

Library Programs in Indiana in the 1850s

JOHN W. FRITCH AND DAVID M. HOVDE

Books are the treasured wealth of the world and the fit inheritance of generations and nations. Books, the oldest and the best, stand naturally and rightfully on the shelves of every cottage.

H. D. Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854

In 1806, the territorial legislature chartered the first library in Indiana. The Vincennes Library Company began with 210 books contributed by local residents, mostly business and professional men. Though the library was chartered by the territory, its founders considered it their exclusive organization; only later did tradesmen, farmers, and craftsmen become library members. In 1811, another early subscription library was formed in Madison, Indiana. The Rappites began the first communal library in Indiana after they settled in southern Indiana in 1815. Evidence indicates that the library at Harmony contained approximately 360 volumes.¹

The state's 1816 constitution permitted the sale of town lots in each county seat to generate revenue for public subscription-model libraries.

John W. Fritch and David M. Hovde are Associate Professors of Library and Information Science at Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

¹Howard H. Peckham, "Books and Reading on the Ohio Valley Frontier," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 44 (1958), 656; J. Robert Constantine, *The Role of Libraries in the Cultural History of Indiana*, ERIC Document ED 044 132 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1970), 21; Dan A. Williams, "The New Harmony Working Men's Institute," *The Library Quarterly* 20 (April 1950), 109.

The first county library chartered under this provision was established in Dubois County in 1818. By 1830, most Indiana counties had founded similar libraries. These early county libraries served large geographic areas; most Indiana towns would not have their own libraries until at least the middle of the century, when public and private forces converged to create more than 1,098 libraries in the decade from 1850 to 1860.²

Two concurrent programs, both begun in the 1850s, strongly influenced the future of Indiana's libraries, establishing a foundation for the creation of true public libraries in the late 1800s. The first was the Indiana School Library program—later known as the Indiana Township Libraries—developed by the state's first superintendent of public instruction and funded by the state. The second was the Maclure Workingmen's Libraries, funded by the estate of scientist and philanthropist William Maclure, and created by the residents of Indiana villages and towns.

CHAMPIONING EDUCATION

Prior to Indiana statehood, religious groups including Quakers, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics established most of the territory's scattered schools and academies. One exception was the government-sponsored Jefferson Academy, later Vincennes University, which was established in 1801. By the 1820s, most Indiana towns contained a church school, neighborhood school, or private academy. As historian James Madison notes: "Where common schools existed, they were locally created, financed, and controlled. Nowhere were they entirely free and equally open to all."³

In the 1830s and 1840s, advocates of education often commented on the development of school and district libraries in other states, believing that Indiana citizens, young and old, would pursue self-improvement

²Constantine, *The Role of Libraries in the Cultural History of Indiana*, 23. Most of these were school/township libraries, along with a presumed additional 160 Maclure libraries. On school/township library programs, see Robert S. Freeman and David M. Hovde, "The Indiana Township Library Program, 1852-1872: A Well Selected, Circulating Library as an Educational Instrumentality," *Libraries to the People: Histories of Outreach*, eds. Robert S. Freeman and David M. Hovde (Jefferson, N.C., 2003), 128-47.

³James H. Madison, *Hoosiers: A New History of Indiana* (Bloomington, Ind., 2014).

if opportunities were available.⁴ This belief mirrored American society: Americans of the time engaged in self-enrichment and self-education; they valued access to books; and those who were able frequented literary clubs, lyceums, and societies. Diverse audiences—men and women of all ages “drawn from an occupational spectrum that included artisans, mechanics, farmers, lawyers, teachers, professors, doctors, clergymen, shopkeepers, and merchants”—attended educational public lectures. In large measure, however, Americans prided themselves not on scholarly endeavors but rather on the acquisition of practical knowledge characterized by “useful” information.⁵

In Indiana, several individuals played key roles in promoting free, public education and in making libraries available so that citizens could be exposed to the benefits of reading. William Clark Larrabee was a leading advocate of common schools and libraries. During debates over the new state constitution of 1851, he worked toward constitutional provision for public schools. In 1852, he was elected the first state superintendent of public instruction and was instrumental in implementing the Indiana School Library program.

Caleb Mills was a graduate of Dartmouth College and Andover Theological Seminary. He moved to Crawfordsville, Indiana, in 1833 to assume leadership of a Presbyterian school which later became Wabash College. Mills was a strong proponent of free public education and libraries, particularly promoting the Harper & Brothers school district library collection used by many eastern states. Mills became superintendent of public instruction after Larrabee's term ended, and he greatly expanded the state's school library program.⁶

William Maclure, born in Scotland in 1763 to a merchant family, experienced great financial success at an early age as a partner in a London commercial firm. In 1803, he became a United States citizen. Maclure embodied the culture and philosophy of Europe, but he was quintessentially American in his embrace of initiative and in his belief that every

⁴Sidney Ditzion, “The School District Library 1835-55,” *The Library Quarterly* 10 (October 1940), 545-77; Robert S. Freeman, “Harper & Brothers Family and School District Libraries, 1830-1846,” *Libraries to the People*, eds. Freeman and Hovde, 26-49; Donald M. Scott, “The Popular Lecture and the Creation of a Public in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America,” *Journal of American History* 66 (March 1980), 801-802; Thomas Augst, “The Business of Reading in Nineteenth-Century America: The New York Mercantile Library,” *American Quarterly* 50 (June 1998), 285, 292-93.

⁵Scott, “The Popular Lecture and the Creation of a Public in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America,” 800, 806.

⁶Freeman and Hovde, “The Indiana Township Library Program, 1852-1872,” 128-47.

individual could succeed because of the freedom, lack of social classes, and opportunity available in the United States. Maclure expended his personal funds to promote scientific exploration and educational reform, and to support various philanthropic projects. His philosophy of education derived from the Swiss theorist Johann Pestalozzi, but his ideas regarding social reform through education were inspired by his experience of American democratic society.⁷

In 1828, Maclure sponsored the Society for Mutual Instruction in New Harmony, Indiana, and a decade later he founded the first Workingmen's Institute to offer useful and practical knowledge to working men in the community. When he wrote his will in 1839, he left \$80,000 to support "the diffusion of useful knowledge and instruction amongst the institutes, libraries, clubs, or meetings of working classes or manual laborers who earn their living by the sweat of the brow." The document specified that \$500 was to be given to any group of workingmen who formed themselves together to collect a library of 100 or more books and committed to purchase additional volumes in the future.⁸

Unfortunately, Maclure's heirs, who wanted control of his estate, had no interest in funding educational programs or libraries. They sought, and initially obtained, a legal opinion disavowing his will's allowance of funds for workingmen's libraries. In response, Alvin P. Hovey, a young, largely self-educated Indiana attorney, filed suit against Maclure's heirs to restore the original terms of the will. The argument eventually reached the state Supreme Court, where Hovey won his case, establishing a reputation for legal acumen, integrity, and perspicacity. The practical problem of

⁷For example, Maclure introduced Pestalozzian methods and teachers to the U.S., was in charge of education at Robert Owen's utopian community in New Harmony, Indiana, and sponsored vocational schools in Europe. Leonard Warren, *Maclure of New Harmony: Scientist, Progressive Educator, Radical Philanthropist* (Bloomington, Ind., 2009), 26.

⁸Jeffrey Douglas, "William Maclure and the New Harmony Working Men's Institute," *Libraries and Culture* 26 (Spring 1991), 405-414; Williams, "The New Harmony Working Men's Institute," 111-12; Josephine Mirabella Elliott, "William Maclure: Patron Saint of Indiana Libraries," *Indiana Magazine of History* 94 (June 1998), 186-87. The terms "workingmen" and "working classes" can be ambiguous, but throughout this paper we rely on the definition specified by Maclure in his 1839 will. Many members of the workingmen's libraries used Maclure's terms in their constitutions, which they provided as documentation when requesting library funding.

distributing Maclure's funds was solved when Hovey was appointed administrator in charge of disbursement.⁹

BOOK OWNERSHIP

Maclure's will specified that funds from his estate be given only to groups with a proven commitment to establishing a library. Those who requested money from the estate needed to gather their own books together before submitting their request. Thus, workingmen selected titles for donation from their own presumably meager collections in order to begin their new libraries.

