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THE RADICAL SCOT: THE EDUCATIONAL IDEAS
AND PHILANTHROPIES OF WILLIAM MACLURE (1763-1840)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

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When I left my small Iowa town to attend Carleton College, I had had one science course and two math courses in high school. A lover of literature, languages, and extra-curricular activities, I had rejected the idea of taking anything alleged to be "hard." After all, I was a girl, so it really didn’t matter that I was not versed in the sciences and mathematics. William Maclure would not have approved. However, the distribution requirements of Carleton made it necessary for me to take a science course my freshman year. What to do? I had no prerequisites for chemistry or physics and would have to take biology later. It was whispered about by the upperclassmen that geology was a snap course. So I enrolled in Geology 101. And I absolutely loved it. I loved the field trips (I had never in all my schooling been on a field trip!). I was fascinated with the creation of land forms and with the history of the earth beneath our feet. Although by no means a serious geologist, I have incorporated some of that learning into teaching I have done in subsequent years.
And so when, in the course of studying Robert Owen in my Educational Classics course taught by Dr. Gerald Gutek, the remarkable career of the man who single-handedly completed the first geological survey of the United States captured my interest. Nothing that I have learned about William Maclure in subsequent months and years has dimmed that interest. It has been a pleasure to explore his times, his friends, his ideas, and his projects.

However, the exploration has been fraught with obstacles. Although Maclure was a prolific essayist and letter writer in his later years, there appears to be no such treasure trove of writings either from his youth or young manhood when he was in London, France, and America. Letters he wrote later are scattered in many collections; it is a puzzlement to know what they are as well as where they are. The volume of journals written during his several European travels, published by the American Philosophical Society, has made a great contribution to the understanding of Maclure, and, of course, his own Opinions, written in his last fourteen or so years, constitute a summary of his thinking.

In writing a dissertation, one has several goals. One wants to explore some hitherto less familiar ground, and one wants to pursue some area that seems particularly interesting to one. Although there is surely more to be uncovered in some areas of Maclure's activities, it seemed
to me that his patronage of the Pestalozzian philosophy had been well done by William Kipnis in his 1972 Loyola dissertation, "Propagating the Pestalozzian," while Alberto Gil Novales had made an enormous contribution to our understanding of Maclure's plans for agricultural schools at Alicante in Spain in his work, *William Maclure in Spain*. Josephine Elliott, a scholar of New Harmony and, in particular, of William Maclure, has written about the libraries that Maclure endowed. Her major work, a definitive edition of all the Maclure-Fretageot letters entitled *Partnership for Posterity: The Correspondence of William Maclure and Marie Duclos Fretageot, 1820-1833*, was published after the submission of this dissertation.

It was clear that, until such time as more documentation might be uncovered, these particular areas of Maclure involvement had been well addressed. Although I will discuss some of these activities in later chapters, further analysis of them is not the central concern of this dissertation.

But I turned to my present investigation for far more positive reasons: I was interested in the congruence between Maclure's strong political and educational opinions and those of some of the more radical thinkers of the time, including some distinguished individuals who were friends of Maclure. My intent has been to suggest that Maclure incorporated these particular ideas into his own thinking
and to further suggest that his ideas led naturally to his philanthropic projects.

The late eighteenth century was an era of revolution; a world was changing fundamentally and irreversibly. And some of Maclure's friends were leading the way. Jefferson, Barlow, Volney, and Bentham, for example, were not only men of their time, they were men shaping their time. And what is striking is the consonance between the ideas of these friends with those of William Maclure. To explore this consonance and to delineate how Maclure's ideas led him into a variety of educational activities is the thesis of this paper.

For me, it is not enough to say that Maclure was simply reflecting the climate of opinion in England, France and the United States that characterized the years before and after the French Revolution. His connections were too close and too important for that. On the other hand, further research is needed, if the data even exist, to establish when he actually became involved with some of these individuals at the time his own ideas were forming.

The middle road seems best at this time. My goal has been to describe the relevant conditions of the times, to confirm his friendships with some important players, to describe their ideas and compare them with his own, and to indicate how his ideas led him inevitably into his philanthropic educational projects.
In his book *Backwoods Utopias*, Arthur Bestor says of William Maclure:

One would like to be able to trace in strict chronology the unfolding of his social ideas, but his earliest expressions of them belong to the years after 1819, when, as a man of fifty-five, they were fully developed. Whether his social philosophy was the corollary of his educational, or vice versa, it is impossible to say, but it is perfectly clear that both were formulated long before his association with Owen. So much of a piece are the ideas he expressed in his correspondence in the early 1820's and those he expounded over the years in the articles finally collected in the three volumes of *Opinions*, one may safely take the whole as a statement of the philosophy that motivated his various enterprises from the one in Spain onward and that finally drew him to New Harmony.¹

And indeed, these ideas are all of a piece with the ideas he encountered in England, France, and America in his earlier years, ideas that included: the rejection of prevailing English laws, policies, and conditions; an embracing of the principles and goals of the French Revolution; an ardent support of the egalitarian principles of the American Jeffersonian Republicans as opposed to those of the Hamiltonian Federalists, and an eventual incorporation of Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism. One may finally have to conclude, contrary to Mr. Bestor, that Maclure's social ideas preceded his educational ideas, but led inexorably to them. Those educational ideas,

crystallized under the influence of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the famous Swiss educator, were the foundation of his various educational projects.

I am most grateful to Loyola University for structuring their program in a way that allows a full-time school administrator to proceed on a course of study at a humane pace. Loyola is a warm and personal place, qualities that do not always characterize institutions of higher learning.

The stimulation, encouragement, and support that I have received throughout the process from my committee of three--Gerald Gutek, Father Walter Krolikowski, and Joan Smith--are most gratefully acknowledged.

To my family, who may not have always understood why I was doing this instead of playing tennis but stood by me anyway, my deepest thanks. My special thanks go to my son John, without whose patience, support, and computer expertise, this dissertation would still be a pile of 3 x 5 cards.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In the Preface to his excellent book, *William Maclure in Spain*, Alberto Gil Novales succinctly described William Maclure as follows: "Maclure was an interesting character in his own right: a traveler, indeed a great traveler, a Jeffersonian in the United States, a radical Benthamite in England, an enthusiast of the Revolution in France even during the Jacobin period, a Pestalozzian, always a friend of the people and Mankind, and consequently, a Utopian socialist who in 1825 took a main role, alongside Robert Owen, in the communitary experiment at New Harmony."¹

This paper is entitled *The Radical Scot*. A radical, according to Webster, is one who is disposed to "make extreme changes in existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions." It will be seen that Maclure's views certainly recommended a departure from many age-old ideas of Europe at that time and that they more comfortably fit into those of the New World. Even in the United States, however, he would have wished to change many "existing views, habits, conditions, or institutions."

It is to investigate at greater depth than appears to have been done previously the conditions and influences that combined and created this radical Jeffersonian, Benthamite, and Jacobin, and to outline how these beliefs merged and led him into his various educational philanthropic projects that this paper is written.

William Maclure divided the world into two classes: the industrious producers who, with the sweat of their brows created the materials that ensure life for all, and the non-producers who live comfortably off the labor of others and at their expense. From the time he became enlisted in the cause of the industrious producers--the millions--he devoted his life, efforts, and fortune to improve their condition and to give them the tools to hold their own against the exploitation of the powerful and privileged. Those tools were knowledge and property--the fruits of their own labors--which would extend their power.

Maclure's fundamental beliefs were expressed in the following quotations:

The division of property divides knowledge, and the division of property and knowledge divides power. The

2One of Maclure's many inconsistencies is the fact that he himself was neither one of the non-industrious consumers nor was he an industrious producer, yet he had only the two categories. It would have been interesting to ask him how he would have characterized himself.
nearly equal division of knowledge will equalize both property and power.\textsuperscript{3}

And since, for Maclure, "ignorance is the cause of all evil," he believed that education was of crucial importance in the democratic society, stating it as follows:

We may assert, that the neglect of the instruction of the millions, is the greatest crime a free people can commit; is attended with incalculable evils during the present age, and death and destruction to freedom in the next.\textsuperscript{4}

What do we know about this remarkable man who made equality of knowledge, power, property, and informed participation in a democratic society his watchwords? The rather sketchy biographical material that is available has been rehearsed in a number of places.\textsuperscript{5} To some extent,


\textsuperscript{4}Ibid., 1:363.

\textsuperscript{5}For the extant information about Maclure's early years, we are most indebted to "A Memoir of William Maclure" by Samuel G. Morton, read on July 1, 1841, to the membership of the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia, and included in Volume I of William Maclure, \textit{Opinions on Various Subjects}, 1:7-31. Mr. Morton in turn obtained his information from Alexander and Anna Maclure, still living in New Harmony at the time of William Maclure's death in Mexico. It continues to be a source of wonderment to this writer that, with a brother and sister of the subject who were presumably familiar to the New Harmony townspeople and the remaining colleagues of Maclure, still so little is known. Presumably they and their other siblings shared a common childhood. Knowing the neighborliness of small towns--nay, the gossip thereof--one wonders why tidbits of information weren't shared. It is known that the surviving Maclures were not pleased with some of the bequests in Maclure's will, but still these details seem oddly obscure.
the sources borrow from each other, but one gleans additional information from small hints in Maclure's own writings or comments in various of the other sources.

William Maclure was born at Ayr, Scotland, on 27 October 1763; his father, David McClure⁶, was a prosperous merchant, so William was tutored privately by a Mr. Douglass, "who was especially reputed for classical and mathematical attainments."⁷

With his father, Maclure visited New York in 1778, when he was fifteen. He returned in 1782 for the apparent purpose of establishing contacts that would be useful when he subsequently entered business in London, where he became a partner in the American firm of Miller, Hart & Co. For the following fifteen years, details of his life are somewhat cloaked in mystery. It is known that he traveled widely both in America and Europe in the interests of his firm. When in America, he conducted business out of New York and Richmond, Virginia, with, apparently, a side


⁶Apparently William changed the spelling of his name at some point. This information is given in the Introduction to The European Journals, fn. xxiii.

enterprise in Norfolk, Virginia. It has been assumed, from comments in the *Opinions*, that Miller, Hart & Co. dealt with textiles and that his Norfolk enterprise involved lumber.

In 1796 Maclure became an American citizen and established residence in Philadelphia, where he continued to carry on business for a while. He wound up the American affairs of Miller, Hart & Co. and, in 1797, retired from business altogether. He was thirty-four years old, and had amassed a considerable fortune. His interests turned to geology and he began a series of short forays around Philadelphia as the beginning steps in what was to be his significant scientific undertaking—a description of the geology of the United States.

In 1799 Maclure left for a nine-year sojourn in Europe, part of which time he spent as one of commission of three appointed by President Thomas Jefferson to investigate and adjudicate the spoliation claims of American sea-captains and shipowners against France. The claims were a result of the damages incurred during the undeclared naval war between the United States and France in 1798-99. That work occupied him between 1803 and 1805; when finished, he and his friend, Joseph C. Cabell, started out on a lengthy tour of Europe.

It was in the course of this trip that he visited Yverdon in Switzerland, where Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi had established his school. The school and the Pestalozzian philosophy so impressed Maclure that he supported
Pestalozzian schools and teachers for the rest of his life, believing that such an approach to education would best equip the millions to take their rightful place in a democratic society. While in Paris, he also met Joseph Neef, a Pestalozzi teacher recommended to him by Pestalozzi, whom he was to support and involve in various of his projects.

Maclure returned to America in the summer of 1808 and resumed the geological excursions he had begun in 1796. By 1809 he had completed his preliminary work and on January 20 of that year, he read his preliminary paper on "Observations on the Geology of the United States, Explanatory of a Geological Map" before the American Philosophical Society.

He returned to Europe in the late fall of that year, where he again traveled extensively for six years.

In August, 1815, he and Charles Alexandre Lesueur, a French scientist and artist who was later to be his colleague at New Harmony, Indiana, cruised for three months through the lesser Antilles, Lesueur gathering zoological data, Maclure making geological observations.

The years 1816 to 1818 were spent in the United States, where Maclure revised and expanded his "Observations on the Geology of the United States," which was published in 1818. By this time, Maclure's geological contributions were well-known and so distinguished that he has become known as the Father of American Geology. As a preeminent American
scientist, he became President of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, founded in that city in 1812 and which he had joined very shortly after its founding. Both his presidency of the organization and his benefactions to it continued to his death in 1840.

Europe called Maclure back in 1818, where his ensuing travels, recorded in his European Journals, took him to Italy, France, Switzerland, and Spain. A number of critical events took place during this journey; he met Madame Marie Duclos Fretageot, a Pestalozzian teacher who was to become his friend, agent, and staunch advocate, and Phiqueupal d’Arusmont, also a Pestalozzian whose relations with Maclure were to take a more erratic path.

It was during this long period away from the United States that Maclure pursued plans to establish a Pestalozzi-based agricultural school for orphans in Spain. He purchased various properties that had been confiscated from the Church during the Liberal Triennium (1820-1823) and was putting his plans in motion when the liberal revolutionary government was toppled and the former repressive regime, aided by the French armies, returned to power. Maclure's lands were threatened with expropriation, and he fled Spain for safety.

He then traveled through the British Isles where, in New Lanark, Scotland, he met Robert Owen and toured his by-then-famous mill town. He returned to America to find that Mme. Fretageot, who, supported by Maclure, had come to
Philadelphia in 1821 to start a Pestalozzian girls' school, was totally enraptured by Robert Owen and his plans for a utopian community in New Harmony, Indiana. It was her hope that she could persuade Maclure to join the experiment. She was seconded in her pressures on Maclure by Phiquepal, who had also come to Philadelphia, and by a number of Maclure's Academy of Natural Science associates--Thomas Say, John Speakman, Gerard Troost, and Charles Lesueur--who looked forward to carrying on their scientific investigations in the Western wilds.

With misgivings, which proved to be well founded, Maclure agreed to join the New Harmony experiment. The entire group was aboard The Philanthropist, the keelboat fitted out for the journey on the Ohio River to New Harmony, when it began its eventful passage from Pittsburgh on 8 December 1825, arriving, after an icebound interlude, on 23 January 1826. The New Harmony experiment, which can only be described as an administrative fiasco, ended in 1827; however, Maclure's connection with the town and the various enterprises that he initiated lasted long after that. Indeed, the Workingmen's Institute, a Maclure endowment, exists today and is the repository for many of the valuable sources that give the reader and scholar insights into Maclure, Owen, the experiment, and much else about New Harmony.
Maclure’s health, by this time, was uncertain. His rheumatism necessitated a warmer climate, which caused him to turn his attention to Mexico. With Mme. Fretageot managing his affairs in New Harmony and the editor and printers of his newspaper, *The Disseminator of Useful Knowledge*, awaiting his frequent dispatches from Mexico, Maclure traveled and wrote his somewhat meandering and repetitive, but fascinating *Opinions*.

Any plans for another agricultural school or even a return to the United States receded further and further into the background as, over the ten or twelve years in Mexico, his health worsened. He had hoped to return to the United States and attempted to do so, but illness and exhaustion forced him to give up any thoughts of such a journey. Finally, on 23 March 1840, in the village of San Angel, he died at the age of seventy-seven.

In addition to his much-valued membership in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, Maclure had been elected to the American Philosophical Society in 1799. He served on the council of that organization from 1818–1829. He was also the first president of the American Geological Society, elected in 1819, and was a member as well of a number of European scientific and philosophical societies.

Various reports agree on Maclure’s physical appearance. Caroline Dale Snedeker, in her delightful and personal book,
The Town of the Fearless, described Maclure as "prosperous, handsome, red-haired, high-tempered, original, untirable physically and mentally, and altogether lovable." 8

"Untirable physically and mentally" he must surely have been. One can only imagine the physical endurance that was required in order to travel so indefatigably both in the wilderness and even in more civilized places, because travel anywhere in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-centuries was fraught with discomfort and inconvenience. He traversed the Allegheny Mountains at least fifty times, surely a physically challenging undertaking at that time. His journals contain a number of anecdotes that illustrate the unpleasantnesses that could attend European travel.

For example, on 3 May 1808, while traveling in Spain, he encountered a road that had become almost impassable after a severe storm. In spite of having upset the calash fourteen times, they proceeded, "with the wheels of the calash up to the knaves in mud. Two men could scarcely keep it upright. A severe shower caused the torrents to rise." 9

Weather was not the only assailant. Accommodations had their perils, as his entry from Cassano in Italy, dated 19 September 1811, testified:


9 Maclure, The European Journals, 149.
The country is rich, well-peopled, and the road is crowded with carriages and travelers, yet there is no tavern that is not dirty and swarming with vermin. I had no idea of finding such a backward civilization in the north of Italy. I am now writing in the bed chamber of the best tavern amongst those at Ospitaletto, only seven miles from the town of Brescia, and the fleas and vermin begin to torment me by penetrating at all the openings in my cloths [sic]. I'm certain that the floor has not been swept this month, nor the coverlids and bed clothes washed for many years, if ever.¹⁰

Patricia Tyson Stroud, biographer and articulate advocate of Maclure's colleague and protégé, Thomas Say, supported the description of Maclure as "tall and imposing with a temperament indicated--at least in his youth--by flaming red hair."¹¹

In his memoir, Morton described him as follows:

In person he was above the middle stature, and of a naturally robust frame. . . . His head was large, his forehead high and expanded, his nose aquiline; and his collective features were expressive of that undisturbed serenity of mind which was a conspicuous trait of his character.¹²

Caroline Snedeker described him as "original"; that is how Maclure later described himself. His thoughts about non-conformity could well have been applied to himself:

It is perhaps not so useful in morals as in physics, for men to march to the same step or tune, and pull all

¹⁰Ibid., 368.


the same way. Morals are so far behind physics, that a little variety and opposition, like the percussion of the flint and steel, produce light.\textsuperscript{13}

Although, according to George Lockwood, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar described Maclure as "amiable"\textsuperscript{14} and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz referred to him as "kind Macluer" [\textit{sic}]\textsuperscript{15}, it is clear that he definitely had a mind of his own. Lockwood says of him that "in his eccentric career Maclure championed many causes with all the vigor of his vehement nature"\textsuperscript{16} and Stroud calls him "a complicated, dogmatic Scotsman."\textsuperscript{17}

Morton seconded these observations:

He was singularly mild and unostentatious in his manner; and though a man of strong feelings, he seldom allowed his temper to triumph over his judgment. Cautious in his intimacies, and firm in his friendships, time and circumstance in no degree weakened the affections of his earlier years. Though affable and communicative, Mr. Maclure was very much isolated during the last thirty years of his life; partly owing to a naturally retiring disposition, partly to the peculiarity of some of his opinions, in respect to which, though unobtrusive, he was inflexible.\textsuperscript{18}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{13}Maclure, \textit{Opinions}, 1:211.
\textsuperscript{17}Stroud, \textit{Thomas Say}, 34.
\end{flushright}
Robert Dale Owen, the oldest son of Robert Owen, wrote of his initial impression of Maclure in his journal, *From Holland to New Harmony*; the impression was not particularly positive. Having set forth with the group on *The Philanthropist*, or, as it was nicknamed, the "Boatload of Knowledge," he wrote in his journal: "It seems to me that Mr. Maclure looks at everything in a much too suspicious manner and manages thereby to make difficulties for himself" and "Mr. Maclure seems to me at times to act somewhat stubbornly and vehemently."\(^{19}\)

Suspicious or no, Maclure's participation in the New Harmony experiment contributed greatly to whatever success the enterprise enjoyed, for as Anne Taylor remarked: "His presence lent a solid air which the enterprise had wanted, for, though hasty, dictatorial, and prone to take people at face value, Maclure was an experienced businessman."\(^{20}\)

The years, with their exertions and frustrations, took their toll of Maclure, both physically and temperamentally. John Doskey quoted Benjamin Silliman's sad comment as he encountered Maclure in 1828 at the meeting of the American Geological Society:


The brilliant man whom I first saw 20 years before had now hoary locks; he stooped as he walked and appeared decidedly marked by age and infirmity; an abscess on his leg made him lame.  

