and arts leaders from New Harmony, Columbus, Bloomington and Indianapolis; leading architects, planners and designers and utopian/communal studies scholars.

Register for free tickets [here](#).

FEBRUARY 2022

Iris Williamson



In spite of snow days and COVID outbreaks, Vanessa Viruet's solo exhibition PAÑUELXS is up and on view through March 5, 2022. In addition to the interior gallery space filled with shiny and bold mixed media artworks, a public art piece by Viruet sits directly across from the gallery in Maclure Square. We hope you can venture out to experience Viruet's work during our open hours (Tues-Sat 10 a.m.-5 p.m.), or during our closing reception with the artist in attendance (March 5, 4-6 p.m.).

A group exhibition titled Visualizing Spaces is next up at the gallery. It will be presented alongside the upcoming (free) [Social Alchemy Symposium](#), which will be held both virtually and in-person from April 11-13. We look forward to opening Visualizing Spaces on March 12, from 4-6 p.m., in conjunction with New Harmony Second Saturday.

DECEMBER 2021/JANUARY 2022

Iris Williamson

Happy Holidays! The last day New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art and the Gallery Shop will be open in 2021 is Saturday, December 18. If you plan on doing some holiday shopping at the Gallery Shop or from *Filled Up 2: A Ceramic Cup Show*, make sure you visit by December 18!

The Gallery Shop opens back up on January 4, but there will be an additional break before we have a new exhibition in the Main Gallery. This is to allow for some facility improvements in the gallery and to align our next opening with when USI students are back in class.



Historic New Harmony

New Harmony State Historic Site Update

MARCH 2022

Jess McPherson, New Harmony State Historic Site Coordinator

As a new manager of the Indiana State Museum's historic sites in New Harmony, it has been my duty for the last four months to inventory, photograph and catalogue the thousands of artifacts the state museum stores in Community House No. 2. As a history buff, it's been like a treasure hunt every day I come into work. Some treasures are less exciting, like the dozens of pewter plates or the hundreds of printing press stamps the museum owns. But other treasures, like the original silhouette portraits of the major figures of the Owenite period or the beautiful gowns of socialites' past, have been a joy to handle and study. For this month's newsletter, I thought I'd give a brief rundown of some of my favorite pieces in our collection!

First, we have this Harmonists era blue silk scarf with white and red floral detailing. The Harmonists famously raised their own silkworms and produced their own silk materials, and this artifact is an amazing representation of all their hard work. Even today, nearly 200 years later, the silk shines brightly in the light and the colors are as vibrant as ever. Truly a beautiful piece of history!

Next, we have an intricate German-style cuckoo clock from the 1880s. This piece was owned by the Mary Emily Fauntleroy and the Indiana Federation of Women's Clubs before it was donated to the Indiana State Museum. The clock proudly displays an image of the 10 commandments at the point of its roof, showing how dedicated its owners would have been to their religion and moral beliefs. Its intricately carved details are what really make this piece stand out for me.

Finally, we have a hand hook rug woven in 1924. The design is of our very own Fauntleroy Home and shows off a vibrant and blooming garden out front by the walkway. I am unsure, however, who or what "Alexandria" might refer to. Perhaps it is the artist themselves? Either way, this rug represents a complete labor of love to me. You can tell whoever designed it did so with the intent to capture the natural beauty of New Harmony and the people who built it.





Every artifact in my care is special to me in one way or another. These three are just examples of the fascinating pieces I get to analyze here in the Community House. Every item stored here is literally a product of its time, and I believe the culture, morals and beliefs of those who created them are still harbored within them. It's been an important job to make sure they are cared properly and will be in their best condition for future historians to write about in their newsletters. Thanks for reading this one!

NOVEMBER 2021

Jess McPherson, New Harmony State Historic Site Coordinator

To the citizens of New Harmony; hello! My name is Jess McPherson, and I have recently joined the State Museum as the site coordinator for the New Harmony State Historic Site. I am a few weeks into the job, and I couldn't be happier. It has been lovely to get to meet everyone who has stopped in so far. New Harmony is truly a welcoming and gracious home.

A bit more about me; I was born and raised a Hoosier by a family who has always encouraged a love and reverence of history. I graduated from Indiana University (IU) Bloomington in 2020, where I earned BAs in both History and Latin (*salve socii fanatici historiae*). I previously worked with the Monroe County History Center, the IU Archives and as a research assistant for the IU department of Anthropology. I have also worked in the community organizing various volunteer opportunities and political campaigns. Hence, why I am so excited to be able to facilitate programs and events as well as preserve the sites that make New Harmony historic!

Feel free to come knock on my door at Community House #2 to say hello. I'd love to hear any stories you may have about the place, what food I should be eating at the local diners or just to chat about the Harmonists! I am always here for a good history-centric conversation.