During the mid-nineteenth century, extensive personal libraries were typically owned by wealthy individuals or by those professionals, such as attorneys, who utilized books directly in their work. Books were expensive—tradesmen and laborers would likely have owned small collections—but they were available for sale in Indiana from territorial times, as general merchandise stores often offered individual volumes for sale. Michael Harris notes evidence of at least one bookstore in Indianapolis by 1833, and by 1850 the federal census lists twenty-two booksellers in the state. Local and regional printers would have made their own books and pamphlets available at reasonable prices; the 1850 census indicates that 374 printers were working in Indiana.¹⁰ Hoosiers, like other Americans,

⁹Born and raised in Indiana, orphaned at age 15, Hovey studied under prominent southern Indiana attorney and judge John Pitcher, a man who had also loaned books to a youthful Abraham Lincoln. Largely self-educated through a program of selective reading, Hovey passed the Bar at age 22. He served in the Mexican War and the Civil War, where he rose to the rank of major general. He later served as a circuit judge, the district attorney for Indiana, and a justice of the Indiana Supreme Court. He was elected to Congress in 1886 and elected governor of Indiana in 1888. Elfrieda Lang, ed., "Autobiography of Alvin P. Hovey's Early Life," *Indiana Magazine of History* 48 (March 1952), 71-84; Charles M. Walker, *Hovey and Chase: Life of General Alvin P. Hovey, Lawyer, Judge, Soldier, Diplomat and Statesman; Together with a Sketch of Ira J. Chase* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1888).

¹⁰David Paul Nord, "Working-Class Readers: Family, Community, and Reading in Late Nineteenth-Century America," *Communication Research* 13 (April 1986), 158; Michael H. Harris, *The Availability of Books and the Nature of Book Ownership on the Southern Indiana Frontier, 1800-1850* (Bloomington, Ind., 1971), 105-106; Peckham, "Books and Reading on the Ohio Valley Frontier," 651-53; Ronald J. Zboray, "Antebellum Reading and the Ironies of Technological Innovation," *Reading in America: Literature and Social History*, ed. Cathy N. Davidson (Baltimore, Md., 1989), 190-91. On Indiana book production during this period, see David M. Hovde, "John Beaston Semens: Visionary Publisher and the First Edition of *Route Across the Rocky Mountains*," in Overton Johnson and William H. Winter, *Route Across the Rocky Mountains*, ed. Angela Firkus (Lafayette, Ind., 2000), 23-32.

also had access to free government documents, provided by congressmen to their constituents upon request.¹¹

Harris, in documenting the availability of books in southern Indiana prior to 1850, discovered that religious organizations were a major source of books in private hands. Protestant denominations and their publishing societies distributed books and tracts to a wide audience at little or no charge. By 1855, approximately sixteen percent of all books produced in the United States were published by three Protestant denominations. Two other pan-Protestant groups—the American Sunday School Union (ASSU) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)—also provided free and low-cost materials on a large scale. The ASSU began in 1824 in Philadelphia, and in many towns it provided the only opportunity for poor children, particularly young girls and free blacks, to receive an education. By the 1850s, the group had begun a number of libraries aimed at different audiences. The YMCA maintained libraries in communities throughout the nation, including Indiana, during the same time; it aimed its reformist efforts towards young men who were drawn to urban areas for work. The YMCA library in Lafayette, Indiana, founded in 1855, possessed a 250-volume library. Overall, however, the number of libraries in Indiana remained relatively small: the 1850 census lists only 151 libraries of all types in the state.¹²

TWO MID-CENTURY LIBRARY PROGRAMS

The new Indiana Constitution of 1851 and the revised statutes of 1852 brought major changes to statewide education initiatives, including the creation of the office of superintendent of public instruction and the establishment of the Indiana School Library program. The program led to the establishment of 938 libraries in 91 counties (see figure 1). Initially, each library was identical, containing 223 volumes from major

¹¹Beginning in 1775, members of Congress were allowed to send postage-free mail, including government documents. See Matthew E. Glassman, "CRS Report for Congress. Congressional Franking Privilege: Background and Current Legislation," Order Code RS22771, December 11, 2007, online at <http://www.fas.org/sfp/crs/misc/RS22771.pdf>.

¹²Harris, *The Availability of Books and the Nature of Book Ownership on the Southern Indiana Frontier*, 20-75; Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789-1880* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 2004), 51; Anne M. Boylan, *Sunday School: The Formation of an American Institution, 1790-1880* (New Haven, Ct., 1988), 6-7, 22-23, 50; William Jones Rhees, *Manual of Public Libraries, Institutions, and Societies in the United States and British Provinces of North America* (Philadelphia, 1859), 595.

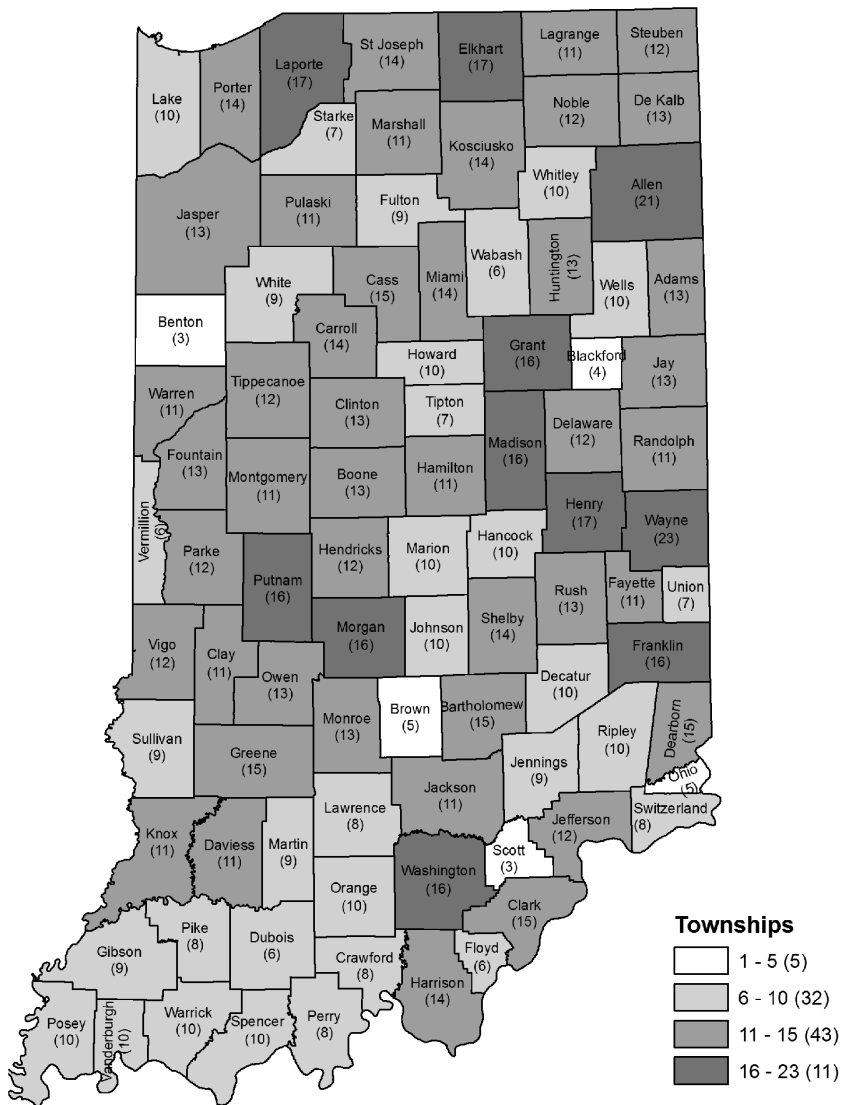


Figure 1: Density of Indiana Townships by County in 1854

Map data depicted by Nicole Kong, GIS Specialist, Purdue University Libraries. 1850 Map: Minnesota Population Center. National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 2.0. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota 2011.

publishers in cities including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Cincinnati.¹³

The Indiana program resembled those in other states and territories. New York had been the first state to place identical libraries in each school district in the 1830s; the program there was tied directly to the development of public schools. By the 1870s, similar programs had appeared in nineteen states and territories, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Michigan, Ohio, and Iowa. The contents of the Indiana School libraries are documented in the first catalog and in annual reports from the superintendent's office.¹⁴

In contrast, the complete contents of the Maclure Workingmen's Libraries are virtually undocumented: the libraries were non-governmental, local efforts, and no records have been discovered for titles purchased directly with Maclure funds. The records that do exist document the beginnings of sixty-four workingmen's libraries.¹⁵ Alvin Hovey followed Maclure's instruction that those wishing to receive money from the estate submit a list of titles already in their group's "library." In 1855

¹³"An Act to Provide for a General and Uniform System of Common Schools, and School Libraries, and Matters properly Connected therewith," *The Revised Statutes of the State of Indiana Passed at the Thirty-sixth Session of the General Assembly*, vol. 1 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1852), chap. 98, sec. 138-46; Freeman and Hovde, "The Indiana Township Library Program, 1852-1872," 128-47.