With illness, disappointment, and advancing age, Maclure became even more "inflexible." Anne Taylor stated that he became not only increasingly "self-indulgent but testy and suspicious." Probably the most telling commentary on Maclure's personality in his declining days, quoted by Patricia Tyson Stroud, came from a letter written by one of Maclure's Philadelphia acquaintances, Lardner Vanuxem, to a mutual friend, Isaac Lea:

[Thomas] Say I found as pleasant a companion as ever. Not so our friend Maclure who is more dogmatic than I am; and of course must be a bore; I found him to be such.

However, it is not to the "bore" in Mexico, if indeed he was that, that we turn to for the thoughts that evolved during those critical years in London, Paris, and Virginia; it is rather to the vigorous prose of Opinions on Various Subjects. As Morton said in his memoir, these "discover a bold and original mind, and a fondness for innovation which occasionally expresses itself in a startling sentiment." 

\[21\text{Maclure, European Journals, xlv.}\]
\[22\text{Taylor, Visions of Harmony, 201.}\]
\[23\text{Stroud, Thomas Say, 202.}\]
\[24\text{Morton, "A Memoir" in Maclure, Opinions, 1:28.}\]
Maclure’s opinions on the specifics of education, the industrious producers and the non-producers, and government will be discussed in a later chapter, but there are many "startling sentiments" of a more general nature that give us insight into Maclure’s nature and values.

According to Morton, "Mr. Maclure’s character habitually expressed itself without dissimulation or disguise." This quality is amply illustrated in aphorisms that are scattered throughout the Opinions. For example, "All unnecessary deviations from nature are useless and perhaps injurious to every kind of animal" and "Go through the greatest proportion of the productions of modern civilization, and sense will be sacrificed to show." Still another--"In all situations of life, flattery is as derogatory to the character of the flatterer as it is pernicious to the one who receives it."

Though an exceedingly wealthy man himself, he attended to his personal needs with almost Spartan simplicity, expending his resources instead on books, instruments, geological samples, both for himself and for numerous institutions. In many of his essays that appeared in The

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25 Ibid., 1:27.

26 Maclure, Opinions, 1:271-72.

27 Ibid., 1:295.
Disseminator he expressed concern about the growing materialism of the United States.

The rate of converting all into merchandize and making money the *summum bonum* of existence is the order of the day in all civilized countries; and in none is it carried so far as in the greatest part of our union, where a man's money, in place of his merit, is put into the scale of public and private consideration.  

and again:

Making money has been the only object of most since I landed. Wild speculations and golden dreams entirely occupies the upper stories of most of the Bipeds.

He was concerned about the effects on society of this driving goal for making money, saying, "Where gold is the goal of a money-making nation, it is difficult to set bounds to its influence."  

Although he himself was a contrary example, he believed that "It is the nature of repletion to produce indolence and the excess of physical indulgence." Certainly his own indefatigable efforts indicated that this was not an unyielding rule.

Maclure was, in many ways, a forthright and canny observer of humankind. His essay of 19 November 1828,

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28Ibid., 2:136.


30Ibid., 2:417.
discoursed very pointedly on his basic values and, as we shall see later, echoed the thinking of Jeremy Bentham:

All our morality should be founded on the immovable rock of well understood self-interest. All the youth ought to be taught, that as social beings, their positive interest requires, they should have as many friends and as few enemies as possible. The old proverb "honesty is the best policy," means that it is the interest of men to be honest and do all the good they can. Once convinced of this truth, they must consider themselves unjust in exacting either praise, commendation or gratitude, for actions that their own interest required them to do; thereby saving themselves much disappointment and consequent unhappiness at what has been called the ingratitude of mankind.

He continued:

The envious and jealous, not only needlessly torment themselves at the happiness or good fortune of their neighbours, but are tempted to the malicious habit of detracting from others' happiness, by scandal and calumny, which always rebound back on themselves with redoubled force, from the equitable law of retaliation, which all assume the right of exercising.

Maclure and his associates were subjected to more than their share of scandal and calumny in the course of the New Harmony years!

And in the true spirit of Emersonian self-reliance, he stated:

the happiness that depends on others, is exceedingly precarious and liable to disappointment. Peace of mind and self-approbation, conduce more to felicity than all external occurrences; and one had better offend the whole world, than offend himself.31

31 The three paragraphs just cited all appear in Maclure's essay of November 19, 1828, appearing in Opinions 1:120-121.
Profoundly pragmatic and concrete in his thinking, he had no tolerance for the mysteries of religion. He was vehemently anti-clerical, railing as follows:

As the priests of all countries have seized [sic] upon the education of children, to imprint their incomprehensible dogmas on their tender and pliable minds, before reason has had time to act, or guide them in the choice of their opinions, intimately leagued with all absolute civil power, for the mutual support of their arbitrary authorities, enforced by the terrors and thunders of both worlds, they have been too strong for isolated common sense to make any progress against their despotic creeds.\(^{32}\)

This did not mean that he did not value churches as sources of ethical guidance, but he did not believe that any one belief had a monopoly on moral truth. In the essay of 6 March 1836, appeared the following:

The church has two sides, the inside and the outside; the inside or kernel, which is morals, is tangible and visible, made to increase the peace, comfort and happiness of humanity, and is equally good and appropriated to the interest of mankind in all churches; the outside or dogmas, being, properly speaking, what has been called religion, aeriform, immaterial, and boundless as space, a fruitful field for fancy and imagination to range in; surrounding every church with phantoms; all different yet all incomprehensible, as far out of the reach of our senses as they are contrary to all the laws of nature our experience has made us acquainted with.\(^{33}\)

If other-worldly matters interested him not at all, justice and equality in this world dominated his thinking. For example, he stated, "Considering the equality with which

\(^{32}\)Ibid., 2:381.

\(^{33}\)Ibid., 3:171-172.
all men come into the world, we are astonished at the great inequality with which they go out of it."

For Maclure, the enemies of that equality were not only the clerics, but monarchy, privilege, and the self-aggrandizing non-producers:

The old world is enclosed in an impenetrable barrier of bayonets and the field of political experiment is in possession of those who have an interest in retaining all subject to physical force, and limiting all moral improvements to the narrow bounds of their luxurious convenience.34

Because of this inequality, he believed that the millions--the industrious producers--were the ones who suffered from war. "The millions in no country, ever have or can gain by a war, be it ever so successful, but must lose all the value of their blood and treasure."35 His anti-war sentiments were expressed most strongly in the following excerpt.

The operator who, by crafty combinations, can augment the number of slaughtered friends or foes, is extolled to the skies and deified like a demi-god, to be worshipped after the example of the ancients; when, in reality, he is not only a wholesale destroyer of life, but the demoralizer of his species, in the same proportion, by legalizing murder, plunder, rapine, and robbery.36

Maclure was entirely consistent in his belief in equality. He believed that the practice of slavery in the

34Ibid., 1:434-435.

35Ibid., 2:204.

36Ibid., 3:173.
United States was a "mortifying" national disgrace and that "Freedom and slavery are in morals, what fire and water are in physics, and cannot exist peaceably in the same body of society." 37

Finally, in order to prevent the waste of one-half of the population of "bipeds," Maclure insisted that women and men should be educated equally. Since it was "lamentable that the tyranny of one sex should reduce the weaker to such a deplorable situation," 38 he wrote to Mme. Fretageot:

The advancing families [females] to fill all places of honor and profit that their physical force will permit them to occupy would be the greatest possible improvement in society. [This advancement] would enlist the other half of the creation in the glorious work of civilization. It would extend the power of mind not only by the additional numbers but by the strong stimulant of rivalship and competition it would create. 39

Given this set of dearly-held and, to a sizable body of opinion at that time (and even in this), "peculiar" opinions, it is small wonder that Maclure could be seen, in spite of his sociability, as a solitary man. He was a complex mixture of down-to-earth pragmatism and visionary idealism, of thoughtful analysis and total illogicality, of consistencies and contradictions. By providing the "variety and opposition, like the percussion of the flint and steel,"

37 Ibid., 2:370.
38 Ibid., 1:479.
39 Bestor, Education and Reform at New Harmony, 306.
he may most certainly have produced light, but this may perhaps have been a lonely beacon.

What intellectual, social, and political influences worked upon this strong-minded, independent man? What stimulated his very specific concern for the working man and his need for education in order to improve his lot? To the observant eyes and sympathetic mind of the late eighteenth century, the answer was not hard to find. And it was clear to Maclure, as to many others, that education was the answer to social reform and the amelioration of social ills.
CHAPTER II

THE TIMES OF WILLIAM MACLURE
A TALE OF THREE COUNTRIES

When William Maclure went to London in 1782, at the age of nineteen, to begin his career with the firm of Miller and Hart, he was at the beginning of what was to be fifteen years of work and travel that took him repeatedly to America, to France, and back to London. It is clear from reading the Opinions that his experiences and observations in all three countries shaped his thinking.

Always deeply concerned with the situation of the workingman and convinced of his potential to participate effectively in the democratic process, he was angered by the political and economic conditions in England that so depressed the lot of the poor. In America he sided with his friend Thomas Jefferson in his belief in the capacity of an educated citizenry, through universal suffrage, to manage their own affairs; and he was at one with Jefferson in his preference for a federation of independent states rather than a strong central government, believing that democratic government was better achievable and more effective in smaller units.
In France, he exulted in the calling of the Estates-General and in the outburst of the French Revolution, believing that its principles would most nearly bring about the equal division of property, knowledge, and power in a country that suffered more than any other under the arbitrary and cruel abuses of king, nobles, and the Church. To survey each of these issues, describe their interrelatedness, and trace the thinking of William Maclure are the aims of this chapter.

It is important to give credence to the likelihood that Maclure was a first-hand observer in England, the United States, and France. Given his own scanty biographical information during the late years of the eighteenth century, one must speculate, and various biographers have described these years differently. Nevertheless, Maclure undoubtedly was in the United States a substantial amount of time during the period between 1782 and 1798, before he retired from business and removed permanently to the United States.

From the following statements, it is clear that his work with Miller, Hart & Co. took him to Virginia:

Immediately after our revolution I was at Norfolk in Virginia, and had a store at the great bridge, for the collection of timber (at that time one of the principal articles of export).1

1William Maclure, Opinions on Various Subjects, 2:176.
But it would appear from the following that while he was in America he was not in full-time residence in that state:

When I was a merchant, having business that forced me to visit Virginia twice a year, I visited Richmond in company with Dr. Scandella.²

There was surely ample opportunity to become familiar with conditions in England and France. John H. Jensen, in his introductory essay for the *Maclure Collection of French Revolutionary Materials*, entitled "Collector and Collection: a Note," stated that he believed it unlikely that Maclure was involved with any of the English Radicals because he was geographically removed.³ However, it seems quite likely that the contrary was true. Maclure was very probably in England regularly during the years between 1782 and 1796. He had ample opportunity to observe conditions in England as it changed from an agrarian society to an industrial one. And, as will be discussed in the following chapter, he had among his friends and acquaintances, either then or at a later date, some of the foremost English Radicals: Dr. Joseph Priestley; Joel Barlow, an American who was of their group; Francis Place; and Maria Edgeworth and her father.

²Ibid., 2:151.

One can deduce that he must have been in England some of the time because of the frequency of his trans-Atlantic voyages. Upon his final departure from Europe in 1825, he mentioned that he left for America, crossing "the Atlantic for the twenty-second time." Ten of those round-trips can be accounted for: 1778 (with his father); 1782; 1799, returning 1808; 1809, returning 1816; 1818, returning 1825. Even assuming the twenty-two crossings to be approximate, that means that at least five or possibly six round trips between Europe and America could have been effected between 1782 and 1796, when he finally moved to Philadelphia and became an American citizen.

**England**

Throughout his writings, Maclure was a harsh critic of the conditions, laws, and customs of "old mother Britain." Why? Because his sympathies, as always, lay with the workingman, and the economic and political situation of the late eighteenth-century English workingman was dire. The impact of two great and interrelated revolutions, one in agriculture, one in industry, had reduced great numbers of formerly-independent and self-sufficient agricultural laborers to unemployment and poverty. Maclure was distressed by what he observed as these revolutions followed

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their course, and he knew that opening educational opportunities was the only means of reform.

The foundation of the agricultural revolution lay in the fact that, from feudal times forward, much of the land in England was in the possession of a relatively small number of titled landowners. Through the customs of entail and primogeniture, the land remained in the same families for generations. Of this practice, Maclure commented:

> The free circulation of property, was much curtailed by the feudal system, which attached property to the person, and made it the reward of services from the inferior to the superior, from the slave to the master. In the oldest of the family being usually the fittest to perform these services, originated the right of primogeniture, from whence sprung entails, which rivet landed property on the legitimate heirs, as in Britain and some of our own States, to the entire exclusion of all creditors. This as well as all rights and privileges, given to one species of property over another, obstructs the natural division of property and prevents the division of knowledge and power, which is freedom.⁵

And from feudal times until the middle of the eighteenth century, the vast majority of English people, other than these privileged few, lived in villages or on small holdings which they rented from the landowners. Villagers operated their acres on a communal basis, taking wood from the common wood lot and turning their livestock into the common pasture. One-third of the individual holdings was allowed to lie fallow each year in order to restore

⁵Ibid., 1:46.
fertility to the soil. Though individual farmers were self-sufficient, the land admittedly was not used efficiently or at maximum productivity. And since farming is a seasonal activity, farmers turned to spinning and weaving in their homes in the off-seasons, thus augmenting their small incomes.

In the course of the eighteenth century, savvy landowners began to study European farming methods and to experiment on their lands. Improved methods of plowing and planting reduced the amount of seed used, while at the same time greatly increased the yield. Fertilization by turnips and manure increased yields still more. Maclure was always interested in agricultural education and improved methods of farming; indeed, among his philanthropic dreams was the creation of farm-schools where students could learn farming and become self-sufficient.

But, unfortunately for the tenant farmers at that particular juncture in English history, these improvements worked against the laboring man; for, to be effective, they required larger sections of land and could not be employed under the old system of communal use of the land. So began the series of enclosures.

The landowner petitioned Parliament to have the common lands of his village enclosed. That meant that each individual who shared in the common tillage would be allotted a particular piece of land that he must fence for
his own use. The landowner had the use of the original woodlots and pastures for his experimentation, but the lesser tenants, even though a parcel was set aside for each, were most likely unable to afford the compulsory fencing and so would have to sell their rights, usually for very little. By this means, the landowners acquired still more land, agriculture became more efficient and profitable, but all this happened at the expense of the common man. His choice was to emigrate to America, move to the industrial towns and work in the burgeoning factories, or do nothing and starve. Even his seasonal spinning and weaving fell victim to the cheaper mass-produced textiles of the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution was even more far-reaching in its impact. The negative results fell upon the same struggling portion of the population. Inventions that changed the methods of manufacture as well as the geography and economics of England appeared between 1733 and 1785. In succession came Kay's "flying shuttle"; Hargreaves' "spinning jenny"; Arkwright's improved spinning machine powered by water, the "water frame"; Cromton's "mule"; and finally Cartwright's power loom. From Arkwright's invention on, manufacture, of necessity, could no longer go on in homes or villages, but had to be carried on in a factory located on a source of water power. This fact changed the map of England.
Parallel with the development of the machinery was the development of the processes to smelt iron, using coal instead of the oaks that were fast disappearing from the landscape, and the development of the steam engine. Throughout the eighteenth century these innovations gradually resulted in a shift in the English population from the south and east to the Midlands and the north, and from the country to the cities.

The lot of the worker was profoundly and irrevocably altered by these trends. From an independent tenant, working his lands and weaving in his home, he was transformed into an individual who had no land, no property, no guarantee of employment, and few rights. From an independent, though difficult, rural existence, he became a dependent, rootless city dweller, abiding by the myriad and exacting demands of the factory.

Living conditions for these unfortunates were deplorable. Men, women and children labored in the dark unsafe factories for twelve or fourteen hours a day, then returned to their inadequate, unsanitary, crowded and cheerless homes. As was characteristic, William Maclure summed it up with more fervor than accuracy:

A lamentable example is exhibited in the present state of Britain, where property is more unequally divided than in any other part of the earth and where there is
more poverty and misery amongst the laboring classes than anywhere else.⁶

Maclure witnessed the distress of the poor and observed as well how the newly-rich factory owners and the aristocratic landowners—and therefore the Parliament—turned a blind eye and a deaf ear to these conditions. Parliament made the rules and Parliament, both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, was made up of the landed aristocracy and their designates. Their thinking was of another era, but their power was palpable and total.

For Maclure, the equal division of property was not an end in itself, but the means to the equal division of power, for, as he stated, "The inherent nature of property is to give power, consideration, and consequence to those who possess it." Property should be equally divided, because, as he continued, the "power, consideration, and consequence" were "liable to be abused in proportion to its [property's] extent."⁷

It is probable that by "equal division of property," Maclure meant the equitable distribution of property. If, as he advocated, the laborer simply received the just reward for his toil, for that which he produced by the "sweat of his brow," he would have the wherewithal to obtain power.

