



Historic New Harmony

In Harmony Newsletter

MAY 2022 Edition

Interim Assistant Director's Update

The HNH team has been incredibly busy, and we just didn't get an April newsletter released. It felt weird not sitting down to write my monthly article, but it's a new month and we're ready to get back on track! [Read more from Claire](#)

"The Golden Troupe Superb Silver Band and Orchestra" Now Open in Thrall's Opera House

The Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites is once again utilizing the space in Thrall's Opera House to display a new exhibit on New Harmony's Golden family. "The Golden Troupe Superb Silver Band and Orchestra" gives visitors an insight into the band that supported one of the most popular theatrical companies of the late 1800s. [Learn more about the exhibit](#)

A Note from HNH's Spring Student Worker

This semester, Hanna Clark, a senior at USI double majoring in political science and world languages and cultures with a focus in Spanish, assisted our team with the Religion and Cultural Institutions Initiative II planning grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. [Read more about how she helped](#)

More Perfect Places: A Theatrical Celebration of the Past, Present and Future

More Perfect Places, a play inspired by New Harmony's utopian history, also invites you to imagine what the future holds for this unique community. Free performances will take place at Thrall's Opera House June 10-11, 2022. [Learn more about *More Perfect Places*](#)

NHGCA Update

On April 30, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art opened "Residence VI," an exhibition featuring ceramics by recent [New Harmony Clay Project](#) (NHCP) artists-in-residence. [Learn more about the artists included in this exhibition](#)

MARCH 2022 Edition



Historic New Harmony

Assistant Director's Update

MAY 2022

Claire Eagle, Interim Assistant Director



The HNH team has been incredibly busy, and we just didn't get an April newsletter released. It felt weird not sitting down to write my monthly article, but it's a new month and we're ready to get back on track!

Last month, the HNH team was focused on two very important events. The first was the Social Alchemy Symposium in partnership with Big Car Collaborative. With more than 1,300 views, both in person and virtual, this symposium connected history with ongoing efforts to explore the role of utopian thinking today. It was wonderful seeing everyone who joined us here in Utopia and we're so thankful to Indiana Humanities, the Efrogmson Family Fund and New America for making it possible. The second was our 38th Annual Heritage Artisans Days. We continued with our virtual program this year but hope to get back to in-person next year. It's always a treat to get to visit with our artisans, some of whom have been participating in this program for decades, and we love getting to share this history with students all over the Tri-state.

As we enter the summer season, it feels like New Harmony is coming alive again. The Atheneum is getting busier, daily tours are filling up and we're scheduling more and more group tours. Why don't you join us? Come take a tour, enjoy a [New Harmony Second Saturday](#) or rent a golf cart for a leisurely ride around town. I encourage you to keep an eye on our newsletter, social media and website for upcoming programs and events.

I'll end this update with a big request for all of you. The past few months we've been hard at work developing a survey as a part of our Lilly Religion and Cultural Institution grant. We're asking for input from you, USI students, New Harmony residents and our visitors as we work on an application for the implementation portion, which would offer up to \$2.5 million for a multi-year project focused on fostering public understanding of religion. The survey can be found [here](#) and we'd love to get your feedback! We've already received almost 500 responses, but our goal is to double that by the time we close the survey on May 31. If you haven't submitted a response yet, please consider doing so. We'd greatly appreciate it!



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.





Historic New Harmony

New Harmony State Historic Site Update

MAY 2022

Jess McPherson, New Harmony State Historic Site Coordinator

The Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites is once again utilizing the space in Thrall's Opera House to display a new exhibit on New Harmony's Golden family. "The Golden Troupe Superb Silver Band and Orchestra" gives visitors an insight into the band that supported one of the most popular theatrical companies of the late 1800s.

The mid-19th century saw the rise of touring theatrical companies across America. The Golden Family, the Silver Band and roughly 20 supporting actors visited communities across the South, Midwest and West. The Golden Troupe's advance man would arrive early, place notices in local newspapers and paper the town with posters. The real excitement would begin when the Superb Silver Band paraded through the streets, advertising the upcoming performances. These parades were so important to a traveling troupe's success that some contracts fined actors for not participating. Although it complements the Golden's name, "silver band" is a generic term for a brass band using silver-plated instruments. The plays they put on, usually a mixture of comedy and drama, were described by patrons as "lively and fascinating" and the wardrobe and scenery as "elaborate and elegant." We are fortunate that much of the Golden Troupe's theatrical material has survived—more than 650 objects, including costumes, wigs, shoes, hats, musical instruments, documents, manuscripts and photographs are part of the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites' collection. The objects on view here are from that collection.