¹⁴"School and Asylum Libraries," U.S. Bureau of Education, *Public Libraries in the United States of America: Their History, Condition, and Management: Special Report*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C., 1876), 38-58; Carleton Bruns Joeckel, *The Government of the American Public Library*, (Chicago, 1935), 8-14; David Kaser, *A Book for a Sixpence: The Circulating Library in America* (Pittsburgh, Pa., 1980), 86-88; and Jesse H. Shera, *Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England, 1629-1855* (Chicago, 1949), 181-84; Haynes McMullen, ed., *Libraries in American Periodicals Before 1876: A Bibliography with Abstracts and an Index* (Jefferson, N. C., 1983), 54-59.

¹⁵We do not consider the original Workingmen's Institute library, established by Maclure in New Harmony, to be a part of this program; its collection has been documented. See Williams, "The New Harmony Working Men's Institute," 116-17; and Douglas, "William Maclure and the New Harmony Working Men's Institute," 410-411.

and 1856, Hovey disbursed \$80,000 to 160 libraries to purchase books.¹⁶

The *Complete Record Circuit Court Journal 1840-1859 Posey County*, stored in the basement of the Posey County Courthouse in Mount Vernon, Indiana, contains the names of sixty-four Workingmen's Institutes, their constitutions and bylaws, their membership lists, and the initial contents of their libraries. Collectively known as the Maclure libraries, each organization had its own name, such as the Raysville Philomathean Society and the New Albany Beneficial Association of Steam Boat Engineers. Some of these entities possessed libraries before receiving Maclure funds: the Farmer's Institute in Tippecanoe County, for example, was an established Quaker educational institution with a library and a literary society, and in Bluffton, Indiana, Maclure funds purchased 214 books to add to an existing library. Unfortunately, title lists for the Maclure libraries cover only the initial collections. The only known example of a Maclure collection studied in detail over time is the Farmers' Institute/Western Literary Union of Tippecanoe County.¹⁷

Because the documents submitted to Hovey included membership lists, we can compare those lists with 1850 and 1860 census records for Indiana to determine whether the members met Maclure's definition of workingmen. The Maclure Workingmen's Association of Knightstown, for example, included carpenter Joseph Deem, blacksmith Elias Henshaw, farmer Charles Bell, coppersmith Joseph Bell, and cabinetmaker Thomas Tucker.¹⁸

¹⁶Questions remain regarding the total amount of money disbursed and the number of libraries formed. If \$80,000 had been given out in increments of \$500, it would have funded 160 libraries. Researchers have offered various estimates on the number of libraries formed: McMullen claimed "at least 146;" Williams and Elliott claimed 160; McBride claimed 162; Dunn claimed 144; Warren claimed 155 libraries. The vast majority of the libraries receiving funds, by scholarly consensus, were in Indiana (144?), with the remainder (16?) located in Illinois. See Haynes McMullen, *American Libraries before 1876* (Westport, Ct., 2000), 76; Williams, "The New Harmony Workingmen's Institute," 113; Elliott, "William Maclure: Patron Saint of Indiana Libraries," 186-87; Francis Helmerick McBride, "Maclure Libraries in Indiana and Illinois," appendix VI, unpublished paper, July 1967, (copy, Indiana State Library); J. P. Dunn, *The Libraries of Indiana* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1893), 15; Warren, *Maclure of New Harmony*, 292. In reviewing primary documents to determine how many libraries were formed and where, we discovered that more requests had been made (from at least three states: Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio) than were fundable. Research into this issue is ongoing.

¹⁷The 64 libraries constitute approximately 40% of the total Maclure libraries; they are relatively evenly distributed across the state. David M. Hovde and John W. Fritch, "In Union There Is Strength: The Farmers' Institute and the Western Literary Union Library," *Libraries & Culture: Historical Essays Honoring the Legacy of Donald G. Davis, Jr.*, eds. Cheryl Knott Malone, Hermina G. B. Anghelescu, and John Mark Tucker (Washington, D.C., 2006), 61-84; Amy G. Greiner, *The Wells County Public Library, A Century of Service 1902-2002* (Bluffton, Ind., 2002), 3.

¹⁸Maclure Workingmen's Association of Knightstown, in *Complete Record Circuit Court Journal 1840-1859 Posey County*, p. 253, Posey County Courthouse, Mount Vernon, Indiana.

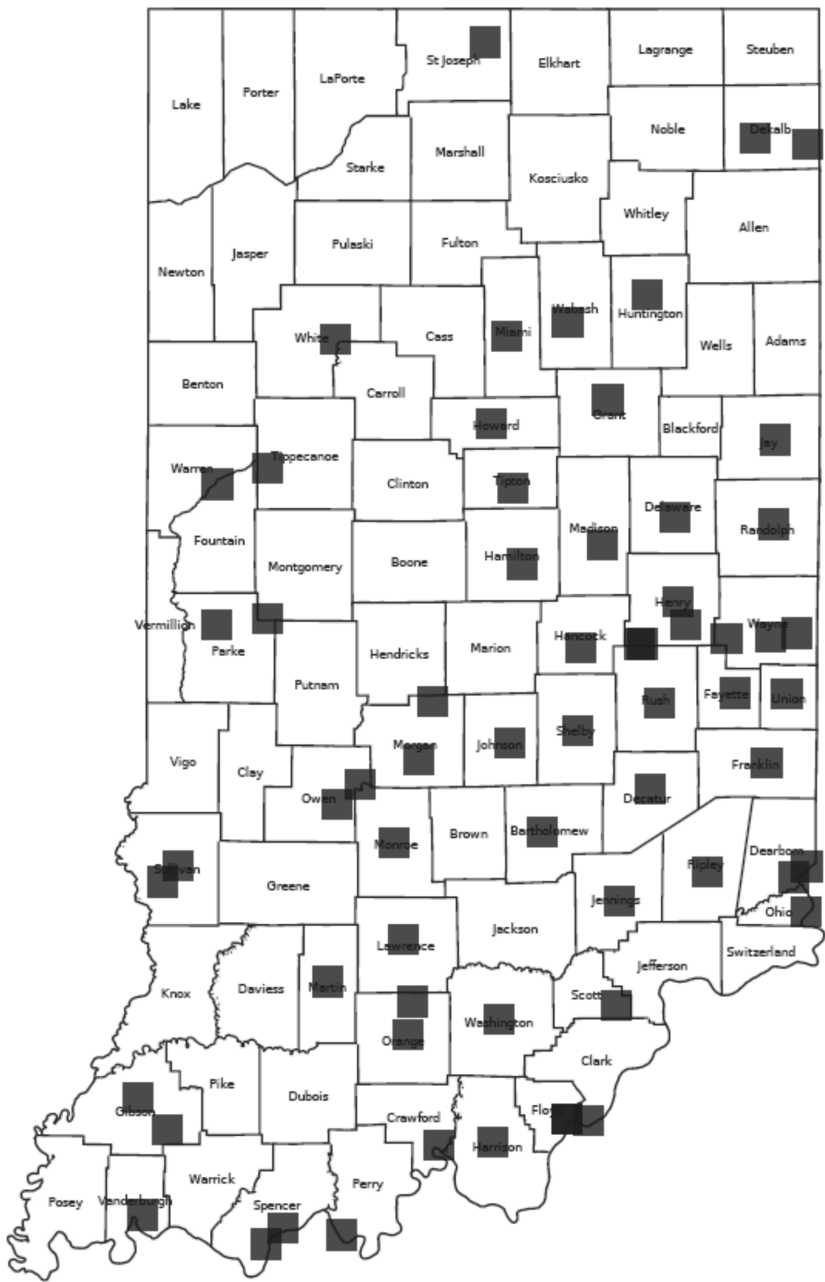


Figure 2: Locations of 64 Maclure library collections that comprise this study
(Map created by C.C. Miller, GIS Specialist, MIT Lincoln Laboratory Library and Archives)