⁶Ibid., 1:291.
⁷Ibid., 2:366.

It was the unequal distribution of political power, rather than the unequal distribution of wealth, that was the chief source of the economic grievances of the people. It was because a minority of rich landowners dominated the political system that government and Parliament neglected the interests of the rest of the population. The need to support an extravagant monarchy and aristocracy, the money lavished on corrupting the legislature and the enormous cost of foreign wars all combined to place a crippling tax burden on the middling and lower orders.⁸

In their book, *A History of England and the British Empire*, Walter Phelps Hall and Robert Greenhalgh Albion described the total autocracy of the period:

In that period we must not think of a majority as resting upon the will of the people; the electoral system was so arranged that the voice of the people was almost negligible. Scarcely one man in ten of legal age, so it has been estimated, could take part in choosing members of Parliament; and only in a few unusually democratic constituencies were the members really chosen by popular election. A handful of peers, usually from among those seventy-odd Whig families of landowners, who were the real power in the eighteenth century, were very often able to control the majority in the House of Commons. The head of the family sat in the House of Lords and provided seats in the Commons for his sons and for friends who were fairly sure to vote as he wished.⁹

Hall, in his book, *British Radicalism, 1791-1797*, expanded on this point:

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In Parliament, and in society, statesmen were spoken of freely as Lord so-and-so's members... The conflicts of party politics in the seventies and eighties of the eighteenth century, emphasized with an ever-increasing lucidity the fact that a majority of the House of Commons were, in no true sense, representative of the nation as a whole, but were, on the other hand, none other than the delegates of influential families.¹⁰

In his essay of 22 February 1826, William Maclure echoed this observation as follows:

The British Government is what is called a government of checks and balances; but it is only so in theory, not in practice. It consists of three powers: two hereditary, one elective. The elective power, or the House of Commons, is a representative of landed property, and is, of course, under the control of those who possess the landed property: now, the House of Peers, as proprietors of more than one-half the landed property of Britain, put into the House of Commons a majority of the members, and of course direct and control them; so that the House of Peers, joined to a majority in the House of Commons, dictate to the third or kingly power. In this manner there is only one positive power in the British government; that is the House of Peers, an hereditary aristocracy: the commons are their servants, the king their puppet, and the minister their broker.¹¹

One of the abuses of power that most distressed the disenfranchised and reformers alike was the election of representatives to the Parliament from "rotten boroughs." The number of representatives from very small electoral districts could be totally disproportionate to the voting population in that borough. Once the crown gave a right to

¹⁰Walter Phelps Hall, British Radicalism, 1791-97 (New York: Columbia University, 1912), 36.

¹¹Maclure, Opinions, 1:4.
representation, a borough could continue to send individuals to Parliament even if no one lived there! Hall reported:

Most common in this class were the decayed seaports along the coast. Remote Cornwall, a stronghold of royal influence jutting into the western sea, was most notoriously overrepresented. It sent 44 members to the Commons, only one less than all Scotland. One small Cornish district only twenty-eight miles long and twelve wide, with some 350 votes among its 15,000 inhabitants, returned 18 men to Parliament—more than Middlesex, Westminster, Southwark, and the other populous constituencies which made up London! Add to the abuses of patronage, buying votes, and manipulation of the ancient regulations the fact that this was a self-perpetuating system. Only landowners could become peers, and peers controlled Parliament. They were by definition Anglicans, since the Tests and Corporations Acts withheld local and government office from Catholics and Dissenters. Parliament needed reform, but it was certainly not going to reform itself and no one else had the power to do so. And without Parliamentary reform, so the thinking went, the multitudinous social ills could not be addressed. Small wonder that a chorus of criticism and grievance began to be heard throughout the land.

Pressure to reform Parliament mounted, as various individuals and organizations attempted to rouse public opinion. New political associations sprang up, among them the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, the

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Society for Constitutional Information and other societies and associations. The Westminster Association drafted a six-point program for parliamentary reform that was seized upon by reforming groups. It called for: (1) universal manhood suffrage; (2) annual Parliaments; (3) equal-sized constituencies; (4) the secret ballot; (5) abolition of property qualifications for MPs; and (6) no payment of MPs. Every one of these had the support of Maclure.

Some reformers argued that these steps would restore rights guaranteed in the Anglo-Saxon past, while others took a page from John Locke and the American Declaration of Independence and claimed that "all men possessed the natural and inalienable rights to life, liberty and property and that these rights could be preserved only if all men had an equal right to elect the members of the legislature who made the laws governing their life, liberty and property."\(^{13}\)

Calls for reform made some, but small, headway throughout the 1780s. Everything changed, however, with the onset of the French Revolution, when English intellectual thought became deeply divided between its supporters of the Revolution and its detractors. As will be seen, the French Revolution coalesced the thinking and the actions of those English who sought to reform their own country. The Radicals, friends of Maclure, rallied to the cause and

\(^{13}\)Dickinson, *British Radicalism*, 4-5.
responded to the vehement prose of Edmund Burke's (1729-1797) publication, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Dr. Joseph Priestley, afterwards to be Maclure's friend and fellow citizen in Philadelphia, led the charge with his *Letter to the Right Hon. Edmund Burke*. Given what he had witnessed of the abuses of the English government and the suffering of the poor, William Maclure was counted among the supporters of the Radicals and of the Revolution. These events, these conditions, and these abuses were to have a profound effect on William Maclure and his plans for his future projects.

**The United States**

William Maclure was an astute, and, for the most part, sympathetic observer of America. It is known that Maclure came to the United States in 1782 to make contacts and arrangements for his future business affairs. That trip would have happened after the cessation of hostilities with England, but before the 1783 signing of the Treaty of Paris. What was the situation in the country to which he first came for business but within thirteen years was to adopt as his own?

The post-war conditions for the working man again aroused his sympathies. In addition, the great philosophical questions with which the new country was wrestling stimulated and refined Maclure's ideas about government and the capacity of the common man to govern.
Events were such that these questions were intertwined. It will be necessary to digress to draw a picture of the country at the close of the American Revolution in order to better delineate what Maclure's concerns were at this time.

With the coming of peace, the new country looked around and took stock. There was cause for rejoicing--and there were deep problems. Some of these problems simply came with the territory; they were no longer England's headaches but had now devolved to the newly-born United States. These--what to do about the Western lands, the Indians, boundaries with Canada, the fur trade and trading posts--are not within the purview of this paper.

Other problems, directly related to the long and costly war and its aftermath, however, are directly relevant to the discussion at hand, because the settlement of debts, of boundary disputes among the several states, and the deplorable condition of the economy, had deep social as well as political implications. They resulted, first, in the attempt to coordinate the thirteen states through the Articles of Confederation, and then, those having been found insufficient, in the creation within a few short months of the Constitution of the United States. At the heart of the discussions before, during, and after the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787 was the necessity both to preserve the sovereignty of the individual states and, given the failure of the Articles of
Confederation, to create a central government that would both arbitrate among the states and present a national identity to the world.

The divisions that arose in the course of resolving this dilemma ultimately opposed the agrarian philosophy of Virginia, most eloquently championed by Thomas Jefferson, and the mercantile interests of the North, most ardently and abrasively forwarded by Alexander Hamilton. William Maclure was most definitely on the team of Thomas Jefferson because, once again, his ideas about the need of the working man for power, property, and knowledge were consonant with those of Thomas Jefferson. And again, as in England, the debate was both crystallized and furthered by the eruption of the French Revolution.

A brief discussion of this great philosophical split--federation vs. centralization--is merited at this juncture. Writing on 10 September 1830, fifty years after the end of the war, when perhaps memory had rewritten history, Maclure wrote a rather surprising statement:

For the first few years after the revolution, before the people were burdened with federal expenses, the States under their economical governments and free trade, recovered the losses and destruction of the revolutionary war, so as to lay a foundation for an unprecedented prosperity in the annals of mankind. The fruits of freedom, augmented the resources of the country, far beyond any thing before.¹⁴

If Maclure really believed that to have been the situation, it is easy to see why he continued to believe in the superiority of strong smaller units loosely federated rather than a strong centralized government. And perhaps this prosperity was true for Maclure; his subsequent fortune is testimony both to his efforts and to a favorable economy. But the situation for many inhabitants of the United States, particularly the farmer and the working class, was bleak.

To trace how this had come about and with apologies for setting Maclure aside for the moment: In 1776, Congress had passed a resolution authorizing each of the individual states to form a government. In various ways and through differing means of ratification, each of the states did so. According to Morison and Commager, this writing of state constitutions "was a splendid opportunity for the democratic elements to remedy their grievances and for the better educated patriots to realize their ambitions for sound government." 15

By and large, the new state constitutions evinced a truly progressive reaction against the strictures of "old mother Britain" with which they had lived for so long. The lands that had belonged to the crown and to departed loyalists were confiscated and redistributed to small

farmers and veterans. Guarantees of religious freedom were put in place, and some progress in erasing slavery was made. "Relics of feudalism such as titles of nobility, quit-rents, entails, primogeniture, and tithes were swept away." Surely Maclure rejoiced at those developments; every one of the bêtes noires that so incensed him in England was addressed.

Among these other reactions to the years under the crown was the deep-seated suspicion of a coercive central government, a feeling shared by Maclure. These reservations about centralization were embedded in the Articles of Confederation, adopted unanimously (finally) in 1781. Under the Articles, the individual states retained control over, among other things, the regulation of commerce and taxation. The Congress could make requisitions upon the states for men and money, but whether or not those requisitions were acceded to was the choice of the states.

Therefore, when Congress faced up to the indebtedness incurred in order to prosecute the Revolution, the situation was daunting. According to Morison and Commager:

In 1783 the foreign debt of the United States stood at $7,885,085. By 1789 the principal of foreign debts had increased to $10,098,706, and the arrears of interest to $1,760,277. Approximately $350,000 of interest had been remitted by the French government.  

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16 Ibid., 1:240.

17 Ibid., 1:272.
Loans from Holland had saved the day, but sooner or later the piper had to be paid. Even though Congress requisitioned the money from the states in order to discharge these debts, the states either would not or could not do so.

As if foreign debts were not serious enough, domestic financial problems were equally severe. Paper money had been issued by the ream during the war; now it was proved to be worthless. Over and over again in his *Opinions* does Maclure rail against the folly of issuing paper money.

Individual indebtedness was formidable; courts became clogged with suits for debt; mortgages were foreclosed; men were imprisoned for indebtedness, to the dismay of Maclure:

> An honest debtor is incarcerated for life for debt, and the miserable, half-starved thief is hanged for taking a few dollars perhaps to buy bread for himself and family. The equitable punishment, and the best to deter others, would be to make him pay, by his work, the damage he has done. 18

The lot of the farmer in particular resulted in the outbreak of Shay's rebellion in Massachusetts, where a band of angry farmers, who first tried to keep the courts from sitting (so they could not order more debtors to prison), turned ugly. "With staves and pitchforks they had marched on county courthouses after the best Revolutionary technique, frightening sound-money men out of their wits and

rousing General Washington to express disgust and anger that a country which had won a difficult war was not able to keep order in peacetime."¹⁹ After members of the mob, under the leadership of Daniel Shay, attempted to capture the federal arsenal in Springfield, they were hunted down and arrested. Fourteen of them were condemned to death, but by January 1787, were pardoned. Many of the reforms they had sought were enacted by the Massachusetts legislature. But the rebellion brought home to the nation’s leaders the fact that "requisitions" were not effective and more centralized powers were necessary. It also underlined the fearsome power of mob action and fueled the already existing beliefs of many that men, even free men, were not capable of reasonable self-government.

Thus was born the proposal to convene in Philadelphia in May of 1787 delegates from the several states to revise the Articles of Confederation, but which to many meant the opportunity to create a new Constitution.

Thorny questions awaited solution and compromise. The Articles of Confederation had given one vote to each state, regardless of population. Larger states saw that as unfair, but smaller states were, on the other hand, threatened by

the fear that their votes would be lost were there to be proportional representation. Requisitions for men and money, without sanctions for non-compliance, had proved to be futile; but how much economic power to put in the hands of a central government?

Maclure was not happy with the outcome:

At this time, the chiefs of the revolution thought a strict union of the states' energies would be more powerful, [and] assembled a convention of the wisdom of the nation, all of whom, born and educated under the colonial system, formed two parties; one disposed to imitate the British constitution, and the other in favor of something more congenial with their declaration of independence. After much debate they produced a compromise; a mongrel between a centralism and a federalism. 20

Most important, who was to vote? At the very foundation of the discussions lay deep differences about the nature of democracy, indeed, the very nature of humankind. Remembering that the gentlemen assembled in Philadelphia were the most educated, the most influential, the most patriotic, and, probably in a number of cases, the richest and most aristocratic in the United States, men who had, as Maclure pointed out, grown up in a royalist society, it is small wonder that they held varying opinions about the ability of the common man to govern his own affairs. And Shay's Rebellion hadn't helped. Many were persuaded that

20Maclure, Opinions, 2:46.
chaos and anarchy would follow were any kind of widespread suffrage to be enacted.

Even the monarchist, Alexander Hamilton, realized that the people would never accept a king. On the other hand, the framers of the Constitution were not, in the later words of John Quincy Adams, "slavish adorers of our sovereign lords the people." As Parrington put it, "The revolutionary conception of equalitarianism, that asserted the rights of man apart from property and superior to property, did not enter into their thinking as a workable hypothesis."21

Thomas Jefferson and William Maclure believed in the abilities and common sense of the ordinary citizen, but theirs was not a popular view. Indeed, for a time in the last decade of the eighteenth century in America, these were held to be extremely radical and dangerous ideas; lesser persons who expressed them were liable to find themselves in trouble with the government.

Things were in turmoil in the very last years of the eighteenth century. With anxiety, Jefferson watched the Federalist reaction to events of the day. The suspicions and anxieties engendered by the flood of immigrants, fleeing Europe because of the wars raging there, resulted in the

passing of the Naturalization Act of 1798, which required that an individual be a resident of the country for fourteen years, rather than five, before being eligible for citizenship. Another measure, the Sedition Act, passed the same year, stated that any speech against the President or Congress was subject to fine or imprisonment. Such measures were anathema to Jefferson. Writing to John Tyler, father of the man who would later become the twelfth President of the United States, Jefferson said in June of 1804, referring to the intolerance and counter protests that had characterized the years that had just passed:

> The panic into which they [the people] were artfully thrown in 1798, the frenzy which was excited in them by their enemies against their apparent readiness to abandon all the principles established for their own protection, seemed for a while to countenance the opinions of those who say they cannot be trusted with their own government. But I never doubted their rallying; and they did rally much sooner than I expected. On the whole, that experiment on their credulity has confirmed my confidence in their ultimate good sense and virtue.\(^2\)

Maclure expostulated:

> What a similarity exists in the sophistry made use of by the enemies of freedom against our revolution and that of the French, Spanish, etc.; the same declamation, exaggerating the ignorance, prejudices and passions of mankind, which prevents the swinish multitude from following their interest; like the

aristocratic toast given during the presidency of John Adams; "The people, their own worst enemies." 

Edmund Burke's derogatory phrase, "swinish multitude," had clearly crossed the Atlantic, to be used sarcastically by the Scottish emigrant.

Alexander Hamilton was foremost among those who distrusted the "millions." His speech to the Constitutional Convention on 18 June 1787, contained the following:

All communities divide themselves into the few and the many. The first are the rich and well born, the other the mass of the people. The voice of the people has been said to be the voice of God; and, however generally this maxim has been quoted and believed, it is not true to fact. The people are turbulent and changing; they seldom judge or determine right. Give, therefore, to the first class a distinct, permanent share in the government. They will check the unsteadiness of the second; and as they cannot receive any advantage by a change, they therefore will ever maintain good government. Can a democratic Assembly, who annually revolve in the mass of the people, be supposed steadily to pursue the public good? Nothing but a permanent body can check the imprudence of democracy. 

Brilliant, cynical, arrogant, inflexible, and effective, Hamilton became, in a few short years, the mainspring of the Federalist party. As such he was the very antithesis to everything Thomas Jefferson did and stood for. And William Maclure and Thomas Jefferson stood for very much the same things.

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23 Maclure, Opinions, 1:380.

24 Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, 302.
When Maclure established residence in Philadelphia, then the capital of the United States, and became an American citizen, he resumed his earlier friendship with Thomas Jefferson. According to Doskey, "Thomas Jefferson had known (Maclure) as a young merchant in Richmond and a warm relationship developed between the two men in Philadelphia."25

Though wealthy and patrician, Jefferson was a thorough-going democrat. He abhorred the very idea of a monarch. One wonders how the deliberations of the Constitutional Convention would have proceeded had he been there instead of in Paris, where he was the United States Minister to France. Writing to George Washington on 2 May 1788, as the ratification process was going on in the United States, and commenting on the provision in the Constitution for the perpetual eligibility of the President for re-election, he said:

This, I fear, will make that an office for life, first, and then hereditary. I was much an enemy to monarchies before I came to Europe. I am ten thousand times more so, since I have seen what they are. There is scarcely an evil known in these countries, which may not be traced to their king, as its source, nor a good, which is not derived from the small fibres of republicanism existing among them. I can further say, with safety, there is not a crowned head in Europe, whose talents or

merits would entitle him to be elected a vestryman by the people of any parish in America. 26

To James Madison he wrote from Paris with a critique of the Constitution:

I own, I am not a friend to very energetic government. It is always oppressive. It places the governors indeed more at their ease, at the expense of the people. . . . And say, finally, whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government, or information to the people. This last is the most certain, and the more legitimate engine of government. Educate and inform the whole mass of the people. . . . They are the only sure reliance for the preservation of our liberty. 27

A striking similarity is to be found between the political beliefs of Jefferson and those of Maclure, as evidenced by a statement-by-statement comparison of Jefferson’s ideas, as expressed in a letter to Elbridge Gerry 28 of 26 January 1799, and those "propositions" of Maclure, in his Opinion of 12 April 1826.

A. Jefferson: I am opposed to the monarchizing its [the Federal Constitution’s] features by the forms of its administration, with a view to conciliate a first transition to a President and Senate for life, and from

26 Padover, A Jefferson Profile, 65.
27 Ibid., 60.
28 Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814) was a signer of both the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation. Although a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, he refused to sign the document. He was to become Governor of Massachusetts and ultimately Vice-President of the United States. While Governor, he rearranged some electoral districts in order to favor his party, the Democratic-Republicans; one of the districts so changed had the shape of a salamander. Hence, the word "gerrymander."
that to an hereditary tenure of these offices, and thus to worm out the elective principle.