I am delighted to have played even a small part in constructing our newest exhibit. Getting up close and personal with the uniforms and instruments I have been viewing through historic photographs was such a treat. I am excited for the people of New Harmony to get the same experience while visiting the exhibit.





Historic New Harmony

Historic New Harmony News

MAY 2022

A Note from HNH's Spring Student Worker

Hanna Clark, Historic New Harmony Student Worker

Despite graduating this semester, I have recently changed my career trajectory. I have studied political science and Spanish; however, I have shifted my focus toward statistics. While I have done a variety of tasks for Historic New Harmony, I have mainly focused on survey work—a vital part of statistics. This position has given me a great start to a career I hope to pursue soon, and I am elated that I had the opportunity to learn so much in such little time at a truly valuable historic site in my home state of Indiana.

One of the most valuable skills I have acquired in this time is survey development. I had taken a class on this as part of my political science degree, but nothing can compare to learning about the process through hands-on experience. Going through the process has taught me in a way that I cannot forget the skills. Not only has working on a survey for Historic New Harmony cemented the skills I have learned in class, but it has also taught me a few tricks I could never learn in class. Since I want to focus on the more humanistic side of statistics, this knowledge is going to be invaluable during my career.

An imperative part of developing a survey is figuring out what questions are best to measure the information one wants. This entails editing the survey and removing many questions. As you can tell by reading this, I am wordy. I have struggled with editing things to be concise and communicate only the information necessary, but this internship has helped me acquire this skill. Working with others at Historic New Harmony and the Office of Planning, Research and Assessment has helped me focus on what is imperative. I hope this skill can transfer to other areas of my professional and academic life.

One of the most challenging yet valuable learning processes that I have experienced here is learning how to use Qualtrics, a survey development and distribution software. I had to watch many tutorials and collaborate with Claire to learn how to use the software. Although it took a while to figure out, it is extremely rewarding to have acquired this skill. I love seeing all my hard work pay off by seeing a usable survey.

I have also acquired and perfected some soft skills that will be valuable in any workplace or any career if I decide once again to change my plans. I think the most invaluable of these is collaboration. Aside from working in a restaurant, I have never had a job in which I had to collaborate with others extensively. In developing the survey, I had to heed the advice of others. Since I am new to this, I received many constructive suggestions from the people at Historic New Harmony and the Office of Planning, Research and Assessment.

This leads to another skill I have practiced while working at Historic New Harmony: communication. I am elated I could practice this skill since it is valuable not only in every workplace, but also in every area of life. I worked from home during this experience, so communication was even more important than it usually is. Exchanging clear and concise emails was part of my usual routine.

Overall, I have learned an incredible amount from this internship. Far too much to list here, but the few named skills will help me in my professional journey. I am so grateful for the opportunity to help Historic New Harmony in its mission to create a new exhibit and/or program. Thank you everyone for having me!

More Perfect Places: A Theatrical Celebration of the Past, Present and Future

Tanya Palmer, Associate Professor of Theatre at Indiana University

“More Perfect Places: A Theatrical Celebration of the Past, Present and Future of New Harmony” will offer free performances at Thrall’s Opera House June 10-11, 2022.

More Perfect Places is a play inspired by New Harmony’s utopian history, but it is also an invitation to imagine what the future holds for this unique community. Part social gathering, part formal theater and part outdoor spectacle, *More Perfect Places* gives voice to well-known historical and contemporary figures such as Robert Owen and Jane Blaffer Owen along with lesser-known figures and writer and historian Charity Dye, pioneering African-American farmer Keziah Rosborough, —through writer and director Seth Bockley’s rich imagination, including the animals, plants and geographic features that make this special place a utopia right here in Indiana. Written and developed with the support of The Center for Rural Engagement, Indiana University’s Department of Theatre, Drama and Contemporary Dance, the New Harmony Project, Historic New Harmony, the University of Southern Indiana, the Working Men’s Institute and the Robert Lee Blaffer Foundation, the creative team behind *More Perfect Places* is thrilled to bring this celebration of the past, present and future of New Harmony to Thrall’s Opera House this summer for two free performances on June 10 and 11.