In contrast, Larrabee and Mills, who selected books for the Indiana School Library program, were highly educated men who had graduated from eastern colleges and held positions as professors. In the beginning of their program, libraries were to be placed in each school district, and the men selected titles they considered of general interest to all ages.¹⁹ The initial catalog of books published in the fall of 1854—the *Catalogue of the Indiana School Library*—contains 223 titles, each accompanied by a short paragraph describing the volume's contents and the reason for its inclusion. In his preface to the catalog, Larrabee acknowledged that he had excluded some categories of books: those available only by subscription, those distributed by religious societies and presses, and those likely to be found in ASSU libraries already in the state.²⁰ The superintendent's annual reports provide specific information on additions to the library collection over time; both of these sources, as well as Caleb Mills's "One of the People" public epistles, offer a good idea of the philosophy behind the collections. In his letters, Mills passionately advocated for a library program to educate citizens:

Who could estimate the value of a library of 500 volumes . . . circulating in every township in this commonwealth? Who could tell how many a strong, vigorous mind would thus be trained for usefulness—how many Franklins and Henrys would there be nourished to shine in the nation's coronet of worthies, how many Shermans thus fostered would rise from the shoemaker's bench to a seat in the Senate of this Union? ²¹

¹⁹Larrabee was a professor at Asbury College (now DePauw University); Mills was a professor at Wabash Teachers' Seminary and Manual Labor College (now Wabash College). William C. Larrabee, *Catalogue of the Indiana School Library* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1854), 4.

²⁰*Ibid.* Caleb Mills struggled with the issue of religion in public education and placing religious titles in the libraries. See One of the People [Caleb Mills], "Read, Circulate and Discuss. An Address To the Legislature of Indiana At The Commencement of its Session December 6, 1847 Upon Popular Education," reprinted in Charles W. Moores, "Caleb Mills and the Indiana School System" *Indiana Historical Society Publications* vol. 3, no. 6 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1905), 458-60.

²¹One of the People, "Sixth Annual Address on Popular Education to the Legislature of Indiana" (1852) reprinted in Moores, "Caleb Mills and the Indiana School System," 578-623.

A CATEGORICAL COMPARISON OF HOLDINGS

The holdings of these two 1850s library programs provide an opportunity to examine access to books in Indiana in the years prior to the Civil War. Examining the choices made by the state superintendents and the founders of the Maclure libraries can help scholars assess what the state chose to offer citizens and what citizens themselves already possessed. In examining the two library programs' holdings, we particularly wanted to identify disparities—areas where one program covered topics that the other did not. Larrabee had originally divided the 1854 Indiana School Library into eight categories. The Maclure collections held a number of titles that did not fit these categories, making comparison difficult. We therefore created new categories, as found in the table below, in order to offer a representative comparison of holdings.

Representative Examples of Books from the Two 1850s Library Programs

Category	Indiana School Library	Maclure Libraries
Government Documents	None	<i>Report of the Commissioner of Patents</i>
		<i>Commerce and Navigation: From the United States Secretary of the Treasury</i>
		<i>Report of the Indiana State Board of Agriculture</i>
Agriculture	<i>The American Shepherd</i> /L.A. Morrell	<i>Farmers' Barn-book : containing the causes, symptoms, and treatment of all the diseases incident to oxen, sheep, and swine</i> / Francis Clater
	<i>Farm Implements</i> / John J. Thomas	<i>Farm Implements</i> / John J. Thomas
	<i>Farmer's Instructor</i> / Jesse Buel	<i>The New-England Farmer; or, Georgical dictionary</i> / Samuel Deane

Religion	None	Holy Bible
		<i>Debate on the evidences of Christianity ...held in the city of Cincinnati, for eight days successively, between Robert Owen, of New Lanark, Scotland, and Alexander Campbell, of Bethany, Virginia / Robert Owen; Alexander Campbell</i>
		<i>The pictorial Sunday book: designed for the use of families, Bible classes, and Sunday School teachers/ Robert Sears</i>
Science	<i>The Connection of the Physical Sciences/ Mary Sommerville</i>	<i>Manual of mineralogy, including observations on mines, rocks, reduction of ores, and the applications of the science to the arts / James Dwight Dana</i>
	<i>Guide to the Observation of Nature/ Robert Mudie</i>	
	<i>Uses and Abuses of the Air/ John H. Griscom</i>	<i>A manual of magnetism, including galvanism, magnetism, electro-magnetism, electro-dynamics, magneto-electricity, and thermo-electricity /</i>
	<i>The Planetary and Stellar Worlds/ O.M. Mitchel</i>	<i>Daniel Davis; William F. Channing; Jos. Hale Abbot; John Bacon, Jr.</i>
		<i>Comstock's Chemistry or Elements of Chemistry, In Which the Recent Discoveries in The Science are Included and Its Doctrines Familiarly Explained/ J. L. Comstock</i>

Engineering/ Mechanical Arts	<i>Illustrations of Mechanics/</i> H. Moseley	<p><i>The mechanic's calculator : comprehending principles, rules, and tables in the various departments of mathematics and mechanics, useful to millwrights, engineers, and artisans in general / William Grier</i></p> <p><i>The artist's guide and mechanic's own book, embracing the portion of chemistry applicable to the mechanic arts, with abstracts of electricity, galvanism, magnetism, pneumatics, optics, astronomy, and mechanical philosophy. Also mechanical exercises in iron, steel, lead, zinc, copper, and tin soldering and a variety of useful receipts, extending to every profession and occupation of life; particularly dyeing, silk, woollen, cotton, and leather / James Pilkington</i></p> <p><i>On the steam engine/Thomas Tredgold</i></p>
History	<i>Rollins Ancient History/</i> Charles Rollins	<p><i>The works of Flavius Josephus: comprising the antiquities of the Jews; a history of the Jewish wars; and life of Flavius Josephus</i></p>
	<i>History of the Moors in Spain/ M. Florian</i>	
	<i>History of Nubia and Abyssinia/ Michael Russell</i>	<p><i>History of the reformation of the sixteenth century / J.H. Merle d'Aubigné; Henry White</i></p>
		<p><i>Camp-fires of the revolution: or The War of Independence illustrated by thrilling events and stories by the old continental soldiers / Henry C. Watson</i></p>

Biography	<i>Library of American Biography/</i> Jared Sparks	<i>A Life of Washington/</i> James Kirke Paulding
	<i>A Life of Washington/</i> James Kirke Paulding	<i>Life of Napoleon Bonaparte. With a preliminary view of the French Revolution/</i> Walter Scott
	<i>Life of Peter the Great/</i> John Barrow	<i>The life of Major-General William H. Harrison, ninth president of the United States/</i> Henry Montgomery
Voyages & Travels	<i>Popular Account of the Discoveries in Nineveh/</i> Austen Henry Layard	<i>Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon, Made Under Direction of the Navy Department/</i> William Lewis Herndon
	<i>Travels of Mungo Park/</i> Mungo Park	<i>An authentic narrative of the loss of the American brig Commerce/</i> James Riley; Anthony Bleecker
	<i>A Summer in Scotland/</i> Jacob Abbott	<i>The travels and adventures of celebrated travelers in the principal countries of the globe /</i> Henry Howe
	<i>Selections from the British Poets/</i> Fitz-Greene Halleck	<i>The prose works of John Milton /</i> John Milton; James Augustus St. John; Charles Richard Sumner
Literature	<i>Moral Tales/</i> Maria Edgeworth	<i>The dramatic works of William Shakespeare /</i> William Shakespeare; Alexander Chalmers
	<i>Home Lights and Shadows/</i> Timothy Shay Arthur	
		<i>Robinson Crusoe/</i> Daniel Defoe