**Maclure:** . . . the shorter time a man is in power, the stronger is the influence of the motive in favor of the governed, and the weaker the motive in favor of power inherent in the governors. . . .

[and]

the only practicable responsibility for men in place, is public opinion, manifested through annual elections.

B. **Jefferson:** I am for a government rigorously frugal and simple, applying all the possible savings of the public revenue to the discharge of the national debt.

**Maclure:** . . . the operations of government may be carried on at little expense, without in the smallest degree interfering with any of the rights or occupations of any of the citizens. . . .

[and]

economy in public expenditure takes away the greatest part of the temptation to bribery and corruption, which ought to be a principal consideration with a free people.

C. **Jefferson:** I am for relying, for internal defense, on our militia solely, . . . and not for a standing army in time of peace.

**Maclure:** When the sovereign power is in the mass of the people, no force is necessary to keep the peace or execute the laws: of course there is no need of standing armies, or any kind of regular troops. A free militia, who elect their own officers, are the best defense of a free nation.

D. **Jefferson:** I am for freedom of religion, and against all maneuvers to bring about a legal ascendancy of one sect over another.

**Maclure:** A government is better without than with a state religion.

E. **Jefferson:** [I am] for freedom of the press, and against all violations of the Constitution to silence by force and not by reason the complaints or criticism, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents.
Maclure: . . . the free and uncontroled [sic] circulation of knowledge and property, is a power, the force of which has no limits.

F. In this letter Jefferson stated as well:

I am for preserving to the States the powers not yielded by them to the Union, and to the legislature of the Union its constitutional share in the division of powers: and I am not for transferring all the powers of the States to the general government, and all those of that government to the executive branch.

In his Opinions, Maclure said:

This shows the immense advantage of small political societies, where federation gives them all the benefits of large powerful empires for external protection.

For both men, the connection between freedom, knowledge, and power was clear and imperative.

In these same writings, both Jefferson and Maclure spoke of the French Revolution.

Jefferson: To these I will add, that I was a sincere well-wisher to the French Revolution, and still wish it may end in the establishment of a free and well-ordered republic;

Maclure: But so active and energetic was the equalizing principle of nature, that the wise laws made during the short time of freedom of the French revolution--removing the obstruction to the free circulation of property--produced in a few years, a more equal division of property than ever existed in any other European country--to which must succeed an equal division of knowledge; after which it is not probable that the French nation can be governed by any
thing less than a free and equal representation, founded on universal suffrage.29

In the Washington administration, Thomas Jefferson was named Secretary of State while Alexander Hamilton was made Secretary of the Treasury. Their interactions in the cabinet deepened the rift between them, exacerbated by Washington's seeming approval of everything Hamilton said and did. Hamilton was the favorite of the northern industrial and financial interests and, as such, the spokesman for the Federalist party; Jefferson spoke for the agrarian interests of the South, and it was around him and his philosophies that the Republican party, the forerunner of the Democratic party of today, was formed.

Given Hamilton's predilection for the British Parliament, constitution, monarchy, finance and society, it was inevitable that he and those of his mind would favor the English in the war between France and England, while Jefferson and Maclure, adamantly opposed to all England stood for and bonded with the French in their call for liberty, equality, and fraternity, took their side.

29All of Jefferson's comments are in his letter to Elbridge Gerry, written on January 26, 1799, and found in Padover, A Jefferson Profile, 111-112. The thoughts of Maclure are found in Opinions, 1:29-32. Note: It was the "atrocious depredations they have committed on our commerce" that motivated Jefferson to appoint Maclure to the spoliations commission in 1803.
France

If conditions for the industrious producers in the United States were grim and conditions for the laborers in England were inhumane, conditions for the French peasant were simply appalling. Upon assuming his duties as Minister to France in 1784, Thomas Jefferson commented at length in letters to various friends about the conditions he found.

To Mrs. Elizabeth Trist he wrote:

In spite of the mildness of their governors, the people are ground to powder by the vices of the form of government. Of twenty millions of people supposed to be in France, I am of opinion there are nineteen millions more wretched, more accursed in every circumstance of human existence, than the most conspicuously wretched individual of the whole United States. 30

To Carlo Bellini, professor of modern languages at William and Mary College, he wrote from Paris on 30 September 1785:

I find the general fate of humanity here most deplorable. The truth of Voltaire's observation offers itself perpetually, that every man here must be either the hammer or the anvil. 31

What reduced millions of human beings to this state of wretchedness? It was not from the attempts to return to a peace-time economy after a draining war, as was the case in the United States. It was not from the selfish seizing of wealth by a few as an entire economy was inevitably transformed from an agrarian to an industrial society, thus

30 Padover, Profile, 21.
31 Ibid., 31.
possibly even being the pains of progress, as was the case in England. In France, the unconscionable abuses and burdens heaped on the backs of the helpless and hapless poor were simply the strategies of the privileged--crown, nobility, and clergy--to maintain the firm grip of feudalism. In order to support the excesses and extravagances of the king, his court, and the hierarchy of the church, the peasants were taxed and taxed and taxed some more.

The florid, impassioned, patriotic, and altogether riveting prose of Jules Michelet tells part of the story:

The evil consists in this, that the nation, from the highest to the lowest, is organized so as to go on producing less and less and paying more and more . . . Let us examine, if you will, these words producing less and less. They are exact to the letter. As early as under Louis XIV, the excise (aides) [taxes] already weighed so heavily, that at Mantes, Etampes, and elsewhere, all the vines were uprooted. The peasant having no goods to seize, the exchequer can lay hold of nothing but the cattle; it [the cattle] is gradually exterminated. No more manure. The cultivation of wheat, though extended in the seventeenth century, by immense clearings of waste land, decreased in the eighteenth. The earth can no longer repair as the cattle may become extinct, so also the land now appears dead.

Not only does the land produce less, but it is less cultivated. In many places, it is not worth while to cultivate it . . . the portion cultivated grows less, and the desert expands . . . How can we be surprised that the crops should fail with such half-starved husbandmen, or that the land should suffer and
refuse to yield? The yearly produce no longer suffices for the year.\(^{32}\)

One can imagine the thoughts of Maclure as he witnessed these abuses, given his hatred of the privileged, his sympathy for the poor, his faith in and knowledge about the productivity of the land.

According to Michelet, though heedless of the poor, the generosity of Louis XVI to his court favorites was inexhaustible. When he denied a request for a gift from one of the mass of courtiers who surrounded him, the petitioner became "moody and sullen." So the king yielded and copied down the sum in what became known as the infamous Red Book, adding excess to excess.

With such benevolence being dispensed on a regular basis at Versailles, it is small wonder that the nobility gathered at the palace around their king, in order to petition on behalf of themselves and their favorites—children, friends, mistresses. To all of these came favors—titles, positions, bequests, gifts, positions in the military. Supervision of the great estates was left to trusted—and abusive—subordinates.

These thousands of idle nobility paid no taxes and resisted every attempt to impose them; the clergy paid a

"gratuitous non-collectible tax." Therefore, what money came in, came in as a result of the efforts of the "farmers of the revenue," or tax-collectors, who sought their resources from those who were already poverty-stricken. Of these, Michelet said:

Tax-gathering was nothing but an organised warfare; it caused an army of two hundred thousand drones to oppress the soil. Those locusts devoured, wasted everything. To drain substance out of a people, thus devoured, it was necessary to have cruel laws, terrible penalties, the galleys, gibbets, racks. The farming agents were authorised to employ arms; they murdered, and were afterwards judged by the special tribunals of the Ferme Générale.\(^{33}\)

In a letter to James Madison, the President of William and Mary College and cousin to the fourth President of the United States, Jefferson commented on the fact that the property in France was held by a very few individuals, who employed the cream of the country for servants, manufacturers and tradesmen, and laboring husbandmen. These were, however, only a very small proportion of the peasant population. He then commented on the "most numerous of all classes, the poor who cannot find work":

I asked myself what could be the reason so many should be permitted to beg who are willing to work, in a country where there is a very considerable proportion of uncultivated lands? These lands are undisturbed only for the sake of game . . . Whenever there are in any country uncultivated lands and unemployed poor, it is clear that the laws of property have been so far

\(^{33}\)Ibid., 69.
extended as to violate natural right. The earth is given as a common stock for man to labor and live on.\textsuperscript{34}

The economic hardships, endless toil, cruel punishments, imprisonment for any cause and without limit, the fearful exactions of the clergy who commanded the obedience of the illiterate masses through fear of eternal punishments, the threat of famine after several years of bad harvest, all created a population slowly arousing itself to a fury.

Louis XVI had cause to rue the day he called for a gathering of the Estates-General. A succession of ministers, both reforming and subservient ones, had been unable to force the nobility or the Church to give up any of their privileges, even in the face of government bankruptcy. In an attempt to solve the problems facing France, the king summoned the three Estates to meet on 1 May 1789, the First Estate being the nobility; the Second, the clergy; and the Third Estate, the people. Two issues had to be settled before the Estates-General, which had not convened since 1614, could meet: (1) how many deputies were to represent each state, and (2) how they were to be elected. Through indolence, oversight, and ignorance of the implications of the decision, it was decided that there would be twice as many deputies in the Third Estate as in the other two.

\textsuperscript{34}Padover, \textit{Profile}, 36-37.
Representatives of the Third Estate were elected by nearly universal suffrage, which is to say that most males over 25 years old who could pay a small contribution were allowed to vote. In addition to naming representatives, voters in all three estates were asked to identify their grievances and proposals for reform. The results showed a widespread demand for a written constitution, the regular convening of the Estates-General to vote taxes and to legislate, and condemnation of the existing financial situation.

Without going into details of the vacillations of the king, the devices and ruses employed to prevent the seating of the Third Estate with the nobles and the clergy, and all the intrigues, deceptions, and double-dealing that characterized the entire process, suffice it to say that at length the Third Estate organized itself into the National Assembly and proceeded to write a constitution for France. This Assembly was composed of the entire Third Estate and those nobles and clergy who were in sympathy with their goals and joined them in their daunting task.

Of this group, Maclure said, "The first time the French exercised the right of universal suffrage, they elected a galaxy of talent, honor and honesty, that has not been equaled [sic] since."\[^{35}\] This opinion was seconded by J. M. Roberts, professor at Merton College, Oxford, and author of

The Pelican History of the World, an ambitious history of the world written for the lay public, in which he stated:

Before 1791, when it [the National Assembly] dispersed, it had nationalized the lands of the Church, abolished what it termed 'the feudal system', ended censorship, created a system of centralized representative government, obliterated the old provincial and local divisions and replaced them with the 'departments' under which Frenchmen still live, instituted equality before the law, and separated the legislative from the executive power. These were only the most remarkable things done by one of the most remarkable bodies the world has ever seen.36

It is small wonder that to William Maclure the French Revolution was a milestone in human history, an event that both created and confirmed his most deeply-held beliefs. In one of his frequent references to the Revolution in his Opinions, he stated:

Our revolution was the first successful attempt to restore the natural equality; but the opposition was not sufficiently strong to scatter and divide property; only political equality was accomplished. . . . The French revolution was the next violent push at the monopolies of church and state, and the reaction against the force and violence of aristocratic opposition, such as to scatter both property, and proprietors, and establish a degree of equality unknown before any state of civilization. It has produced a corresponding equality of knowledge, and forced a proportioned equalization of power, the end and aim of the present revolution, which most probably will finish by an elective system of universal suffrage, as the only kind of government that can suit the equality so completely pervading the French nation.37


37 Maclure, Opinions, 2:162-163.
Once again, the connection, for Maclure, between knowledge, power, and property is made clear. (Note the use of the word "proportioned," supporting the belief that he did not believe in the equal distribution of property and power, but rather the equitable distribution thereof. The ground was being prepared for a lifetime of educational projects that would further the kinds of progress made by the French Revolution.

Never in his writings does Maclure mention the excesses of the mob or the horror of the Reign of Terror; to him the advances the French society made as a whole probably outweighed even those extremes. The rule of Napoleon and the later restoration of the Bourbons distressed him, because it appeared that so many of the advances of the Revolution were reversed. As a result, he subjected his ideas about knowledge, property, and power to intense scrutiny. On 12 April 1826, the following appeared in The Disseminator:

To attempt the division of power and consequently freedom, before the division of property or knowledge on which liberty alone can be a solid foundation, is warring against nature . . . and all will fall back into nearly the ancient despotism. . . . Such has been abundantly proven by the French Revolution, and almost all the other European revolutions. They began by dividing power and expected to possess liberty, but they were greatly disappointed by the ignorance and poverty of the great mass, on whose information alone depends their freedom. 38

38 Ibid., 1:32.
But he continued to believe that, given the wide distribution of property that resulted from claiming and selling the ecclesiastical lands, the French population would once again reclaim their rights and once again enjoy the equalization of property and knowledge so essential to equality of power. Even with the emergence of the Directory, the Empire, and the restoration of the Bourbons, Maclure believed that what the French had learned during the Revolution would stand them in good stead. In his essay in The Disseminator of 31 May 1834, he wrote (taking even more liberties with syntax than was his wont):

France got equality by her revolution, in spite of the allied powers, who deprived them of their freedom. Some kind of freedom may exist without equality, but equality cannot continue long without freedom. The last and present hereditary executives, follow blindly the British system of extravagance, and augmenting the national debt and consequent taxation; the elective part of their government is a mere mockery, and whatever melioration the millions gain in France, it must be as it has always been by physical force.39

His faith in the lasting effects of the Revolution, even writing as he was in 1830 with the monarchy back on the throne, was expressed as follows:

When one reflects on all these circumstances, tending to strengthen and fortify the propensity to liberty and equality, one would be disposed to conjecture, that the French people will not be satisfied with any thing less than the first constitution given them by the national assembly . . . even if they are disposed to tolerate

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39Ibid., 2:271.
hereditary power for the sake of peace with their neighbors.\footnote{Ibid., 2:184.}

What was it about the French Revolution that so inspired some leading individuals in all three countries, yet brought upon them calumnies, imprecations, suspicions, and punishments from their fellow citizens?

Although complicated international relationships are involved in a thorough answer to that question--not to be gone into here--there are more general responses as well. To its supporters, the French Revolution was a true ideological triumph, signaling the dawn of a new day for humankind. With the total upset of the ancien régime and all of its feudal abuses, those who share Maclure's beliefs could hope that liberty and equality of property, knowledge, and power would become realities.

To the Federalist mentality in the United States, which had so effectively--and to Maclure's great dissatisfaction--looked to Britain as the government model for the United States, as well as for customs, fashions, and educational structures, the mobs surging through Paris were, in Hamilton's terms, "a disgusting spectacle." To the King and Parliament in England, the abuses being corrected and the reforms sought in France brought matters too close to home; repression was the answer.
In all three countries, there were groups that held fast to the principles of the French Revolution in spite of such violent opposition. For such groups, throwing off the yoke of oppression, as the Americans had done; totally demolishing the relics of feudalism; securing the benefits of universal suffrage and the redistribution of property; reorganizing the government to meet the educational, social, and economic needs of all its citizens; and, they hoped, ushering in a new Golden Age, were exhilarating and laudable goals. Is it any wonder that William Maclure and his friends were exalted by the French Revolution?
CHAPTER III
WILLIAM MACLURE AND HIS FRIENDS

Whether one lived in France, England, or America in 1789, the interested observer was probably on one side or the other regarding the French Revolution. In the simplest terms, those who were for the French Revolution were for equality and against privilege; those who were against the French Revolution, even those who might even have been partisans of the American Revolution, were for the status quo.

We have seen how the existing situation both in France and England, in Maclure's opinion, militated against the possession of the rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness for what Maclure called "the millions." And it has been suggested that even in the United States, powerful voices were raised in denial of the value or possibility of true equality.

In France, the extreme situation of the poor combined with the impact of the writings of great thinkers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Rousseau produced a violent revolution that was both economic and ideological. Across the Channel, in England, economic issues had stimulated movements for reform since the 1780s, but the actual
uprising of the French, as well as the philosophical bases for the Revolution, engendered both governmental opposition, on the one hand, and a whole new spirit of protest among a group known as the English Radicals, on the other.

It is important to examine this group, in an attempt to draw some conclusions about what influence their thinking and activities might have had on the young William Maclure. Lacking definitive evidence, it is impossible to establish clear connections, but it is possible to make some interesting deductions.

This is not a new discussion. In his introduction to the Maclure Collection of French Revolutionary Materials, John H. Jensen stated:

It is impossible to place Maclure as a member of the English group of reformers and radicals of the times; because of his views the temptation is strong to bracket him with Margarot, Price, Hardy, Godwin, and Cartwright, but direct evidence is lacking. It is probable that he knew most of these men and met them when he was in London. However, he was already cut off, by long residence abroad, from the constitutional struggles which absorbed the attention of these pamphleteers, orators, and agitators.¹

On the other hand, we read the opinion of Alberto Gil Novales in his introduction to his book, William Maclure in Spain,

Nor do I think Jensen is right when he says it is impossible to align Maclure with the group of English

reformers and radicals like Margaret, Price, Hardy, Godwin, and Cartwright. He admits that the idea is very tempting, but that all evidence is lacking, and that anyway Maclure is definitively separated from the English radicals by distance... Maclure may very well not have had a direct relationship with all of them, sharing common ideals; and he certainly did not take part in the enterprises or undergo the fate of those who disappeared earlier, like Margaret and others.\(^2\)

At that juncture, Novales makes his case for the influence of Jeremy Bentham on Maclure. There is no doubt that Maclure was friendly with Bentham and visited him several times in his home in London in August of 1824\(^3\) and that ultimately the influence was very deep. That influence will be examined in a later chapter. Maclure described himself as a "utilitarian of Jeremy Bentham suit."\(^4\) But there is no evidence that Maclure knew Bentham during the years currently under consideration, 1782-1796. Bentham apparently was not an integral member of the group of radicals who were actively engaged in reform, although he may well have been acquainted with them. (In fact, according to Novales, Bentham was a Conservative until 1808, when he converted to the Liberal cause.\(^5\) However, this date


\(^5\)Ibid., 18.
is disputed by M. P. Mack, who described Bentham as feverishly involved, under the direction of Lord Shelburne, in writing position papers for the French National Assembly, and ardently in support of the Revolution. The excesses of the Terror of 1793 apparently appalled him and he then turned to his writings about legal reform, returning to the analysis of democracy and revolution and to radicalism at a much later time.)