More Perfect Places is a collaboration between director and playwright Seth Bockley, video and installation artist Liz Nofziger, theatre scholar Tanya Palmer and arts integration and education specialist Angela Tillges. While many of the stories at the center of *More Perfect Places* are inspired by history, this event also invites young people from Southern Indiana to articulate both what they would want to preserve about their communities, and what they would like to

transform. As the play was being written in 2020 and 2021, Minnesota-based Arts Education expert Angela Tillges built curriculum and conducted workshops with middle schoolers and high schoolers in Mount Vernon and Huntingburg, Indiana, asking them to envision what a utopia in Southern Indiana would look like today. Their ideas and images will make up a part of the experience of *More Perfect Places*, which will feature a cast of IU Theatre students alongside professional actors from across the Midwest. Paoli, Indiana, based musician and composer Andrew Gerber is creating an original score for the play, and local New Harmony musician Liz Mumford and her band Blue Harmony will join in for a post-show community celebration.



We are still seeking interested youth (ages approximately 10-20) to join us as performers in the show. No prior experience is necessary, you just need to be available during the week of June 6-12. If you are interested, please contact Angela Tillges at angie.tillges@gmail.com. Finally, we need audience members—you and your friends and family are a critical part of the show! Please visit us at www.moreperfectplaces.org to learn more about the performance and to reserve free tickets for the play and post-show video installation and celebration. We look forward to seeing you at Thrall's Opera House at 7 p.m. on June 10 or 11.

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.



Historic New Harmony

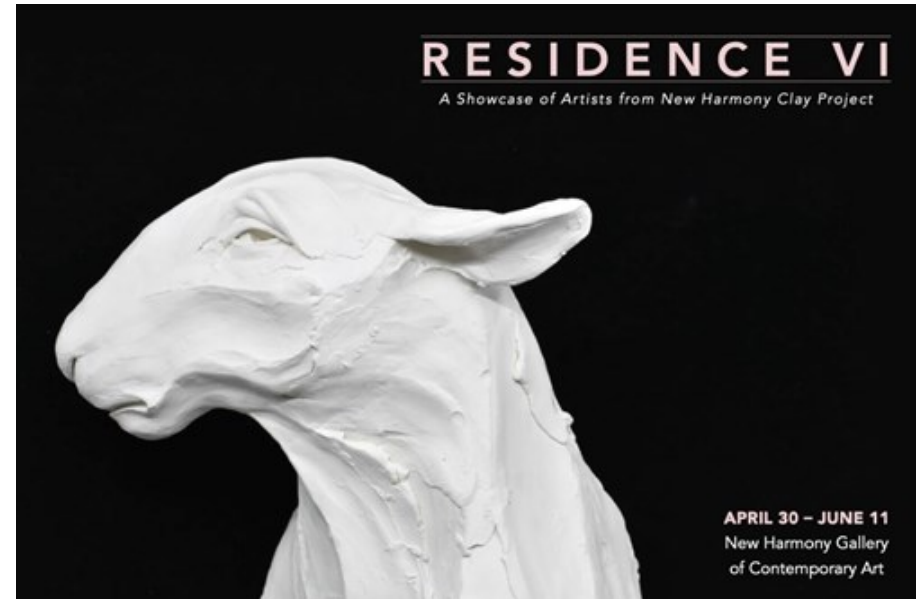
New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art Update

MAY 2022

Iris Williamson

On April 30, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art opened "Residence VI," an exhibition featuring ceramics by recent New Harmony Clay Project (NHCP) artists-in-residence. Works by Caro Burks, Donna Causland, Katie Chandler, Pennie Ebsen, Daeun Lim, Sarah McIntosh, Natalie Nicholson, Eva Polzer and Mona Martinez Seno span the realm of the functional, the sculptural and installation. "Residence VI" is the sixth-annual exhibition showcasing NHCP residents.

New Harmony Clay Project celebrates research and experimentation in clay, bringing artists from around the world to expand their practice at Sarah Campbell Blaffer Ceramic Studio in New Harmony, Indiana. In addition to being a vital resource for visiting artists, NHCP provides classes in the summer for community members who are interested in working with clay. We're thankful for this longstanding partnership with New Harmony Clay Project, and we hope you will make it out to the gallery before June 11 to see "Residence VI!"



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.