Medical & Health	None	<p><i>Consumption: its prevention and cure by the water treatment, with advice concerning haemorrhage from the lungs, coughs, colds, asthma, bronchitis, and sore throat / Joel Shew</i></p> <p><i>Six lectures on the uses of the lungs ; and causes, prevention, and cure of pulmonary consumption, asthma, and diseases of the heart; on the laws of longevity; and on the mode of preserving male and female health to an hundred years / Samuel Sheldon Fitch</i></p> <p><i>Philosophy of health : natural principles of health and cure : or, Health and cure without drugs : also, the moral bearings of erroneous appetites / Larkin B. Coles</i></p>
Self-Improvement	<p><i>Mercantile Morals; A book for Young Merchants/ Rev. W. H. Van Doren</i></p> <p><i>The Mother at Home / John S. C. Abbott</i></p> <p><i>Economy of Health/ James Johnson</i></p>	<p><i>The young man's guide/William A. Alcott</i></p> <p><i>Golden steps to respectability, usefulness and happiness/ John Mather Austin</i></p> <p><i>Hopes and helps for the young of both sexes / G. S. Weaver</i></p>

Social issues: Anti-Catholic	None	<i>The Great Red Dragon, or, The Master-key to Popery/</i> Antonio Gavin
		<i>A Debate on the Roman Catholic religion, between Alexander Campbell, and the Rt. Rev. John B Purcell</i>
		<i>Danger in the Dark: A tale of intrigue and priestcraft</i> /Isaac Kelso
Social issues: Anti-Slavery	None	<i>Twelve years a slave narrative of Solomon Northrup/</i> Solomon Northup
		<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin/</i> Harriet Beecher Stowe
		<i>Prison Life and Reflections; or, A narrative of the arrest, trial, conviction, imprisonment, treatment, observations, reflections, and deliverance of Work, Burr, and Thompson, who suffered an unjust and cruel imprisonment in Missouri Penitentiary, for attempting to aid some slaves to liberty/</i> George Thompson

The table highlights a number of differences in holdings within categories. Two of the most obvious are the lack of books on religion and the lack of government documents in the Indiana School Library program. The other disparity is seen in the School Library program's lack of coverage of specific social issues, including anti-slavery and anti-Catholicism.

NOTEWORTHY HOLDINGS

One category of Maclure library holdings that seems surprisingly limited in size and scope is agriculture. Examination of membership lists

and 1850 census records makes clear that a sizable number of Workingmen's Libraries' members were farmers; yet, of the sixty-four Maclure libraries in this study, nineteen possessed only one copy of an agriculture-related title from a commercial press, and the other forty-five had none. For a state with an economy largely based on agriculture, and a library program with ample representation of farmers, these numbers appear low. However, agricultural knowledge during this time was typically passed on within the family. In 1854, many of Indiana's county agricultural societies were only two to three years old, and the state's Board of Agriculture had only recently been founded. These organizations exposed farmers to new views on agricultural practice, as one document noted: "The old imbecile prejudice against 'Book-Farming' and the education of the sons and daughters of farmers is fast giving way before the lights of this Rail road and Telegraphic age."²²

Larrabee, on the other hand, emphasized agriculture in his selections for the school libraries. There are twelve agricultural commercial press books in the collection, including *The Farmer's Dictionary*, *The American Shepherd*, *The Fruit Garden*, and *Chemistry Applied to Agriculture*. These books ranged from a textbook aimed at a young audience to works oriented towards improving the knowledge, practices, and productivity of Hoosier farmers, and thus also improving the state's economy.

Mitigating the apparent dearth of agricultural books in Maclure libraries is the strong presence of federal government documents that included a number of agriculturally oriented titles. The Maclure collections' extensive holdings of government documents indicate that such volumes were owned by numerous citizens before the libraries were founded; some titles date back to the 1840s. As an example, William G. Coffin, a mechanic and a member of the Annapolis Laboring Man's Institute, contributed his copies of the *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury* for 1853, *Messages of the President* for 1851, and the *Report of the Commissioner of Patents* for 1846 and 1850. He also donated two state documents: *The Revised Statutes of the State of Indiana* for 1852 and the *Annual Report of the Indiana State Board of Agriculture*. Seven of seventeen contributors to this library gave copies of *Patent Office Reports*, ranging

²²N. Tompkins, "An Essay on Agriculture in General," *Third Annual Report of the Indiana State Board of Agriculture for the Year 1853* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1854), 48-49.

in date between 1846 and 1854. In total, thirty-one government documents appear in the Annapolis collection.²³

The *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Patents*, one of the two most common titles in the Maclure libraries, was interesting reading for those involved in business and the industrial sector of the growing Hoosier economy. The reports note new inventions and improvements on existing technologies, complete with illustrations; additionally, these volumes contain a wealth of information concerning agriculture. The volume covering agriculture in the 1854 report begins with an article on "Experiments with Seeds," followed by a "Report on Seeds and Cuttings recently introduced into the United States." These are followed by articles on the breeding of farm animals, insects injurious to vegetation, fertilizer, forage crops, gardening, live fences, pumping, and climatology—contemporary information regarding agricultural knowledge and practice in 1854.²⁴

Another significant government volume held by one-third of the Maclure collections is an annual entitled *Commerce and Navigation: from the United States Secretary of the Treasury*. These volumes contain tables of imports and exports by country and specify whether these goods were carried on American or foreign vessels. Using these along with *The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, another common item in these libraries, members could compare Indiana with other states with regard to population, agricultural production, education, and the number of libraries in each county.²⁵

Religious material constitutes another obvious difference between the Maclure libraries and the Indiana School Library program. Larrabee considered religious books unnecessary in the school program because they were commonplace in homes and because the Bible was often used in public schools to teach both reading and morality, so no theological titles were purchased for the school libraries. Further scrutiny, however,

²³Annapolis Laboring Man's Institute, *Complete Record Circuit Court Journal 1840-1859 Posey County*, 160.

²⁴Commissioner of Patents, *Report of the Commissioner of Patents for the Year 1854: Agriculture* (Washington, D. C., 1855).

²⁵Other works include the *Message from the President of the United States to the two houses of Congress*, *The Congressional Globe*, reports from the Smithsonian Institution, *The Revised Statutes of the State of Indiana*, and curiously *The Report of the Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey*. This last is an annual publication which contains large highly detailed maps of the United States coast and coastal rivers, reports on magnetic declinations, navigation techniques, tables of geographical positions of lighthouses and prominent physical landforms, and mathematical formulas related to the work of the Survey; nothing relates to the interior of the country, nor would a land surveyor find the material particularly valuable.

reveals the presence of religious topics across a variety of categories in both library programs. Consider, for example, *Indications of the Creator: Or the Natural Evidences of a Final Cause*, which Larrabee placed in the category of Science and Art. Other books in the categories of History and Literature also could be placed in the Religion category, although they would not have been at the time of publication.²⁶

Religious titles held prominent places in Workingmen's collections, not surprising given the prevalence of religious literature in Indiana generally and the distribution of tracts by religious societies. *Pilgrim's Progress* is found in seventeen of the Maclure libraries. The Bible is found frequently in Maclure collections as well. Bible reference books with titles such as *The Pictorial Sunday Book: Designed for the Use of Families, Bible Classes, and Sunday School Teachers* are common. It is clear from these libraries' holdings that Protestant literature, some of which was overtly anti-Roman Catholic, was widely held in Hoosier homes.

The existence of anti-Catholic material would not surprise anyone familiar with America in the 1850s, when anti-Catholic sentiment, already widespread, gained a prominent political voice through the Know-Nothing movement. Beginning in the 1830s, many poor, illiterate, Irish Catholic immigrants arrived in Indiana to work on canals. The men's work-camp existence and unhealthy working conditions enhanced prejudice against the workers, as did the fear of a large and growing body of immigrants loyal to the Pope. This fear was increased in 1853 by the arrival of Papal envoy Archbishop Gaetano Bedini, who spent seven months in America.²⁷ A number of riots and church burnings occurred over the next two years in the Midwest, including an August 1855 election-day riot by Know-Nothings, which caused the death of at least two dozen people in Louis-

²⁶Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (New York, 2003), 197-211; Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America* (New York, 1981), 149-57. On religion in Indiana, see William M. Cockrum, *Pioneer History of Indiana* (Oakland City, Ind., 1907), 462; Donald F. Carmony, *Indiana 1816-1850: The Pioneer Era* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1998), 389; Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1965), 481.