As was discussed in the Introduction, it is not at all clear that Maclure was geographically removed from the ferment of discussion in London and in Paris, but neither is there evidence to support the belief that Maclure’s chief influences at this time were Bentham, Greenhough, or Francis Place (whom he did not meet until 1824), as Novales suggests. And, being a gentleman himself, he was more likely to have been associated with members of the London Society for Constitutional Information, upper middle-class professionals and intellectuals, than with Maurice Margarot, Richard Price, Francis Place, and Joseph Gerrald, who were the organizing spirits of the London Corresponding Society, which was comprised of some lawyers and professionals but was largely made up of artisans, tradesmen, merchants, and shop-keepers.

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It must be remembered that Maclure, young as he was during those years immediately after the American Revolution and during the French Revolution, was highly intelligent, ambitious, mobile, gregarious, concerned about social issues, and well placed to discuss them with individuals who were in the thick of things. He knew everyone. Is it extending credulity too much to believe that a man who not only knew Thomas Jefferson, but was placed by him as one of three on an absolutely vital commission, did not also know some of the other central figures who shared his ideals and ideas?

It is my belief that he did and that his thinking was congruent with theirs. Whether Maclure was brought together with Joel Barlow or Volney, for example, because of an affinity of radical thought or whether the friendship and interchange of radical ideas among these men created such an affinity is immaterial. An individual's ideas are shaped by many different influences and circumstances, some more critical than others. Out of the interchange with many like-minded individuals, and indeed, with those in opposition, emerge the ideas and convictions that are individual, personal, and deeply-held. So it was with Maclure. In his letter to Benjamin Silliman of 1 October 1836, he said of himself:

I am rather what some would call an original and though I have run over most of the civilized world have had too much obstinacy and independence to copy others. What I thought worth examining I have formed my own
opinions and perhaps with more presumption than prudence have printed them and I am not disappointed at finding them unpopular.

An investigation of several of Maclure's friendships gives some idea of what he might have thought "worth examining" and reinforces the opinion of Doskey that "Maclure's basic political and economic views were conceived during these years," and so sets the stage for the crystallization of his ideas about educational reform.

Connections among the English radicals and intellectuals abounded. In the introductory essay to her collection of writings of Edmund Burke and the English radicals, *Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolutionary Controversy*, Marilyn Butler described the group of reformers who were included in the closely-knit circle around Joseph Johnson, the Dissenter (Unitarian) publisher, book-seller, and owner of the *Analytical Review*. These included the distinguished scientist and Unitarian scholar and minister, Dr. Joseph Priestley; the American and Hartford Wit, Joel Barlow; the Edgeworths, father and daughter; William Godwin, author of the truly radical book, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice*; Godwin's wife for all too short a time, Mary Wollstonecraft, author of both *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* and *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; and Tom Paine, British pamphleteer whose *Rights of Man* aroused two continents. She mentions others--William Wordsworth, Henry Fuseli, and William Blake, poets and artists--and she
includes John Horne Tooke. Tooke revived, in 1790, the London Society for Constitutional Information which had been formed by London intellectuals ten years earlier to discuss the need for Parliamentary reform and to attempt to arouse among the "COMMONALITY AT LARGE, a knowledge of their lost rights."  

It is possible that Maclure knew Dr. Priestley while both were in London, but there is at present no evidence for this. But it is certain that they knew each other in Philadelphia. Hounded out of England for his radical beliefs and activities, Joseph Priestley settled first in Philadelphia in 1794, then moved to Northumberland, Pennsylvania, shortly thereafter. He had been a friend of Benjamin Franklin, the founder of the American Philosophical Society, and had been elected to foreign membership in that body in 1785. Upon his arrival in America, he was welcomed to resident membership where he gave a series of lectures to the Society on "The Evidences of Revelation" in the spring of 1796 and was frequently in attendance at meetings of the Society.  


William Maclure took up residence in Philadelphia that same year and became a member of the American Philosophical Society in 1799, probably at the invitation of the then president of the Society, Thomas Jefferson. Sometime between 1796 and the late summer or early fall of 1799, when he again departed for Europe, Maclure visited Dr. Priestley at his home in Northumberland; Dr. Priestley accompanied Maclure and several of his friends on "all our botanical and geological excursions" and said that he "found an amusement in natural history that he wanted." He told Maclure:

If you will remain with me for a few weeks, I will begin to learn it [natural history]; for books, and even chemistry, cease to have that novelty to me, which I perceive I could find in the study of nature.  

It is unlikely that Maclure and Priestley could be together under such circumstances and not discuss their many other mutual interests, and probably their mutual acquaintances.

Dr. Joseph Priestley was a Nonconformist minister and a chemist of world renown. His studies in electricity won him election to the Royal Society in 1766 and his researches into "different kinds of airs" caused him to be chosen as a foreign associate of the French Academy of Sciences. As a

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9The visit had to have taken place during this period. Prior to that time, Maclure was in Europe, and by the time he returned in 1808, Priestley was dead, having died in 1804.

10Maclure, Opinions, 2:100.
scientist, his contributions to the study of gases, including the discovery of oxygen, were important and gained him international fame. At the same time that he was carrying on scientific research, he was expanding and promulgating his theological and political views. From 1767 on, he wrote against the English policies towards the American colonies and, as has been seen, was active as well in the group calling for Parliamentary reform and the French Revolution.

It was this latter allegiance that caused him to come to America. For a very brief time at first the English were enthusiastic about the French Revolution, seeing a parallel between it and their own "Glorious Revolution" of 1688. But within a short time, the mood changed: the ancient enmity with France, the gradual appearance of nobles emigrating from France, and the tales of assaults on the property of French noblemen traveled across the Channel and resulted in a sharp about-face for great segments of the British population, and especially for the aristocrats, for Parliament, and for the Prime Minister, William Pitt the younger.

The volume, *Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolution Controversy*, by Marilyn Butler, examines the storm of writings that followed the publication of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, which was issued in 1790. Burke’s vehement attack on the French Revolution and
his ardent case for aristocracy and the status quo brought an immediate response from the circle of English Radicals. The response of Joseph Priestley echoes everything dear to William Maclure:

The generality of governments have hitherto been little more than a combination of the few against the many; and to the mean passions and low cunning of these few, have the great interests of mankind been too long sacrificed. Whole nations have been deluged with blood, and every source of future prosperity has been drained, to gratify the caprices of some of the most despicable, or the most execrable, of the human species. How glorious, then, is the prospect, the reverse of all the past, which is now opening upon us, and upon the world. Government, we may now expect to see, not only in theory, and in books, but in actual practice, calculated for the general good, and taking no more upon it than the general good requires; leaving all men the enjoyment of as many of their natural rights as possible, and no more interfering with matters of religion, with men's notions concerning God, and a future state, than with philosophy, or medicine.¹¹

As a result, the radical political writings of Joseph Priestley were unpopular and, as it turned out, dangerous for him. Living in Birmingham in 1791, he attended a dinner on July 14, celebrating the fall of the Bastille two years earlier. A mob took that opportunity to sack and burn his house, including his laboratory and all the research of years. He and his family escaped to London, where his welcome at the home of Joseph Johnson was offset by the snubs he received from members of the Royal Society.

In addition to his political radicalism, Priestley's writings attacked conventional religion and, according to Butler, demonstrated the belief that a "more open, egalitarian, prosperous, and humane England is attainable, on the American model; a middle-class state which would dispense with aristocratic policies." These were unwelcome words to a society that venerated the past, aristocracy, and the status quo. But he was welcome in America.

The newly-elected President Jefferson wrote to Priestley in 1801 as follows:

Yours is one of the few lives precious to mankind, and for the continuance of which every thinking man is solicitous. Bigots may be an exception. What an effort, my dear sir, of bigotry in politics and religion have we gone through! . . . Our countrymen have recovered from the alarm into which art and industry had thrown them; science and honesty are replaced on their high ground; and you, my dear sir, as their great apostle, are on its pinnacle. It is with heartfelt satisfaction that, in the first moments of my public action, I can hail you with welcome to our land, tender to you the homage of its respect and esteem, cover you under the protection of those laws which were made for the wise and good like you, and disdain the legitimacy of that libel on legislation, which, under the form of a law, was for some time placed among them.

His margin notes indicated that he was referring to the Alien law.

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12 Butler, Revolution Controversy, 84.

13 Saul K. Padover, A Jefferson Profile as Revealed in His Letters, 127-128.
Another friend of Maclure's was a member of that radical group that centered on Joseph Johnson. The name of Joel Barlow is prominent among those individuals who were so active in Parliamentary reform movements and enthusiastic about the French Revolution. Again, it is not known at present exactly when Maclure met Barlow, but by 1801 their friendship was such that Maclure, writing to Jefferson from Paris, reported that their "mutual friends C.F. Volney and Joel Barlowe [sic] were in good health."

Barlow, born in 1754, was originally one of the group know as the Hartford Wits, a group of conservative Connecticut literati, described by Parrington as the "literary old-guard of the expiring eighteenth century, suspicious of all innovation, contemptuous of every idealistic program." His thinking left that group far behind in the course of his subsequent adventures. In 1788 he left the provincial attitudes of "prim little Hartford" and sailed for France, where he set up headquarters for the Scioto Land Company, a speculative enterprise selling land in America. There he remained for seventeen years, from 1788 until 1805, and there he was transformed from a Yale conservative to a cosmopolitan and outspoken champion of the rights of man. He was, according to Parrington, "equally at

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home in London and Paris, passing long periods of time in both cities.\textsuperscript{15} He was a member of the London Society for Constitutional Information, that group of well-to-do liberal gentlemen who sought Parliamentary reform, and was their link to the London Corresponding Society, the group earlier described as being made up largely of artisans and shopkeepers, with a sprinkling of professionals. Barlow's book, \textit{Advice to the Privileged Orders}, was as inflammatory as Tom Paine's \textit{Rights of Man}, in the mind of British conservatives.

For Barlow, the primary function of the state is the securing of justice. One can understand why Barlow's ideas resonated with those of his friend, William Maclure. Barlow stated:

\begin{quote}
But justice without equal opportunity is a mockery; and equal opportunity is impossible unless the individual citizen shall be equipped to live on equal terms with his fellows. Hence the fine flower of political justice is discovered in education; in that generous provision for the young and the weak that shall equip them to become free members of the commonwealth.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

No wonder he and William Maclure were friends. I would venture to say that since Barlow went first to France on American business at the time Jefferson was Minister to France and since Jefferson had known Maclure in Virginia, he

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 383.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 385.
may well have introduced the two of them when both were in Paris.

Yet another friend to whom Maclure referred in his letter to Jefferson was C. F. Volney; his full name was Comte de Constantin François Chasse-Boeuf Volney (1757-1820). According to Anne Taylor, Volney had become known to Maclure when the latter was in Paris in the last days of the ancien régime. Her source is a letter in the archives of the American Philosophical Society written by William Maclure to S.G. Morton and dated 27 December 1836.17

Born of middle-level nobility, Volney was a scientist, traveler, a man of letters and profound learning, a statesman, and a radical. He was a member of both the Estates-General and the Constituent Assembly that produced the excellent Constitution referred to earlier. He was a member of an inner circle of thinkers that, like their English counterparts, wished to see reforming ideas put into action. Taylor suggests that the thinking of Volney's inner circle "found an eager response in William Maclure":

It was the first time in his life that he had been sufficiently impressed to surrender to instruction for, as his correspondence shows, he possessed all the dogmatism of those who make an early success in life.18

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18 Ibid., 127.
Volney's essay on the philosophy of history, *Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires* appeared in 1791. It went through several translations into English, but the translation with which Volney himself was most satisfied was made under his supervision by Joel Barlow.¹⁹

*Volney's Ruins* is essentially a long, dramatic and visionary, but closely-reasoned essay on the rise and fall of civilizations. In mythic terms it explores the nature of man, the nature of society, and the nature of justice.

In a dialogue with the "Genius," the narrator thinks about past empires from which he passes into gloomy thoughts about mankind and its natural tendency toward usurpation of power. To the disconsolate narrator, the Genius says:

Nature has established laws, your part is to obey them; observe, reason, and profit by experience. It is the folly of man which ruins him, let his wisdom save him. The people are ignorant, let them acquire instruction; their chiefs are wicked, let them correct and amend; for such is Nature's decree. Since the evils of society spring from cupidity and ignorance, men will never cease to be persecuted, till they become enlightened and wise.²⁰

Then to the ears of the downcast narrator comes the sound of "a hollow sound . . . a cry of liberty, proceeding from far distant shores" as "a powerful nation inquires what


²⁰Ibid., 64.
she is and what she ought to be, while ... she interrogates her rights, her resources and what has been the conduct of her chiefs. 21

In such a style the narrator examines the nobles, the priests, and praises the delegates who have assembled to create the "compact." The people assembled speak to the delegates thus:

And reflect what tribute of glory the world, which reveres so many apostles of error, will bestow on the first assembly of rational men, who shall have solemnly proclaimed the immutable principles of justice, and consecrated in the face of tyrants the rights of nations! 22

Representatives of all the world's great religions are summoned to seek some common ground, which cannot be found among their beliefs, based as they are on "things absent and beyond their reach." Harmony will be established with a return to nature, to "real beings that have in themselves an identical, constant, and uniform mode of existence." What cannot be submitted to the examination of the senses is impossible to be determined and therefore must not be argued about or decided upon.

From this we conclude, that, to live in harmony and peace, we must agree never to decide on such subjects, and to attach to them no importance; in a word, we must trace a line of distinction between those that are capable of verification, and those that are not, and separate, by an inviolable barrier, the world of

21 Ibid., 70.

22 Ibid., 79.
fantastical beings from the world of realities—that is to say, all civil effect must be taken away from theological and religious opinions.\textsuperscript{23}

Thus spoke the scientist against state religions and religious intolerance. The emphasis on reality, on verification, on the dependence of truth only on the observations of the senses found echoes in the thoughts of William Maclure.

Neither an allegory nor a political treatise, but combining elements of both into dramatic and visionary prose, \textit{Les Ruines} is a poetical inquiry into the nature of justice.

Now in the social state, in the government of men, what is just and unjust? Justice consists in preserving or restoring to each individual what belongs to him; (1) life, (2) the use of the senses and faculties given him, (3) the enjoyment of the fruits of his labor; and all this, as long as he injures not the same rights in others. . . . But the greater the number of the injured, the more injustice is committed: consequently, if, as is the fact, what is called the people composes the immense majority of a nation, it is the interest, the happiness of that majority, which constitutes justice.\textsuperscript{24}

Volney's participation in the National and Constituent Assemblies was distinguished. He spoke in favor of making all deliberations public, supported the organization of a national guard, and the division of France into departments. He advocated selling the ecclesiastical lands to individuals

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., 184.

\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., fn. 77.
since land is most productive when man is "a free and entire proprietor" and the more proprietors, the stronger the state. That is, there should be a greater division of property.

But one so visible and committed to justice was not safe in Jacobin France; he was imprisoned for ten months during The Terror, fortunately escaping the guillotine. In 1794, he was appointed to the faculty of a new normal school which was to improve teaching, but that school failed. In 1795, he came to America where he did the research for his subsequent treatise, Tableau du climat et du sol des États-Unis. According to Taylor, he set out for his journey to the West from the Philadelphia home of William Maclure. However, it was that time of public anxiety about foreigners, which had so distressed Jefferson, and in 1797 Volney was accused of being a French spy and had to return to France in 1798.

Until he died in 1820, he served as a legislator and continued his remarkable scholarship, writing a treatise on Herodotus and other works on ancient history, philosophy, and languages.

The friendship of men such as Thomas Jefferson, Joseph Priestley, Joel Barlow, and C. F. Volney, with their powerful and radical ideas about political justice, religious freedom and toleration, and the education of the
masses were surely major influences on the still young William Maclure.
CHAPTER IV

UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE AND UNIVERSAL FREE EDUCATION

It has been seen that in the temper of the times and in the radical cosmopolitan and international circles in which Maclure moved, there was a growing understanding that the unempowered and the dispossessed—the laborer, the factory worker, the peasant—would be able to claim their rightful and equal share of property and power only through education—the equal share of knowledge. Ignorant men were duped and exploited by those who were richer, better educated, and more powerful. The latter were free to pursue their own self-interest; the former were inhibited from doing so by laws, customs, pressures—created by the non-producers—and by ignorance of their rights.

Most Europeans were fully convinced that the American experiment would be a disaster and that only anarchy and chaos could follow in the wake of the establishment of a government based on universal suffrage and the general will. As we have seen, many of the patrician creators of the Constitution, Alexander Hamilton among them, had the same doubts. But the first years of the American republic had proved to doubters like Jeremy Bentham what many of the founding fathers and certainly William Maclure had always
believed, which was that, given the facts, the people were capable of governing themselves.

Maclure was very clear on this point:

To assert that there are not thousands of industrious millions capable of legislating for their own interest and the interest of the majority is a deception that cannot stand the light of day.¹

The common sense of the people had long been a dearly-held tenet of Thomas Jefferson. To Lieutenant Colonel Edward Carrington, a Revolutionary War soldier from Virginia, he wrote from Paris on 16 January 1787:

I am persuaded myself, that the good sense of the people will always be found to be the best army. They may be led astray for a moment, but will soon correct themselves. The people are the only censors of their governors, and even their errors will tend to keep these to the true principles of their institution.²

But to both of these men, one born in America, one who adopted the nation as his own, an absolutely imperative corollary of giving power to the people was ensuring that they had the education that participation in a democratic society required. Jefferson wrote from Paris to George Wythe, professor of law at William and Mary College, in August of 1786 as follows:

I think by far the most important bill in our whole code is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness.

²Saul K. Padover, *A Jefferson Profile as Revealed in His Letters*, 44.
Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know, that the people alone can protect us against these evils, and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests and nobles, who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance.  

William Maclure said it all in one long paragraph!

The only radical cure for such an accumulation of evils, miseries and wretchedness, as has oppressed mankind, is the equalization of knowledge by our working people’s plan of an equal, universal, useful and liberal instruction, with food and clothing to all the children of the nation, at the expense of the people’s purse; thus founding society on an equal division of useful knowledge, securing a proportionably equal division of property and power, which totally eradicates the power, as well as the temptation, of one class of society tyrannizing over another; compresses the two vision extremes of the population toward the center of justice, comfort, and happiness, and can be accomplished by universal suffrage.

It was because the equalization of property and power in France, as a result of the Revolution, had run ahead of the proportionate division of knowledge that the benefits of the Revolution had been eclipsed:

To attempt the division of power, and consequently freedom, before the division of property or knowledge, on which alone liberty can have a solid foundation, is warring against nature, and all will fall back into nearly the ancient despotism. ... Such has been abundantly proven by the French revolution, and almost all the other European revolutions. They began by dividing power, and expected to possess liberty; but they were greatly disappointed, by the ignorance and poverty of the great mass, on whose information alone depends their freedom, to the security of which the

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3 Ibid., 40.

