

Southeast Working-Class Task Force January/February 2018 Newsletter

The Working Men's Institute New Harmony, Indiana

Today, the Working Men's Institute (WMI) is a public library, a museum and an archive (<http://workingmensinstitute.org/>). The mission of the WMI was set forth by founder William Maclure in 1838 is the dissemination of useful knowledge to working men and their families. Maclure intended the Working Men's Institute to bridge the information gap between the wealthy and the poor by providing libraries for average people. Today, the institute still bridges the information gap by providing library services including public access computers to all of the people of Posey County.

With the growth of our museum, and archives that house rare books, manuscripts and artifacts from New Harmony's unique past we embrace the mission of safeguarding our unique holdings while making them accessible to increase public awareness and knowledge of the New Harmony experiment.

Established by philanthropist William Maclure in 1838, WMI set as its mission the dissemination of useful knowledge to those who work with their hands. After 170 years of continuous service, this goal is still at the heart of our mission.

Maclure, who was a business partner with Robert Owen in the communal experiment in New Harmony from 1825-1827, was devoted to the ideal of education for the common man as a means of positive change in society. At New Harmony, The Working Men's Institute was one manifestation of this ideal.

The Working Men's Institute in New Harmony was the first of 144 WMIs in Indiana and 16 in Illinois. It is the only one remaining. Many WMIs were absorbed by township libraries or Carnegie libraries. Yet the one in New Harmony remained.

Housed in a wing of the old Harmonist Church from 1838 until 1894, the WMI found a new home in our lovely Victorian Romanesque Revival building that is now one of Indiana's 72 National Historic Landmarks. With its arched windows, belt courses of stone and iconic tower, the WMI is an imposing landmark in the historic town of New Harmony.

This public library, museum and archive continues to try to stay true to the original mission of William Maclure. The WMI is located at 407 Tavern St., 47631. Phone (812) 682-4806 for more information.

"The Working Men's Institute New Harmony, Indiana" is quoted directly from <http://workingmensinstitute.org/about-us/>.

The *SEW-CTF Newsletter* is edited by task force Chair John Harris Loflin
The task force meets the 3rd Wed. of the month at 6:30 on the 2nd floor, 901 Shelby St.
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