²⁷David J. Endres, "Know-Nothings, Nationhood, and the Nuncio: Reassessing the Visit of Archbishop Bedini," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 21 (Fall 2003), 1-16.

ville, Kentucky.²⁸ The popularity of anti-Catholic literature is reflected in Maclure library titles such as Antonio Gavin’s *The Great Red Dragon, or, The Master-key to Popery* and Isaac Kelso’s *Danger in the Dark: A Tale of Intrigue and Priestcraft*. Of the sixty-four Maclure libraries, more than one-third (twenty-three) contained anti-Catholic literature. As figure 3 indicates, this type of literature was distributed throughout the state.

Many Maclure collections also contain books attacking other religious groups, including Universalists and Mormons. Overall, religious titles—including religious history, biography, education, and theology—make up a significant portion of many Maclure libraries’ collections and are some of the most common books in the libraries. The Snake Run Hovey Library Association, for example, included twenty-four religious titles.

Most Common Books in Sixty-four Maclure Libraries

Titles	Number of libraries holding
<i>The works of Flavius Josephus: comprising the antiquities of the Jews; a history of the Jewish wars; and life of Flavius Josephus</i>	31
<i>Annual report of the Commissioner of Patents.</i>	31
<i>History of the reformation of the sixteenth century</i> / J. H. Merle d'Aubigné.	25
<i>Commerce and navigation: Letter from the Secretary of the Treasury, transmitting a report from the Register of the Treasury of the commerce and navigation of the United States for the fiscal year.</i>	20
<i>Pilgrim's Progress</i> / John Bunyan.	17
<i>Exploration of the valley of the Amazon: made under the direction of the Navy Department</i> / William Lewis Herndon and Lardner Gibbon.	16
<i>An authentic narrative of the loss of the American brig Commerce, wrecked on the western coast of Africa, in the month of August, 1815, with an account of the sufferings of the surviving officers and crew, who were enslaved by the wandering Arabs, on the African desert, or Zahahrah; and observations historical, geographical, &c. made during the travels of the author, while a slave to the Arabs, and in the empire of Morocco</i> / James Riley and Anthony Bleecker.	11

²⁸“Bloody Monday (1855),” in Steven Laurence Danver, ed., *Revolts, protests, demonstrations, and rebellions in American history: an Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, Cal., 2011), 377; United States Catholic Historical Society, *Historical Records and Studies*, vol. 5 (New York, 1907), 456-57; “Riots and Mobs,” in William Hyde and Howard Louis Conard, eds., *Encyclopedia of the History of St. Louis*, vol. 4 (New York, 1899), 1917; “Knownothingism,” in Charles George Herbermann, et al., eds. *The Catholic Encyclopedia* vol. 8 (New York, 1910), 679; Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s* (New York, 1992), 144.



Figure 3: Maclure libraries – Locations of Anti-Catholic literature
(Map created by C.C. Miller, GIS Specialist, MIT Lincoln Laboratory Library and Archives)

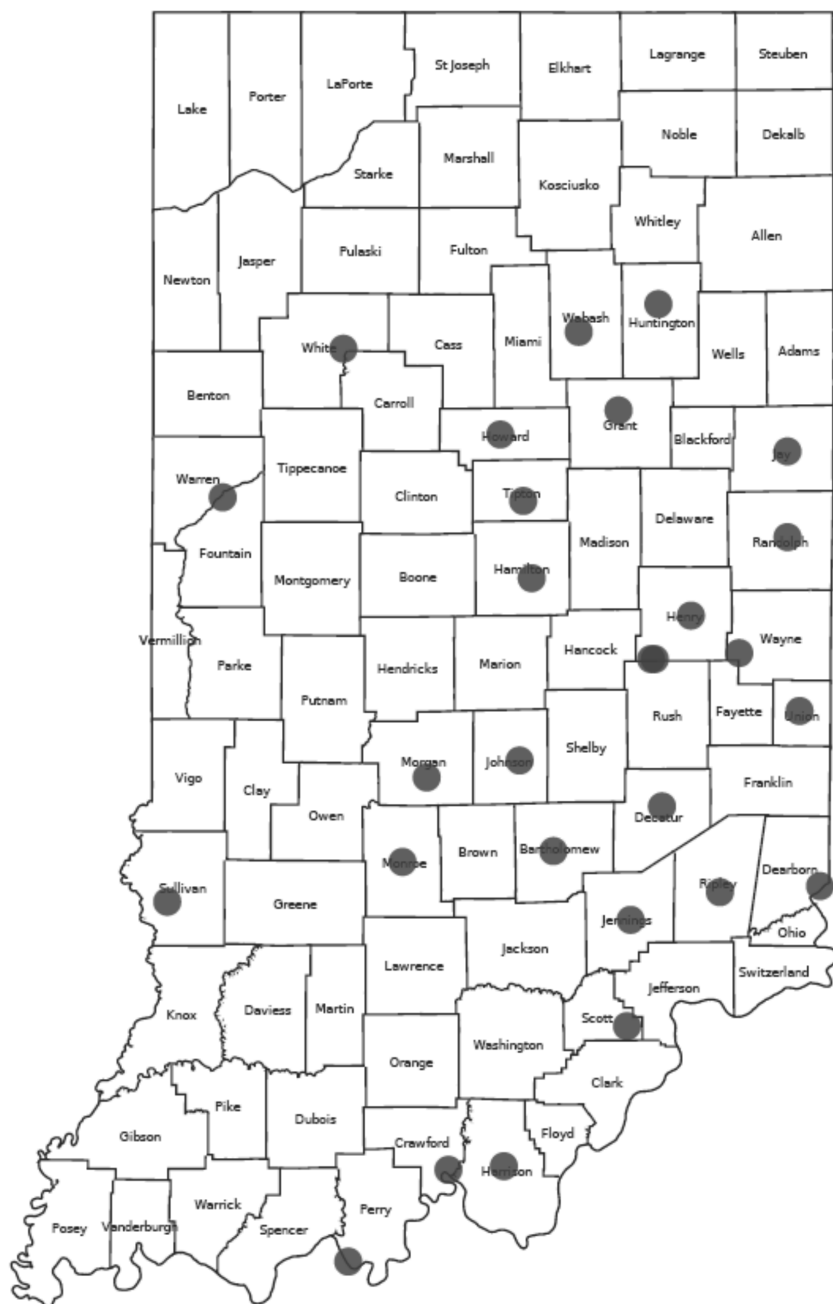


Figure 4: Maclure Libraries-Locations of Anti-Slavery Literature
(Map created by C.C. Miller, GIS Specialist, MIT Lincoln Laboratory Library and Archives)

The school libraries did not contain any books about slavery. Twenty-eight Maclure libraries (44 percent) contained anti-slavery literature; four (6 percent) contained pro-slavery literature. Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and George Thompson's *Prison Life and Reflections: or, A Narrative of the Arrest, Trial, Conviction, Imprisonment, Treatment, Observations, Reflections, and Deliverance of Work, Burr, and Thompson, Who Suffered an Unjust and Cruel Imprisonment in Missouri Penitentiary, for Attempting to Aid Some Slaves to Liberty* offer two examples. As figure 4 demonstrates, this topic was of widespread interest to Indiana workingmen.

The two collections heavily overlap in the area of literature. Though many educators, including Maclure, thought fiction detrimental to personal development, the Workingmen's Libraries contain an abundance of literature.²⁹ Larrabee, in building the school collection, believed that works by authors such as Maria Edgeworth and Timothy Shay Arthur presented "the purest moral aim." Larrabee commented on Edgeworth's novel *Frank*: "Miss Edgeworth's tales are all designed to inculcate lessons of virtue and benevolence. The importance of self-control, self-denial, decision, and perseverance are illustrated by a profusion of interesting and natural incidents." The Indiana School Library collection contains seventy-two literary works (including poetry, moral tales, and essays) which together comprise over 30 percent of the total collection of 223 titles.³⁰

Interestingly, American authors far outnumber European authors in the School Library, while the opposite is true of the Maclure collections. American authors represented in the school program include Ohio-born poet Alice Carey, novelists Ike Marvel (Donald Grant Mitchell), Caroline M. Kirkland, and Timothy Shay Arthur. Prominent European authors include Shakespeare and Dickens.