4 Maclure, Opinions, 1:36.
knowledge of the few men they put into power is an
insurmountable obstruction.⁵

This belief in the capacity of the laboring class to
manage their own governance, given the education required to
do so, was not unique to the United States. However much
the various groups of English radicals might have disagreed
about the nature of the societal ills that confronted them
or the means of amelioration, they all agreed that there
would be no reform of Parliament or an improvement in the
lot of the working man unless he was better educated and
informed of his rights. At a meeting of representatives
from various radical societies in Norwich on 24 March 1792,
the following declaration was agreed on:

We believe that instructing the people in political
knowledge and in their natural and inherent rights as
men is the only effectual way to obtain the grand
object of reform, for men need only be made acquainted
with the abuses of government and they will readily
join in every lawful means to obtain redress.⁶

Furthermore, the English experience during the 1790s
had proved that, not only simply education, but education of
and through groups led to political power as well as
individual self-improvement. There was ample proof that the
approach of the radicals had been effective. Francis Place,
whom Maclure met in London in August of 1824, had been a

⁵Ibid., 1:32.

⁶H. T. Dickinson, British Radicalism and the French
Revolution, 1789-1815, 18.
central figure in the founding of the London Corresponding Society, the well-organized group of artisans, merchants, shopkeepers, and professionals that, in the 1790s, had been so active in the cause both of Parliamentary reform and support of the French Revolution. Through the experiences, often painful and even dangerous, of those years, Place’s life was transformed. In the late 1780s, he was a master tailor plying his trade; in subsequent years, he became known throughout the kingdom, the darling of the reformers, the nemesis of the conservatives.

After war was declared between England and France in 1793, the situation of the members of the London Corresponding Society was filled with risks. The Seditious Meetings Act and the Treasonable Practices Act forced the organization underground. Yet the activities of spies within the groups resulted in arrests, trials, and, in several cases, transportation to Botany Bay, at the end of the world in Australia.

Only through the able defense of Lord Erskine were several of Place’s friends and associates in the London Corresponding Society rescued from that fate. Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke faced a jury trial because they advocated "representative government, the direct opposite of the government which is established here," and were fortunately acquitted.
Years later, in 1822, at the annual dinner celebrating that acquittal, Place interviewed twenty-four men at that dinner who had been members of the London Corresponding Society (LCS). According to Place in his Autobiography and quoted by Mary Thale in her book on the Society, all twenty-four were "flourishing men." All agreed with Place that their education had been furthered by their membership in the LCS. Membership had:

Induced men to read books . . . to respect themselves and to desire to educate their children. . . . The discussions in the divisions, in the Sunday evening readings, and in the small debating meetings, opened to them views that had never before taken. They were compelled by these discussions to find reasons for their opinions, and to tolerate others. It is more than probable that a circumstance like this had never before occurred. 7

Both the times in which it flourished and membership in the LCS were unusual and dangerous, but the success of the organization could serve as a model for more peaceful times. Perhaps organizations along the lines of the LCS were in Maclure's mind when he wrote about organizations of workingmen in his essay of 27 August 1828:

Already the laboring classes, in the countries the most civilized in Europe, are thoroughly convinced that knowledge is power, and that the most certain and rational mode for them to acquire the power of living comfortable and happy, is to obtain as perfect a knowledge of their own interest, as their means will

afford them. For which purpose they have established mechanical institutes in the large towns, with libraries and lectures on every kind of useful science; and in the small towns, societies or school clubs, where each member in his turn reads lectures from one of the best elementary books of the science they wish to learn, and at the same time they obtain a library of useful books by subscription.  

Maclure had discussed the forming of such groups in an earlier essay in May of the same year:

The productive laborers, in some countries, have already found (and will no doubt soon be convinced, in all places) that a lecture read by one of themselves out of a book is full as intelligible, and perhaps more so, than a lecture given by any of the learned professors. . . . Fifty or twenty laborers, clubbing together to procure a reading room, would find that one author on mechanics, and one on chemistry applied to the arts, would be sufficient to begin with, and give them occupation for some months. Each might lecture in his turn. . . . The lecture might take an hour, and the rest of the evening be spent in conversation, either on the subject of the lecture, or any other that pleased the majority better.  

As we shall see later, Maclure's will provided for libraries for any such groups as might wish to form in Indiana and Illinois.

While the groups he described above were for self-improvement and general education, Maclure was equally persuaded that education was the key to the success of the workingman in affairs of government. He was also clear that neglect of any interest in affairs of government would continue the same exploitation and voicelessness that had

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8Maclure, Opinions, 1:98.
9Ibid., 1:78.
been the lot of the workingman up to that point. He understood that the price of liberty was eternal vigilance.

The greatest promoter, encourager, and continuer of tyranny and despotism is that slothful disposition to indifference concerning public measures. They say, what is that to me? It is not a cent out of my pocket; and copying the weakness of and imbecility of subjects and slaves, say, it is out of my reach, I cannot change it. Every citizen has both a physical and moral interest in watching over the conduct of public servants. 10

Thomas Jefferson, in his letter to Edward Carrington, had likened the situation of the people under European governments as sheep to wolves. He exhorted Carrington to "Cherish the spirit of the people and keep alive their attention," saying:

If once they become inattentive to the public affairs, you and I, and congress and assemblies, judges and governors, shall all become wolves. It seems to be the law of our general nature, in spite of individual exceptions, and experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind, for I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe, and to the general prey of the rich on the poor. 11

It was one thing for the burdened millions in France and England, as well as the rest of Europe, to be denied the power that the equal division of property and education would extend to them. But Maclure was absolutely baffled by the situation that existed in the United States, where after fifty years of liberty in a country where nearly universal

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10 Ibid., 3:277.
11 Padover, Jefferson, 45.
suffrage was a fact, the millions in America had not begun to realize the power that was theirs to claim. The United States may "have effected much in the short time of independence, yet they are but an indifferent example of what may be accomplished by universal suffrage."\textsuperscript{12} He asserted that "the sum of comfort and happiness must be far below the degree mankind are naturally capable of enjoying; ignorance is the cause of all evil, and the diffusion of useful knowledge is the only remedy."\textsuperscript{13}

At that point in his thinking, Maclure turned the blame onto the industrious producers themselves. They had not realized the benefits of their liberty because of their "apathetic indifference, indolence and ignorance . . . [they] tamely submit to be deprived, under false pretences, of nine-tenths of their property, produced by their toil and labor."\textsuperscript{14} Under an "elective government of universal suffrage, the people are unjust and unreasonable to blame any but themselves for the faults, blunders, plundering, or extortion of either church or state."\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{12}Maclure, \textit{Opinions}, 3:288.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 3:285.

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 3:198.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 2:28.
His impatience with the lack of progress of the industrious producers is never so well expressed as in the following words:

Fifty-one years have we been independent of all hereditary, or any species of arbitrary power. Fifty-one years have the positive majority ruled, with legal constitutional power to act, decree and put in execution, everything for their own benefit and advantage; and what have they done? Let the pages of history,—let our courts of law, bewildered in the mazes and corruption of feudal precedents,—let our trinity of political power,—let all our habits, customs and passions, declare what improvement, change or melioration we have made, from the accumulated evils, usurpations and misery, of the millions in old mother Britain. . . . What have the millions, with their uncontrolled power, done for their own comfort and happiness? Have they not, like a horse in a mill, followed the colonial impulse, received from the dominion of Britain. . . . The mechanism of our minds, like a clock wound up under the colonial system, goes on without being changed by external circumstances.16

If the millions had only themselves to blame for their powerlessness and ignorance, for the fact that they continued to elect into positions of responsibility representatives whose "notions of both luxuries and necessaries are in proportion to the ignorance of their fellow men who surround them," from whom could they expect aid or assistance? The answer: "From themselves--from the only class that is interested in their welfare. To look for help from any others, would be to expect an effect, without a cause."17

16Ibid., 1:105.

17Ibid., 1:72.
The use of the word "class" in that last quotation underlines the fact that, for Maclure, the interests of the producers and the non-producers were, as society was organized, inherently opposed.

The interest of the producers is contrary to the interest of the consumers; the interest of the poor is contrary to the interest of the rich; the interest of those who make the laws is contrary to the interest of those who are forced to obey them. What an immense jarring of interests in the social order! What a contradiction of interests between the various classes into which civilization has divided mankind!\(^\text{18}\)

What, for Maclure, was the solution? Union. It behooved the producers to unite at the ballot box and "put into places of trust, power, and profit, those of their own trade, the working and producing millions."\(^\text{19}\) He wrote: "With a majority in the ballot boxes they can do every thing, without it they can do nothing, but be laughed at by those who live on the fruit of their labor."\(^\text{20}\)

By union, Maclure meant a formal, organized strategy for ensuring that the millions would protect and further their own interests. The nascent labor union movement received support from Maclure in statements like this:

Union and perseverance are the qualities that can alone obtain their just rights. When they shall have obtained a majority in the council or legislature they must sit together on one side of the house, conduct and

\(^{18}\)Ibid., 3:131.

\(^{19}\)Ibid., 3:101.

\(^{20}\)Ibid., 2:43.
arrange their plans, and not permit any but the producing class to interfere. They must remain firm on the elevated ground that they produce all, and that they have a majority that are determined to distribute all, in accordance with their interest and the interest of their constituents.²¹

It is not the intention of this dissertation to critique Maclure's political philosophy except in the most general way, but one is struck by some of the potential problems he ignores in statements like this:

When the producers obtain the majority, before which nothing can be done, they must sit altogether in one house, consult one another on all subjects and act like one united force... if they by their eloquent logic can convince their constituents to change their pledges, it is the only method of changing their votes, for it is their opinions, interest and welfare they represent and not themselves.... Its [universal suffrage's] utility is not on any other principle, but that the voice of the majority should rule.²²

It is easy to understand the conditions under which Maclure wrote these thoughts, where the working class had few rights and little representation. But one wonders what justice he would have extended to any minority, including that of the privileged, assuming the emergence of the millions as the political power. And one wonders, given the fact that the millions (or any group) cannot always speak with a single voice or always accept "eloquent logic" even when it is in the right, what role individual conviction and

²¹Ibid., 2:43.

²²Ibid., 3:309.
integrity should play in the vote of the chosen representative of the producers.

For Maclure, all roads led to education. For Maclure, education served two purposes—education for a livelihood and education for citizenship. Education, in short, was to be useful. Usefulness and utility loom large in the vocabulary of William Maclure. It would be interesting to analyze the undoubted source of these ideas—Jeremy Bentham.
CHAPTER V

THE CENTRALITY OF UTILITY

It has been argued in the preceding chapters that Maclure's experiences and friendships during the years between the time he went to London to enter business and the very last years of the eighteenth century were critical in the shaping of his thinking. He observed the situation of the repressed English working class, the valiant struggles of the successful revolutionaries of France, and the choices being made in the United States between the Federalists and the Republicans. Central concepts that dominated his thinking during those days of ferment were the equitable distribution of knowledge, property, and power through universal suffrage and universal free education. These themes are consistent in his writing--his letters, journals, and Opinions--from as early a time as we have his writings.

A whole new dimension entered his thinking at some point, however; in his later comments in letters to Madame Fretageot and in his Opinions he refers frequently to "the happiness of mankind," and he values things that have "utility" or are "useful." An examination of these ideas lends support to his own characterization of himself as "a utilitarian of the Jeremy Bentham suit."
It is not known when he first met Jeremy Bentham. In his journal entries of 28 and 31 August and 3 September 1824, he reports that he had been with Mr. Bentham. For example: "I called on Jeremy Bentham in the evening and spent a few hours with him. He is a cheerful old man, full of good ideas, and a liberal."¹

Perhaps this introduction came about in the following way: Only a month before, Maclure had visited Robert Owen's establishment in New Lanark for the first time. Traveling on to London, he was introduced, on 26 August, to Dr. Charles Maclean, John Black, Francis Place, James Pierrepont Greaves, and William Allen. He apparently already knew John Bowring, whom he also saw that day; Bowring was the disciple, editor, and intimate of Bentham. Two days later he was with Jeremy Bentham. Given the custom of traveling with letters of introduction, it is possible that it was with Robert Owen's introduction that he met at least some of these men, since several of them were intimately connected with Owen's New Lanark enterprise.

When Robert Owen was in danger of being dismissed as Manager of the New Lanark mills in August 1814, as a result of the displeasure of his partners, he traveled to London to find some new partners who would support his objectives.

The joint stock company that was formed as a result had among its members, in addition to Owen, Jeremy Bentham and William Allen. Further, when Owen went to London to find support, he met William Godwin, author of An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice, who, in turn, introduced Owen to Francis Place, the radical tailor who had played a central role in the activities of the London Corresponding Society referred to in Chapters II and III.

But whether this was a first meeting with Bentham or not, Maclure can certainly take his place in the van of Benthamites. His own extremely common-sensical and practical approach to life would render him fully open to Bentham's philosophy, whether his grounding in those ideas was a result of direct acquaintance, reading Bentham's works, or simply inhaling his ideas from the climate of opinion of the time. For after his Introduction to Principles of Morals and Legislation was published in 1789, Bentham's fame and that of his ideas of happiness and utility spread through Europe and the United States. Such diffusion was facilitated through the publication of The Philanthropist, a journal of the Utilitarians that was edited by James Mill, father of John Stuart Mill, and owned by the William Allen just mentioned above. Perhaps The Philanthropist, the keelboat that took the Boatload of Knowledge down the Ohio River, was named after this publication.
Although what follows in no way pretends to be an exposition of the philosophy of Jeremy Bentham and depends on the interpretation of M. F. Mack in her book, Jeremy Bentham: An Odyssey of Ideas, it is interesting to describe commonalities with the ideas of William Maclure, ideas that led Maclure to see himself as a Benthamite, and to discuss briefly, as well, where they depart from each other, because that discussion leads directly into Maclure's ideas about education.

According to Mack, Bentham borrowed his fundamental belief in the centrality of sense impressions or sensationalism from John Locke. "He assumed that Locke's description of the direct or indirect origin of all ideas from sense impressions and the possibility of reducing all complex ones to simple ones was correct."²

For Bentham, the mainspring of human behavior was a search for pleasurable sensations and an avoidance of painful ones. This was not a negative moral judgment; this was a fact. The quality that informed this search was utility, that which furthered the individual in his quest for happiness, which was the overall good of life. A preponderance of pleasurable experiences contributed to happiness; painful experiences detracted from happiness. This search was not conducted with unrestrained liberty,

²M. P. Mack, Jeremy Bentham: An Odyssey of Ideas, 120.
however. There were *sanctions*, the "various forms in which the fear of consequences check a man in the pursuit of what may be his own individual pleasures." Those consequences could be physical, psychological, personal or social. Greater happiness was afforded to the individual who considered all the possible ramifications of his pleasurable actions before taking that action.

A man was virtuous in proportion to the range of considerations that prompted his actions. Virtues were either self-regarding or other-regarding; prudence, the judicious exercise of foresight in one's own affairs, or benevolence, the widest extension of sympathy for other human beings.³

Maclure echoed this thought in his essay of 7 August 1829:

All men are actuated by their interest, as far as they understand it. Hence it follows as a certain consequence, that he who possesses the most knowledge and the greatest and most accurate foresight into the consequences of his actions, will pursue most accurately his own real interest, and that all deviations from it must be in proportion to the quantum of ignorance, or want of thought, reflection, or foresight of the individual.⁴

Maclure accepted Bentham's sanctions too:

But it must be congenial to the happiness of all, taught by mature reflection on his own nature and real interests, that he enjoys happiness in proportion to the happiness that surrounds him.⁵

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³Ibid., 206.


⁵Ibid., 3:78.
On 1 April 1837, Maclure wrote from Mexico and discoursed further on the subject of happiness, pointing out the importance of equality among men as a precondition for the realization of happiness:

Perhaps an approach toward equality is the only effectual cure for a great part of the evils which torment humanity, the fault is not in the nature of men, who are all in search of happiness, but in the ignorance necessary to the maintaining of that great inequality by the division of classes and ranks, introduced by civilization as a foundation of the great tyranny which constitute masters and slaves,—consumers and producers. It may be doubted whether any rational or reasonable being can enjoy either satisfaction or happiness when surrounded by discontent, misery or starvation. [italics mine.]

For both men, happiness at the individual level was paralleled at a universal level, the general happiness of mankind. Governments came into being to ensure the conditions under which the "greatest happiness for the greatest number" would exist and be maintained.

In the Opinions, we read:

The only rational object and end of all governments, and every association of men, ought to be to augment and protect the happiness and interest of the great majority.

Bentham insisted on the necessity of differentiating between what is and what ought to be. Governments should make laws that protect the freedom of every citizen to seek personal happiness and participate in the general happiness.

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6 Ibid., 3:283.

7 Ibid., 1:12.
Since that was not the case, Jeremy Bentham spent a lifetime attempting to create a logic of the laws that would better provide for the general happiness.

Maclure wrote on 15 October 1829:

In the present state of society, it is more than probable, that surrounding circumstances oppose the interest of the governors to that of the governed; the interest of the conqueror to the interest of the conquered; the strong to the weak; the rich to the poor; the one who assumes the command to the one that is forced to obey; the buyer to the seller; the master to the slave; the lion to the lamb, etc. When the dissemination of knowledge and equality, shall have reconciled and amalgamated those jarring [sic] interests, perpetual peace and the golden age of the poets may be realized; but until then, all constitutions, laws, rules and regulations, ought to modify and correct that universal selfishness, inherent in men as the principle of their action.\(^8\)

But as Bentham's study revealed, laws were partial, chaotic, contradictory, and, as Maclure often pointed out, made for the benefit of those who were in the position to make them--the legislators, the clergy, the rich and powerful--often to the detriment of the unempowered.

Bentham, the lawyer and life-long observer of the courts, found little reassurance in the state of English justice. In 1790 Bentham catalogued the defects of the system and found it wanting across the board. Items in his catalogue included:

All laws converting the country into a prison and punishing the skill and ingenuity of the poor workman with confinement in support of the monopoly of the

\(^8\)Ibid., 1:349.
merchant and master-manufacturer . . . and of their malignant hostility against foreign nations under the mask of patriotism. . . . All laws by which, under pretense of conspiracy, the price of labour, the sole patrimony of the bulk of the people, is prevented from rising to its natural level, while the rich masters are left at full liberty to conspire to beat it down. . . . All laws adverse to religious liberty. . . . But above all, all laws adverse to the liberty of the press; all laws and penal customs screening the conduct of public men from the tribunal of the public.