Overall, the sixty-four Maclure libraries contained two hundred and sixty-one fiction and poetry titles. Eighty-eight of these consist of European poetry, including the works of authors such as Byron, Tupper, Burns, Cowper, Bulwer-Lytton, Macpherson, and Milton. The next largest grouping, European fiction, comprises seventy-five titles (including seventeen copies of *Pilgrim's Progress*). The major authors in these collections are Sir Walter Scott, Bulwer-Lytton, Young, Marryat, Lesage, and Cervantes; the libraries hold an additional twenty-two titles of Shakespeare's com-

²⁹Warren, *Maclure of New Harmony*, 232; Ditzion, "The District-School Library, 1835-55," 545-77; David M. Hovde, "Sea Colportage: The Loan Library System of the American Seamen's Friend Society: 1859-1967," *Libraries & Culture* 29 (Fall 1994), 399-405.

³⁰Larrabee, *Catalogue of the Indiana School Library*, 40, 47.

plete works, poetry, or drama. The next largest grouping of literature in the Maclure libraries is American fiction with fifty-five titles, including thirteen copies of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as well as the novels that countered it. American fiction titles include temperance tales, anti-slavery novels, and American Tract Society material. Fanny Fern leads the list of American authors; there were also multiple titles authored by Edgar Allan Poe and works of American poetry authored by Sigourney, Longfellow, and Alcott.

Though no medical or health books appear in the School Library, a small number of health- and medicine-related works are present in the Maclure libraries' collections. One topic of note in this category is mineral water cures or hydrotherapy; Russell T. Trall, for example, designed his *Hydropathic encyclopedia: a system of hydropathy and hygiene*, as a guide for families but also for physicians.³¹

The scant attention given to Engineering/Mechanical Arts in the Indiana School Library is perhaps surprising, considering that the program's founder was interested in economic and industrial development. The single engineering title is *Illustrations of Mechanics*, designed, according to Larrabee, for self-instruction in civil engineering and mining. The Maclure collections contain a number of books concerning the mechanical arts. Five libraries contained *The Artist's Guide and Mechanic's Own Book, Embracing the Portion of Chemistry Applicable to the Mechanic Arts, with Abstracts of Electricity, Galvanism, Magnetism, Pneumatics, Optics, Astronomy, and Mechanical Philosophy* by James Pilkington. One unique library was undoubtedly the state's first engineering library: the New Albany Beneficial Association of Steam Boat Engineers. Of the one hundred and four titles in this collection, thirty-two involve steam engines and related topics. Others deal with astronomy and other sciences, including the geology and hydrology of the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. Titles include *Tredgold on the Steam Engine: Locomotive and Stationary Engines* and *A Practical Treatise on Chimneys; with a Few Remarks on Stoves* by George F. Eckstein.³²

³¹Indiana had a thriving industry in mineral waters decades before these libraries existed. The town of French Lick, for example, established its first spa in the 1830s. Fifty-one Indiana counties had mineral springs used for health-related activities during the nineteenth century, and a number had large, thriving resorts and spas. Harry B. Weiss and Howard R. Kemble, *The Great American Water-Cure Craze* (Trenton, N. J., 1967); W. S. Blatchley, "The Mineral Waters of Indiana," *Indiana Department of Geology and Natural Resources* 26 (1901), 11-158; Robert Hessler, "The Mineral Properties and Uses of Indiana Mineral Waters," *Indiana Department of Geology and Natural Resources* 26 (1901), 159-227.

³²New Albany Beneficial Association of Steam Boat Engineers, *Complete Record Circuit Court Journal 1840-1859 Posey County*, 333.

Self-improvement literature is also prevalent in both collections. Such literature was extremely popular during this period, particularly titles aimed at young men who were leaving farms to find employment in industrialized urban centers. The Indiana School collection contains eleven titles, including *Mercantile Morals*, *The Parent's Assistant*, *The Mother at Home*, and *The School and Schoolmaster*. Considering Larrabee's views, it is not surprising to find works by authors such as Maria Edgeworth, Mrs. L. H. Sigourney, and John S.C. Abbott. The sixty-four Maclure libraries contain no less than eighteen different titles in this category, the most common being Henry Ward Beecher's *Lectures to Young Men* and *The Young Man's Guide* by William A. Alcott.

CALEB MILLS'S ADJUSTMENTS TO THE SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAM

After Caleb Mills became superintendent of public instruction, he moved to correct what he considered defects in the School Library program. First, not all of the libraries had been distributed. In addition, the libraries that existed lacked basic state government documents, including the *Reports of the State Board of Agriculture*, *Laws of the State of Indiana*, and *Documents of the General Assembly of Indiana*, all serial titles. Mills also added John B. Dillon's *The History of Indiana, from Its Earliest Exploration by Europeans, to the Close of the Territorial Government in 1816* to the collections and changed the name of the libraries to Indiana Township Libraries.

During Mills's tenure, the library program expanded dramatically—by 1856, he had increased the total number of titles available in the collection to 1,084 (more than quadrupling the original number). Mills added overtly Christian titles such as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Christianity Revived in the East*, and *Evidences of Christianity*; he increased the number of titles concerned with economic issues, such as *The Man of Business Considered in His Various Relations* and *The Horse Doctor*; and he also added books concerning educational issues, such as *Teacher and Parent: a Treatise upon Common-School Education* and *The Bible in Common Schools*. In short, the township libraries, under the direction of Mills, moved closer in content to the Maclure collections compiled by the workingmen of Indiana.³³

³³Caleb Mills, *Third Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the State of Indiana*, in *Documents of the General Assembly of Indiana at the Thirty-eighth Session, Second Part* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1855), 842; Mills, *Fourth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 355; Mills, *Sixth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, for the State of Indiana*, in *Documents of the General Assembly of Indiana at the Thirty-eighth Session, First Part* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1858), 819-927.

While a great deal of topical overlap exists between the collections, the salient differences lead to questions about the absence of certain topics in the School Library collections. Answers to those questions may prove elusive. Perhaps because of a pull toward self-betterment, many workers selected books that would also have been selected for them by state administrators. We also know that in later years Mills added some of the neglected subject areas and formats to the School Library program as funding continued.

Analyses of titles in these collections make clear that the workingmen of Indiana had interest in and gained access to a wide variety of literary and non-fiction works, including those contained in both state and federal government documents. Indiana residents were concerned with major social issues of the day, including slavery, an expanding economy, the West, and perceived negative foreign influences. Slavery is an issue represented in a considerable number of the Maclure libraries, in books of both fiction and non-fiction—yet no coverage of this topic occurs in the School Library program. An obvious question is *why*? Was this topic considered too divisive by both Larrabee and later Mills? Larrabee was a Democrat, and Mills a Whig, so political party affiliation was probably not a factor. Did both men believe that some books were already widely owned, and thus unneeded in the collection? *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was one of the best-selling works of its day.³⁴

Both the anti-slavery and anti-Catholic literature demonstrate that workingmen of Indiana made an effort to keep abreast of controversial issues, some of which were beginning to divide the country. Thirteen Maclure libraries contain books on both topics, and these libraries are relatively evenly distributed throughout the state.

Western topics also greatly interested the American people. Books on these topics were not initially present in the School Library program, although they were found regularly in the Maclure collections: fifteen Maclure libraries contained books on California, ten contained works on Utah or Mormonism, eight contained books on Oregon, and three contained books on Kansas and Nebraska.

³⁴Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: the Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York, 1947), 114-22.

Workingmen held and valued many religious titles, and the Bible was a common book in homes of this period. Caleb Mills understood and gave voice to the importance of including religious titles in library collections:

However diversified may be our religious sentiments, there is a strong and prevailing impression in society that the great principles of the Bible, are inwrought in, and inseparable from, the civil institutions of the land. The Bible is too deeply enthroned in the hearts of the people to be excluded from our common schools and other institutions of learning.³⁵

The strong presence of government documents in the Maclure libraries demonstrates that workingmen took advantage of the free literature produced by the federal government. No other study of this type has encountered government documents owned by a specific group of American citizens in the nineteenth century. These holdings also seem to suggest that workingmen understood the value represented by the scientific and economic information available in many of these volumes.

Maclure libraries' titles covering business, mechanical arts, and medical cures such as hydrotherapy reveal an interest among workingmen in maintaining health and potentially earning additional income. In the 1850s, hydrotherapy was considered by many as a legitimate medical practice and/or a possible source of income. The absence of these sorts of titles in the state program may indicate that Larrabee considered them too narrow to appeal to a general audience.³⁶

Overall, the Maclure libraries provide a strong indication of nineteenth-century Hoosiers' motivation for self-improvement. Membership in such libraries would have given access to books but also to other like-minded individuals wishing to better themselves. The names of the organizations founded to create libraries often reveal cohorts and collaborators in shared learning: The New Albany Beneficial Association of Steamboat Engineers, The Farmer's Institute, The Raysville Philomathean Society, The Young Men's Maclure Literary Association of Mount Vernon. Many of the books that appear in these collections were expensive—titles

³⁵One of the People, "Read, Circulate and Discuss," 458-60.

³⁶Weiss and Kemble, *The Great American Water-Cure Craze*.

ranged from 44 cents to \$2.34, with multi-volume sets as high as \$9.12. Purchasing a book indicated a true commitment to reading, given a salary base that averaged \$1.70 a day.³⁷ Given the expense of book ownership, any single contributor to a Maclure library collection may not have had a well-balanced library at home and probably selected from a small, personal library of very limited topics. As an example, one contributor provided only four free-of-charge government documents, so cost may have constrained the range of topics or choices may have reflected the eclectic interests of a particular member. Further, multiple copies of the same title at a single location may suggest the popularity of that title in a community; for example, five copies of *Don Quixote* are listed from the Snake Run Maclure collection.³⁸ The pooling of books offered the possibility of balance and exposure to new topics; the chance of gaining funds for new purchases would offer hope of overcoming existing deficiencies. The workingmen could not know what their final collections would look like, but each effort represented collaboration, based upon the desire and intent to build an improved library collection through Maclure's bequest.

With their extensive distribution across the state, the school libraries also offered access to knowledge to many citizens who otherwise might never have gained a wide exposure to books. Voters were willing to tax themselves to develop such a program, indicating its importance.³⁹ Larabee and Mills attempted to bring a cohesive collection to each school district and township through their careful selection of titles, but our comparisons suggest that, at least initially, they neglected books about the world extending socially, politically, and economically beyond Indiana.⁴⁰

Earlier scholars often dismissed these libraries as insignificant, but it seems clear that good faith efforts were made to found libraries of lasting importance. In some cases, these libraries lasted for many years. Some are mentioned in county histories and records through the twentieth century,

³⁷Table Ba4253-4267, "Daily and monthly wages for common labor, artisans, and clerks, by region: 1821-1860," by Robert A. Margo, in Susan B. Carter, et al. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Earliest Times to the present*, vol. 2, part B: *Work and Welfare* (Cambridge, UK, 2006), 262.

³⁸Snake Run Hovey Library Association, *Complete Record Circuit Court Journal 1840-1859 Posey County*, 393.

³⁹Freeman and Hovde, "The Indiana Township Library Program, 1852-1872," 135.

⁴⁰The content of publisher "libraries" created by firms such as Harper & Brothers, many titles of which were selected as part of the School Library collection, could help to explain some omitted topics.

proving that they endured because their communities and constituents found them useful, and perhaps, vital. Many were transformed into true public libraries as general interest in libraries for all increased. Though the names typically changed at that point, the original collections were often absorbed into larger public institutions.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

The numerous county histories published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries provide important information about early Indiana libraries. Some mention the creation of county libraries in the first decade after statehood; a number also mention both the Indiana school/township libraries and Maclure libraries.

County histories record that not all of the libraries based upon these two programs were successful. The Miami County Workingmen's Institute was formed in cooperation with the town council; it disbanded in March 1860, giving it a lifespan of at best five years. The library had three caretakers, and during the tenure of the third, the library was scattered. A history of Spencer County details the titles of the initial collection of the 1831 county library and mentions both 1850s programs. Although the author does not mention the status of the county's six township libraries, he notes that several "McClure" libraries in the county were "now scattered and gone." The author of a history of Jay County notes the existence of township libraries and a Maclure library. Both suffered from mismanagement and neglect and had relatively short lives. The author of a Benton County history failed to recall the existence of the township library, but did mention Oxford's "old McClure library...almost forgotten in the passing years." This library eventually contained "several hundred volumes," although books of scientific or technical nature, biographies, histories, and letters of eminent men proved unpopular in the "unlettered rural community."⁴¹

⁴¹Arthur L. Bodurtha, *History of Miami County Indiana: A Narrative Account of its Historical progress, Its People and Its Principal Interests*, vol. 1 (Chicago, 1914), 307-308; *History of Warrick, Spencer and Perry Counties, Indiana, From the Earliest Time to the Present* (Chicago, 1885), 288-89; Milton T. Jay, *Jay County Indiana: Including Its World War Record and Incorporating the Montgomery History*, vol. 1 (Indianapolis, Ind., 1922), 232; Jesse Setlington Birch, *History of Benton County and Historic Oxford* (Oxford, Ind., 1928), 79; John G. Carnahan, et al., *Tales of a Prairie Town as told by Howard C. Gillespie* (Oxford, Ind., 1935), 45.

In other localities, these libraries continued to benefit their communities for many years. In Wayne County, the Morrison Public Library absorbed the township library as well as the library of the Manual Labor and Working Men's Institute in 1864. The same type of merger took place in Clay County within a year of the founding of the Brazil City Library in 1880 and the Jeffersonville Carnegie Library in 1907. In Bluffton, Indiana, Maclure funds allowed for the purchase of 214 books which were added to a preexisting collection. In 1881 this library was combined with the Bluffton High School Library. In Princeton, Indiana, the Maclure collection became the foundation of the public library in 1885.⁴²

A Hancock County history notes that some of the township libraries were still in use and considered valuable as of 1874. The "M'Clure" library in Greene County was merged with the county library, which had been founded prior to 1840. In Randolph County, as of 1882, the township libraries continued to be the only libraries serving the public outside of two high school libraries and the Union City Library. In Greene County, as of 1884, the township libraries were still in use; in Dubois County as of 1910; and in Cass and Warren Counties they were still in use as of 1913. Another source states some of these early libraries were still active as of 1922.⁴³

There is little doubt that libraries can be transformational, especially for those who otherwise could not afford access to great books. Hovey and Larrabee's backgrounds and rise to prominence attest to their success utilizing a program of reading for self-education. Although it is difficult to locate personal accounts discussing reading and the direct impact of these libraries, even seemingly routine documents can provide a testimony of success, such as the "Report of the Township Library" for Richmond, Indiana, in 1862:

⁴²*History of Wayne County, Indiana*, Vol. 2 (Chicago, 1884), 120-22; Charles Blanchard, *Counties of Clay and Owen Indiana: Historical and Biographical* (Chicago, 1884), 153; Lewis C. Baird, *Baird's History of Clark County Indiana* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1909), 425; Greiner, *The Wells County Public Library*, 3; Thomas R. Paxton, "Development of the Public Library Movement in Princeton," 329.

⁴³George J. Richman, *History of Hancock County Indiana: Its People, Industries and Institutions* (Greenfield, Ind., 1916), 194-95; *History of Greene and Sullivan Counties, State of Indiana* (Chicago, 1884), 51; George R. Wilson, *History of Dubois County from its Primitive Days to 1910* (Jasper, Ind., 1910), 179; Jehu Z. Powell, *History of Cass County Indiana: From its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* (Chicago, 1913), 228; Thomas A. Clifton, *Past and present of Fountain and Warren Counties Indiana* (Indianapolis, Ind., 1913), 52, 294.

The whole number of volumes circulated during the year 7,800. Average number taken each week 150. Whole number in the library at the close of the year, April 5, 1,546. There is, at the present time, something over 200 volumes at the book-binders for repairs; with this exception the Library is in good condition. A benevolent citizen of Richmond donated \$500 to this library which has been expended in literary, scientific, and religious works, making it one of the most useful and attractive public Libraries in the State. Open every Saturday from 9 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the evening.

M. J. Newton, Librarian ⁴⁴



⁴⁴That two hundred volumes were at the bookbinders for repair (representing approximately 13% of the entire collection) suggests heavy usage of at least some titles. M. J. Newton, "Report of the Township Library for the Year Ending April 5th 1862," *Richmond Weekly Palladium*, April 19, 1862, p. 3.