As Mack concluded at the end of this catalogue, this was "no mere list of laws but an indictment of an entire social system."*9

Maclure was positively caustic on the subject of lawyers and the law:

Bentham, who was the first to expose the absurd injustice of the common law . . . is ridiculed by every pettifogging attorney on both sides of the Atlantic, who preach by the year on the great and mysterious science of right and wrong, which they pretend cannot be understood, but by those who have studied the hundred thousand volumes of feudal precedents, . . . and who have so much confidence in their law logic, as boldly to assert, that society would be unhinged by abolishing . . . those chains and trammels, invented by a diminishing aristocracy to perpetuate their tyranny over the millions.10

One of the few positive outcomes of Napoleon's regime, in the opinion of Maclure, was the creation of the Napoleonic Code, the basis of the French legal system. For Maclure, for whom catch phrases became automatic, a standard phrase concerned laws that can be carried in "a slim volume

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*9Mack, Bentham, 427.

10Maclure, Opinions, 2:35.
in a man's pocket." He described the Napoleonic code as "perhaps the only law, on account of its utility, impartiality, and common sense, that can be usefully translated into any other language." The clarity and parsimony of that code would appeal to the concrete and literal-minded Maclure far more than, even were it to be reformed, the English Common Law. He had little use for the "glorious uncertainty of the law," and he certainly had no use for the totally skewed British system of justice of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Speaking of the American legal system, based as it is on the British Common Law, he wrote:

Law is one of the most complicated, intricate, and undefined rules of conduct, at variance with the simplicity of all our other institutions, made up of the shreds and patches of feudal tyranny, by the adoption of the common law of Britain. It is one of the things most necessary for the happiness of the millions, to be reformed and simplified by a code expressed in plain and intelligible language, so that every one can know when he offends against the law. Every man in arbitrary France has his laws in a small volume in his pocket. What a disgrace to the most enlightened people on the globe, to be governed by laws that no man understands!

Maclure and Bentham had many ideas in common. Both believed that the brains and energies of women should be put to better use in society, both believed in the dignity of manual labor and the merits and importance of the working

11Ibid., 3:174.
12Ibid., 1:164.
man. Both wished to put their beliefs to the practical test through some concrete projects--Maclure through his agricultural and Pestalozzi schools, Bentham through any number of schemes.

One of Bentham's projects, for example, was the Panopticon, a plan for a wheel-like prison with the cells as spokes and the superintendent's office as the hub, so the entire operation could be viewed from that central location. He wanted to build a national network of self-sufficient houses of industry, complete with farms and workshops, to accommodate the disabled--the unemployed, ill, aged, handicapped--who could then help support themselves. 13

As Bentham came more and more to see the defects in the legal and therefore the social systems of France and England, he also became accepting of those particular circumstances that justified revolution. If one goal of good government was to guarantee security to its citizens, revolution, as anarchy, was opposed to security. But if existing conditions did not guarantee security to the majority of a citizenry, then, in Utilitarian terms, perhaps more was to be gained than lost in a revolution.

Again, Maclure, with the same conditions, would also have supported revolution:

13Mack, Bentham, 212.
The millions in all countries have toiled and labored long enough for the benefit of their masters; it is high time they should begin to do something for themselves, before they may be deprived of the means, the universal suffrage, when a physical and violent revolution would be necessary, in place of a mild, legal, and moral revolution through the medium of the ballot boxes.\textsuperscript{14}

That he saw revolution as a logical and perhaps inevitable result of continued injustice is inherent in the following paragraphs:

The two great elements of destruction, as well as of production, fire and water, may be made the instruments of revenge of the poor against the rich, when defective or unjustly partial legislation drives them to that desperation.\textsuperscript{15}

In a rare use of metaphor, Maclure described the need for revolution as follows:

So long has the habit of physical punishment been the only means employed by all descriptions of rulers, that it has been wrought up into an axiom that coercion is the natural state of man. . . . This mass of irrationality has been so long beaten into a tough paste, and plastered round every crevice of society, that the crust adheres so firmly to all parts as to defy all peaceful means of freeing mankind from its destructive effects, and the pickaxe of revolution becomes the last hope of humanity.\textsuperscript{16}

Although Maclure shared many of Bentham’s observations and echoed many of his conclusions, the similarities end. They had differing purposes: central to Bentham’s

\textsuperscript{14}Maclure, \textit{Opinions}, 2:94.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 3:155.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 1:102-103.
radicalism was a reform of the law; central to Maclure's radicalism was a reform of education.

They had different methods. Bentham was a philosopher who began with an analysis of the language and logic of law and who, with painstaking attention to every word, every definition, every implication, every cause and effect, traced the impact of his legal analysis into every area of human endeavor. Maclure was not a philosopher; he borrowed phrases and ideas and incorporated them into the warp and woof of his own thoughts, thoughts that often cannot stand the light of logical analysis. Bentham reached reasoned, difficult conclusions; Maclure relied on catch phrases and expressed opinions. He was a Utilitarian only in a somewhat superficial sense, using the terms, most accessible premises, and observations to support his own ideas and projects.

For these reasons, Bentham's philosophy of education would encompass all intellectual endeavor that would be pleasurable to an individual. Not only the sciences, but logic, rhetoric, ethics, aesthetics, and politics were included in his Encyclopedical Tree or Chrestomathic Chart, which contained "every branch of art and science, considered as conducive to WELL-BEING." On the other hand, Maclure's

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17 Mack, Bentham, 445.
understanding of a "useful" education, one of utility, was, as we shall now see, circumscribed and earth-bound.
CHAPTER VI
ONLY THE MILLIONS CAN HELP THE MILLIONS

We have seen in the two previous chapters that Maclure believed it to be imperative that the workingman--the millions--participate in the democratic process and that the terminology and concepts of Jeremy Bentham, with their emphasis on education, usefulness, and the general happiness, had permeated the writing of Maclure. This chapter will examine the nature of that democratic participation more thoroughly, particularly as it was informed by the "diffusion of useful knowledge," and will identify the conditions and goals of such participation. Finally, there will be a discussion of projects Maclure envisioned and facilitated in order to bring about the diffusion of useful knowledge among workingmen.

Maclure divided the world into the consumers or non-producers who live without labor and the industrious producers whose labors, up to that point, had only enhanced the lives of the privileged and created very little profit for themselves. He believed that this situation existed because the non-producers had a monopoly on property, knowledge, and power gained through the medium of unjust laws, rules, and regulations that they had had the power to
make for their own benefit. Since the non-producers were very comfortable with the status quo, there was no hope that any changes for the betterment of the producers, and therefore for the "greater happiness of mankind" would come through their efforts. As Maclure stated: "Only the millions can help the millions."

It would therefore be the height of folly and imprudence either for an individual or a nation, to entrust the execution of any measure, to individuals who have no interest in the success of it; and still more foolish and absurd, to entrust any affair to the management, of individuals who, from situation, opinions, or surrounding circumstances, either have, or think they have, an interest in counteracting, by every means, the success of the undertaking.¹

But if the millions were kept in ignorance and poverty by the consumers, how were they to realize that power that would produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number, even if they did enjoy universal suffrage? Why would they not continue to "elect the consumers into power"? No matter that right was on their side, that it was "high time . . . that the great majority should occupy themselves with their own interest," how would it come about?

In spite of the conviction on the part of the consumers that the industrious producers were unable to manage their own affairs and that all would be chaos and anarchy, the art of government, according to Maclure, was simply a matter of common sense acting on "useful knowledge."

¹William Maclure, Opinions on Various Subjects, 1:73.
Fortunately the abilities or ingenuity, requisite to discover their general interest in public affairs, is not equal to the talents and industry necessary to make a good house carpenter.\(^2\)

Not only could the millions govern, they would do so. Maclure believed that as long as the great majority were clear about what was in their own best interest, they could, in a democracy, elect their own people to legislatures, "call for the question, pass the law." The power was theirs: "in popular governments, all must yield to the will of the majority, vox populi vox dei, the majority cannot be wrong unless they injure themselves, which is impossible in the present state of the civilization of the country."\(^3\)

But how did they become clear about what was in their best interest? Maclure's answer: "by the diffusion of useful knowledge amongst the industrious producers." What was "useful knowledge" and how was it to be diffused? The knowledge the producers needed was not that which fit into theories or dreams, but that which was in accord with what could be learned and verified by the five senses. There must be observation, testing, and conclusions. There must be thinking. Of useful knowledge, Maclure stated in his essay of 14 April 1835:

> As all our ideas which constitute useful knowledge come to us through the medium of our five senses, the more

\(^2\)Ibid., 2:29.

\(^3\)Ibid., 2:41-42.
accurately we are taught the exercise of our senses, the more correct and true will be the ideas we receive through them. . . . All the difference between knowledge and ignorance, between a wise man and a fool, is the accuracy with which he observes the properties of men and matter, and the adaptation of both to further his interest.\(^4\)

All of the five senses could be employed when the objects to be examined were close at hand. But what if the matters to be studied and acted upon were out of range? Maclure's answer was that "a correct representation or delineation of them is the next best way of obtaining a knowledge of them," and that "description by the use of words should be the last," a lesser alternative given the ambiguity and lack of clarity of language.

[The] sophistry of literature and the undefined meanings of words must yield to the positive properties, utility and qualities of things and practice founded on a correct use of the senses.\(^5\)

In short, individuals had to trust their own observations, whether they be gained from concrete experience, from representations, or from the written word, and think for themselves. Maclure had little patience for the persons--and nations--who mindlessly accepted the ideas, opinions, or customs of others without thought as to how they matched their own interest. Of the individual, he said that "adopting the opinions of others without knowing the

\(^4\)Ibid., 2:541.

\(^5\)Ibid., 2:500.
why or wherefore, is like a shopkeeper with his shelves full of merchandize who, when a customer demands the price of any of them, is forced to answer he does not know."

And as to the nation, we have seen how frequently he railed against the American propensity to "ape" everything from old Mother Britain—the laws, the education, the fashions, customs, practices—when none of these fit American conditions.

To summarize thus far: the millions needed to think and act for themselves; this they did by using common sense, the capacity to make practical judgments about matters accessible through the five senses and dependent for their validity on the close and accurate observation of the environment which is made up of others and of things. These judgments led them to understand what was in their best interest, and then, taking matters into their own hands, they should elect through the ballot box those who would represent that best interest in the legislatures. Once in power, legislation was again a matter of common sense; the new legislator simply voted according to the knowledge that he understood was in the best interest of the majority,

A small degree of common sense to observe daily occurrences teaches them their interest which their majority enforces, without the aid or artifice of eloquence, and renders the task easy for the great

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6 Ibid., 2:99.
number of producers to rule and dictate to the few non-producers, by the ballot boxes. 7

What matters were accessible to the five senses, either directly, through depictions, or through words? Practical matters close at hand--taxes, public improvements, schools, agricultural and manufacturing matters--to name a few. These needs could be readily understood and addressed by the producers.

Though words and sounds can be taught in an area of sixteen or twenty feet square to the idle and non-productive, who never expect to be exposed to the inclemency of the weather, yet the great mass of productive laborers can obtain a much more correct idea both of matter and motion on the outside of the house, on the roads or fields where the men and things they are necessitated to know are found, which gives a vast superiority to the system, making every place a school, accustoming them to draw information from everything that passes within the reach of their senses. 8

It is important to remember that small political units were essential to Maclure because of the immediacy of issues and the practicality of their solution. His writings constantly praise the Swiss government that was a federation of independent cantons and express regret, as did Jefferson, that the American Constitution created what Maclure called a mongrel mix of the worst features of both centralism and federation. His model for civic participation was that of the New England township of "six miles square," [or

7Ibid., 2:42.
8Ibid., 1:88.
squared], where political matters were decided face-to-face.

The inhabitants of any of the townships must be great fools if they could not manage their own affairs better than either the states or United States governments will now manage for them; for having all the advantages of small communities, of a perfect knowledge of their situation and circumstances, an intimate acquaintance with the necessity and nature of all their improvements, joined to a strict and well conducted inspection of all public works, they must have an immense superiority over any wholesale direction of a body politic at hundreds of miles from the locale, and perhaps much farther from having any interest in the well being of the inhabitants. . . . Experience has sufficiently proven the incompatibility of large empires with the happiness of millions. It is high time to try small communities. 9

With such concerns, and such proximity to them, it becomes clear why the knowledge required must be concrete and specific.

The positive knowledge of the useful arts and exact sciences (which fortunately are becoming more in fashion every day as mankind approach the much to be wished for era, when utility will be the seal of value, "the greatest happiness to the greatest number," are necessary to the comfort and happiness of all ranks. 10

There are certainly some remarkable leaps in logic in the foregoing quotations. Some mechanism was needed to analyze and hypothesize from the data derived from the activities of the five senses. Some means of assessing and choosing the strategies that will achieve the greatest happiness for the greatest number was required. Some expertise in drafting the laws that would usher in the

9Ibid., 2:455.

10Ibid., 2:360.
wished for era was necessary. Maclure never dealt with such practicalities.

In his several essays of 13 February 1828, Maclure defined the "productive, useful and necessary" education that "constitutes the comfort and happiness of the millions." The useful and necessary arts and sciences were: drawing or delineation; chemistry; natural history; mineralogy; geology; botany; zoology; arithmetic; mechanism; mathematics; natural philosophy (physics); geography; and astronomy. (Noticeable by their absence are the fine arts; literature and poetry; history, except for statistics; and philosophy; this taxonomy will be returned to later.)

Having listed the areas of "useful knowledge," how, according to Maclure, was it to be diffused? The "late mechanical inventions," such as the steam boat and the railroad, had brought about a rapidity and facility of communication that was to bring all parts of society to a more nearly equal level of knowledge. But the greatest contribution to the diffusion of useful knowledge was the proliferation of cheap books.

Even though Maclure had described words as the least accurate and effective way of communicating knowledge, he not only used them plentifully himself, but was cognizant of their power to communicate information. Where previously,

"Ibid., 1:48-56."
to his mind, books in expensive bindings adorned with gold leaf were written to express the views of the non-productive consumer who was able to afford to buy them, the industrious producer could now buy inexpensive "small books, of from six to thirty pages." These were "being published in hundreds of thousands in place of hundreds, each page containing as much useful information as used to be found in a volume." He believed that "this diffusion of knowledge, this equalization of intellect" was only beginning to have a practical effect on society.\(^\text{12}\)

These publications, now so accessible to the millions, contained "condensed, plain, and well-defined truths in all kinds of practical and useful knowledge."\(^\text{13}\) It is interesting that Maclure, who was so contemptuous of books written from the viewpoint of the consumers, was so confident that these publications written for Everyman contained "truths." At the same time he had no confidence in public utterances, rhetoric or oratory. Politicians and lawyers, his favorite whipping boys, put forth the brawling, thundering oratory of two or three days' speeches, consisting of such wandering circumlocution, so irrelevant to the subject, that the hearers are so bewildered as to forget what was the subject in dispute; as if they expected their ignorant

\(^{12}\text{Ibid., 2:375.}\)

\(^{13}\text{Ibid., 2:230.}\)
constituents would value their speeches like a piece of Osnaburgs,\textsuperscript{14} by the yard.\textsuperscript{15}

He seldom acknowledged the potential value of the spoken word for communicating knowledge. But while he considered language to be "so imperfect, vague, and undefined as to leave great doubts and difficulties," he believed that "numbers are invariably the same in all ages and languages." For that reason, he chose to rely on statistics as the "only criterion to judge of the situation of nations."\textsuperscript{16} These new publications, so inexpensive and available, made extensive use of statistics. (His own use of statistics in several instances would be useful in proving that statistics, far from being "positive knowledge" and "truth", could be manipulated just as handily as could words.)

Having, through the ballot box, put into legislatures individuals who could work for the interest of the millions, what were they to do? Simply put, they were to "invent laws, rules, regulations, habits and customs more congenial to their freedom." Maclure was very specific about the agenda: (1) universal education of children; (2) equality

\textsuperscript{14}Osnaburg was a heavy coarse cotton in a plain weave used for grain sacks, sportswear, and decorating fabrics. The name is derived from the German town of Osnabrück, famous for its linen.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 2:359.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 2:302.
of property through abolition of exclusive privileges, indirect taxes, and equal taxes on all kinds of property, and legal reform; (3) abolition of capital punishment and imprisonment for debt; a militia; no legislation on religion; no mortgaging the future through a national debt; constitutional reform (The numerous items included with each number are Maclure's classification). These are consistent with his essay and the ideas of Jefferson described in Chapter III.

Since Maclure was in favor of annual elections for the legislature and mandatory rotation out of office and was violently critical of the legal profession, one does have to wonder how all this was to be accomplished effectively, legally, and in a timely way. However, were it to be so, a new day would dawn.

Liberty and equality will not only be secured to themselves, but to their posterity to the latest generations; and the example of such a flood of prosperity, power, comfort, and universal happiness, that must flow from such sources, will cause a moral revolution, in time, over the surface of the earth.

For all his pragmatic common sense, Maclure was a visionary. Even though his projects, one after another, came to naught, he could still write those lines. And indeed he did have projects that would facilitate the

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17 Ibid., 2:426.
18 Ibid., 2:426.
"diffusion of useful knowledge." Maclure's contributions to the advancement of science, especially in the United States, is clear. In his "Memorial" to Maclure, S. G. Morton stated:

He habitually extended his patronage to genius, and his cordial support to those plans which, in his view, were adapted to the common interests of humanity. There are few cabinets of Natural History in our country, public or private, that have not been augmented from his stores; and several scientific publications of an expensive character, have been sustained to completion by his instrumentality.¹⁹

Indeed, his European journals are replete with details of the boxes of geological specimens being sent off to Yale and the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia. He also mentioned in the Opinions that he had collected a number of minerals and copper plates for engravings to be sent to schools.

Two examples will illustrate Maclure's generosity to individuals: In his essay of 10 September 1830, he mentioned that he had, in 1805, "enabled a young Frenchman, (Mr. Godon) to go from Paris to the United States" where he delivered lectures on mineralogy in Boston and Philadelphia. Maclure claimed that those were the first lectures on that subject given in any part of the United States.²⁰

²⁰Maclure, Opinions, 2:152.
His generosity, as well as that of three other members of the American Philosophical Society, enabled Thomas Nuttall to travel west to the Arkansas River from 1818 to 1820, studying American flora. In his gratitude to Maclure, Nuttall named the Osage orange tree in his honor, the *maclura aurantiaca*. Maclure's beneficence maintained the naturalist, Thomas Say, for much of his adult life.

But what were his specific contributions to the class whose interests he held so close to his heart? Even though he had clear ideas about what he would like to do, examples of what he accomplished are few. It is clear that he saw the need for greater education for the workingman, both for their enhanced political participation and for furthering them in their own work. He wrote: "At present all our farmers and manufacturers, nine-tenths of our population, would be very much benefited by possessing one or two of the mechanic arts, suitable to their occupations."\(^{21}\)

In his book, *A Short History of the Working Class Movement, 1789-1848*, G. D. H. Cole described the conditions confronting England in the early years of the nineteenth century. The years between 1815, when the Napoleonic Wars ended, and 1820 were extremely difficult for the British working classes. Many of the previous grievances had been attributed to the war, but with the cessation of armed

\(^{21}\)Ibid., 2:147.
conflict it turned out that matters did not improve. Any attempts on the part of the workingmen to organize and protest or even strike for higher wages had been harshly suppressed, partly out of the lively profit motive of the manufacturing interests, partly from the upper-class fear of the masses—a result of their revulsion at the excesses of the French Revolution.

Further, the heavy expenses of carrying on the war had drained the treasury. As a result of good harvests, improved production, and the end of abnormal war-time demand, an agricultural depression came about. Speculative export glutted foreign markets even when the hoped-for purchasers had no money with which to buy. Wages sank; factories were shut down; bankruptcies multiplied; unemployment spread throughout the land. The British economy sank into a deep depression.

Understandably, the British working man was desperate. However, riots, strikes, and other attempts to organize were met with still harsher measures than had been true before. It was not until trade and industry recovered from the worst of the depression that the workingmen could begin to take matters into their own hands and improve their lot, which included improving their educational opportunities.²²
With the gradual improvement in the economy, according to Cole,

Exceptional measures of repression were allowed gradually to lapse; the activities of spies were relaxed; and the law was set less freely in motion against working-class attempts at combination. As panic subsided, a mood of greater toleration began.23

The repeal of measures that had hindered the inexpensive publications for the working class readership, the resurgence of political Radicalism and renewed calls to reform Parliament, and new and conflicting interpretations of political economy that pitted a capitalist view against the nascent socialist view created, by the early 1820s, conditions that were ripe for the creation of organizations to promote adult working-class education.

By 1824, when Maclure traveled in Scotland, Ireland, and England, he found men and enterprises that pleased him. It would be interesting to learn more about the Maclure's connection with the Belfast (Ireland) Natural History Society, which he visited on 6 July 1824. He wrote in his journal that Belfast "had the beginnings of a society for natural history with small collections of minerals, insects, etc." He then reminded himself that he should "send them some minerals."24

23Ibid., 88.

This he must have done because he apparently remained in correspondence with the organization. The following excerpt from his essay in *The Disseminator* of 30 July 1830, is a fine example of the possibilities of the "diffusion of knowledge." From whatever contribution Maclure was able to make to the Belfast Natural History Society grew a variety of other enterprises. He at least believed that there was a direct connection between his visit, the formation of the Natural History Society, and the subsequent formation of other educational groups.

In that essay, Maclure first quoted from the letter that he had received from Belfast:

> Since the establishment of the Natural History Society when you were here, there have been formed a Mechanics' Institute and elementary schools, a New Library for young men in business, a Botanic Garden, an Historical Society and the practice of Oratory, a Phrenological Society, and several others. Science seems to have power to annihilate distance, and to make the antipodes hold converse with each other.\(^\text{25}\)

This diffusion was due, thought Maclure, to the fact that the young men who had begun the Natural History Society had "lectured to each other" and from those activities had "sprung all the others."

Maclure spoke approvingly of this kind of self-help several times. On 16 July 1824, back in Belfast after several days of travel, he mentioned having met, in the

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\(^{25}\text{Maclure, Opinions, 1:92.}\)
Linen Hall, the manager, a Mr. Barlow who "lectured on practical mechanics at the Institute for Journeymen." Any workingman who wished to attend the lectures could do so for a nominal sum. Commented Maclure: "This is an excellent mode of disseminating knowledge to those who can make the most of it." 26

On 24 July 1824, he spent the evening with one of the professors of the Mechanics Institute of Glasgow. Maclure was deeply impressed, not only with the fact of the Institute but with its origins. Apparently a Professor Anderson had left funds in his will for the establishment of an institute which was begun and directed by the executors. Although six or seven hundred workingmen stayed with that institute, a number of others were dissatisfied with the management and formed their own school in an old church. The new institute was run democratically, with officers being elected by the total membership. According to the journal entry of that day there were "nearly one thousand scholars, with everything necessary to teach them mechanism [mechanics], chemistry as applied to the arts [industrial arts], natural philosophy, etc. and with a library of twelve hundred volumes on all the subjects of positive knowledge" 26

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which had been purchased by contributions from the students.27

However, it was in London that he met the men who were most central to educational reform in England, both the education of adults and that of children. These were the same men whom he met on 26 August 1824, and whom he may have been led to by Robert Owen, as described in the preceding chapter on Jeremy Bentham. He met John Black, Francis Place, James Pierrepont Greaves, George Birkbeck, and William Allen.28 These were all members of the Bentham Utilitarian circle, but more to the present point, Birkbeck's scientific lectures in Glasgow had actually been the beginnings of the Glasgow Mechanics' Institute that Maclure had just visited, and Birkbeck and Place were instrumental, in 1823, in founding the London Mechanics' Institute.29

According to Cole, mechanics' institutes were founded in town after town in the 1820's. They "did much to stimulate discussion and kindle working-class interest, and they often supplied the stimulus for the organisation of counter-activities by the working-class bodies."30 These

27Ibid., 718.
28Maclure, European Journals, 730.
29Cole, Short History, 85.
30Ibid., 86.
organizations clearly made a deep impression on Maclure. In his *Opinions*, he described what he had seen. In this passage, as happened so often, his basic point was followed by a stab at one of his *bêtes noires*:

The productive laborers, in some countries, have already found (and will no doubt soon be convinced in all places,) that a lecture read by one of themselves out of a book is full as intelligible, and perhaps more so, than a lecture given by any of the learned professors; as no one presents himself to the public as an author, without having some merit . . . which is not the case with 9-10ths of our college professors. 31

Continuing in the same essay, Maclure proceeded to fill in the details of the institutes, and he continued with an enumeration of the benefits that would accrue:

Economy, care and industry, and the natural fruits of such an association would soon enable them to increase their stock of books, and at the same time, either to make or procure all the necessary instruments that might be useful to the complete understanding of their lectures. Such an aggregation of both knowledge and property, would roll on in a geometrical progression, and the acquirements of one month, would lay the foundation for an additional stock of both knowledge and property for the next.

The moralizing Maclure continued in this vein:

The physical advantages would soon be evident in saving nine-tenths of the doctors' bills, by ceasing to pour poison into the stomach in the shape of ardent spirits, and spending their evenings in a comfortable room, in place of lounging about the doors in their light day dress in the cool of the evening, thus augmenting the alternation of temperature between the heat of the sun and the cold of the nights, which is the cause of a great many of our fall fevers. 32


32 Ibid., 1:80.
By the time Maclure returned from his European travels, he found himself surrounded by colleagues eager to join Robert Owen in his New Harmony, Indiana, social experiment. It was thus that New Harmony became the site for the realization of Maclure's dreams of adult working-class education. According to George Lockwood, the first attempt to found such an institute was made in 1828: Maclure called it the "Society for Mutual Instruction" and announced in The Disseminator that the new plan was to be like the mechanics' institutes in Europe and the United States. The object of the Society was to "communicate a general knowledge of the arts and sciences to those persons who have hitherto been excluded from a scientific or general education by the erroneous and narrow-minded policy of college and public schools, which have invariably endeavored to confine learning to the rich few, so that they might tyrannize over the uneducated many." 33

On the heels of the creation of the Society, Maclure left New Harmony for Mexico, never to return. The Society faltered, then "went to sleep." But in 1837, three years before his death, he arranged to bring the organization back to life, give it a permanent home, and add a library; thus was established and incorporated the Working Men's Institute

and Library in New Harmony. The Working Men's Institute, thanks not only to its founder, but to generous benefactors in the years that followed, exists today.

However, the libraries for working men that Maclure hoped to establish and provided for in his will did not fare so well. Maintaining his interest in those who "labor with their hands and earn their living with the sweat of their brows" to the very end, he wished to give the sum of five hundred dollars to any group of working men in the United States who would add books to their already existing libraries of at least one hundred volumes.

After his death, this wished-for trust was declared void because it provided for funds to be distributed to organizations not yet in existence. And so Anna and Alexander Maclure, William's brother and sister who were living in New Harmony, proceeded to consume the proceeds of the estate to which, with the exception of the library provision, they were the sole heirs.

However, a young attorney, A. P. Hovey, fought the case of the library provision through the Supreme Court of Indiana, where he finally won and was made administrator of the trust. Finally, in 1855--fifteen years after Maclure's death--he began to distribute funds to groups of working men who sought to add to their collections of books.

Apparently, according to Lockwood, some of these collections had been made more in the name of the law than
in the spirit thereof, being hastily and not very thoughtfully assembled. Nonetheless, in the end, Hovey distributed $80,000 to a total of one hundred sixty libraries; one hundred forty-four in Indiana and sixteen in Illinois.

Ultimately, however, with the exception of the Working Men's Institute Library itself, most of these collections were either absorbed into later public or school libraries or disappeared. Unfortunately, given the vicissitudes of the will, no endowment for the housing, maintenance or expansion of the collections was provided for. One wonders whether the situation might have been different had Maclure had enough trust in that despised profession, the law, to provide more carefully for the execution of his dream.

In spite of his enthusiasm for the forwarding of the education of adults, an enthusiasm that continued in his writing for The Disseminator through the 1820s and 30s, Maclure sometimes despaired of the efficacy of transforming grown persons. In his letter to Madame Fretageot of 15 July 1825, he wrote:

At one time I had the vanity to suppose that individual exertion could possibly effect some little reformation in men, thrust into and formed by the iron mould of habit, carefully and ingeniously wrought by all the talents and cunning of the industrious, hypocritical priests, aided by the civil and political tyrants for thousands of years. Taking warning from the failure of the vast number who in every age have unsuccessfully attempted it, indolence prompted me to try the little means in my power on children. And not withstanding the immense diffusion of knowledge within the last 30 years, I'm still afraid that the education of the
children must be the chief support and foundation of the system.\textsuperscript{34}

As we have seen, education for democratic participation was a theme for Maclure since his early days in London, France, and Virginia. And though persisting in his goals for the education of the working man, his major efforts and the greater part of his resources were expended on the education of children. It is to his ideas about their education and the projects he supported on their behalf that this work now turns.

\textsuperscript{34}Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., \textit{Education and Reform at New Harmony}, 322.
CHAPTER VII
THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

In one of his many letters to Marie Duclos Fretageot, Maclure wrote:

For this 30 years I have considered ignorance as the cause of all the miseries and errors of mankind and have used all my endeavors to reduce the quantity of that truly diabolical evil. My experience soon convinced me that it was impossible to give any real information to men and that the only possible means of giving useful knowledge to the world was by the education of children.¹

Even though his thoughts and philanthropies at the very end of his life remained with his Workingman’s Institute and libraries for working men, he had come to realize that the life experiences of far too many adults had either not educated them or had mis-educated them. It became clear to him that undoing the errors and faulty learning of a lifetime was too difficult. He stated it thus:

Men must be wise before they understand the real use of knowledge, and they must have knowledge before they can be wise: how to accomplish either, after their education has put them on the wrong road, in which the further they travel, the further they are from the direct path to happiness, is difficult to decide. One thing seems proven by all our experience, that any

¹Arthur E. Bestor, Jr., Education and Reform at New Harmony, 301.
thing like a radical reform must be through the education of children.\(^2\)

By the time he was writing this in 1828, Maclure had been as good as his word. He believed that his own classical education had ill-prepared him for life, and he was fully convinced that the education most people had received as children was equally useless. What he saw as the traditional methods of rote learning of meaningless information taught by authoritarian and ill-prepared teachers was no way to lift the working classes and prepare them for participation in democracy.

But from the moment, in 1805, that he saw the Pestalozzian method of teaching and learning in action, he knew that it would answer the need for a rational and useful education. Baron Roger DeGuimps, in his book *Pestalozzi: His Aim and Work*, relates the circumstances in which Maclure first encountered the work of Pestalozzi. Maclure was in Paris and wished to see Napoleon. The American ambassador to France took Maclure to a meeting at the orphanage where Joseph Neef was teaching according to the Pestalozzi method. Maclure's aim in going was not to observe Neef, but to meet Napoleon who, with Tallyrand and "a large number of distinguished people," was observing the results of Joseph Neef's teaching.

DeGuimps wrote:

During the whole time that the exercises were going on, Maclure, absorbed in looking at Napoleon, saw nothing else; but, when going away he heard Tallyrand say to Napoleon, "It is too much for us." The remark struck him; he returned to the room and learned from Naef [sic] the object of the meeting; and as he was deeply interested in the improvement of the position of the poorer classes, he saw at once all that Pestalozzi's system could do to benefit their condition. 3

That was only the beginning. Maclure first visited Pestalozzi himself at Yverdon on 3 October 1805, after which visit he wrote in his journal, "At Yverdon the institute of Pestalozzi appears to be the most rational system of education I have seen." 4 His initial enthusiasm was reinforced by closer and lengthier acquaintance. In his essay of 9 April 1828, Maclure wrote that he had "traveled seven summers in Switzerland, and some months of each residing at Pestalozzi's school at Yverdon." 5

The method that so attracted Maclure was developed by Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827), a Swiss educational reformer who had been a political radical in his youth and whose ideas about the education of children departed radically from the educational thinking of the time. Since

3 Baron Roger DeGuimps, Pestalozzi: His Aim and Work, translated by Margaret Cuthbertson Crombie (Syracuse, New York: C. W. Bardeen, Publisher, 1889), 137.

4 William Maclure, The European Journals of William Maclure, 75.

5 Maclure, Opinions, 1:60.
his life, work, schools, and principles have been well described and analyzed by Gerald Gutek, Baron Roger DeGuimps, Kate Silber, and J. A. Green, among many others,\(^6\) it is not in the purview of this paper to review the difficult life and ground-breaking work of this remarkable man. But it will be most instructive to compare Pestalozzi’s ideas and Maclure’s opinions on a number of salient points, because it will be clear how much Maclure absorbed from the master teacher of Yverdon.

Both men began as social reformers and came finally to education as the only solid foundation for reform. Maclure’s long odyssey that brought him to the philanthropic support of educational projects is documented in this dissertation. Of Pestalozzi, Silber stated:

> If at the outset the question is asked what made Pestalozzi try to establish a new method of teaching, the answer is that he had been observing people in their education, their occupations, and their social relationships, and had found their thinking superficial, their work inefficient and the community life corrupt. He believed the prevalent ignorance, poverty, and revolution to be the consequences of these deficits.\(^7\)


\(^7\)Silber, *Pestalozzi*, 135.
The following comment about Pestalozzi by DeGuimps indicated how completely in accord Pestalozzi and Maclure should have been.

The starting point of his work had been pity for the poor. He saw that evil could not be cured by charity, legislation, or by sermons. Education appeared to him to be the only true remedy, but it must be an education suited to the work of life, which sets in motion all the healthy powers which are found in the germ in human nature, an education in which the child is always active.\textsuperscript{8}

And again, DeGuimps wrote:

\begin{quote}
[Pestalozzi] saw that the poor cannot be effectively helped unless they wish to help themselves, that is to say, material misery cannot disappear as long as intellectual and moral misery exist. The true remedy is education.\textsuperscript{9}
\end{quote}

The beginning observation for Pestalozzi, echoed by Maclure, is that all learning begins with sensory experiences that connect with prior sensory experiences. For Pestalozzi, that which connects experiences and creates ideas is intuition.

In the interest of economy and condensation, the summary of Pestalozzi's pedagogic principles found in DeGuimps will follow, rather than tracing quotations throughout the works of Pestalozzi, not always an easy task. Quoting from M. Morf, Pestalozzi's biographer, DeGuimps outlined the following:

\begin{itemize}
\item[]\textsuperscript{8}DeGuimps, Pestalozzi, 52.
\item[]\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 66.
\end{itemize}
I. Intuition is the basis of instruction.

II. Language should be linked with intuition.

III. The time for learning is not the time for judgment and criticism.

IV. In every branch, teaching should begin with the simplest elements and proceed gradually according to the development of the child, that is, in psychologically connected order.

V. Sufficient time should be devoted to each point of the teaching in order to ensure the complete mastery of it by the pupil.

VI. Teaching should aim at development and not dogmatic exposition.

VII. The educator should respect the individuality of the pupil.

VIII. The chief end of elementary teaching is not to impart knowledge and talent to the learner, but to develop and increase the powers of his intelligence.

IX. Power must be linked to knowledge; and skill to learning.

X. The relations between the master and the pupil, especially as to discipline, should be based upon and ruled by love.

XI. Instruction should be subordinated to the higher aims of education.

For Pestalozzi's system, key ideas are that the child, using all his capacities for observing, thinking, feeling, and acting, journeys from simple objects, simple ideas, and simple experiences, drawing on what is near at hand, to more and more complex objects, ideas, and experiences in an ever-widening circle. At the heart of all learning, binding it together, permeating it, stimulating it, is love--first the love of parents, then the love of teachers and friends. The
child, a self-confident, curious, and joyful individual, becomes a self-active learner with a broad foundation of both knowledge and skills that will serve him in his life work.

Maclure wrote extensively about education in various of his Opinions. He agreed that the origin of learning was sensory experience, writing that "Children as well as all other animals, commence their instruction the moment they begin to make use of their senses."\(^{10}\)

He held that "Our senses are the conduct-pipe through which we receive all our ideas and knowledge." For Maclure, the child operated directly on things and not through the words or ideas of others. He wrote on this theme in his essay of 9 April 1828:

Perhaps the greatest improvement that can be effected in education is to free the pupil as much as possible from dependence on the ipse dixit of the master, by teaching him to derive his knowledge directly from the things themselves or accurate representations of them. Instruct children to teach themselves by their own observations, which make lasting impressions, and enlist self love to enhance the value of the knowledge acquired.\(^{11}\)

He wrote in his essay printed on 13 August 1828:

The advantage of the Pestalozzian system, consists in teaching children only what they comprehend; their minds are relieved from the load of metaphysics and

\(^{10}\)Maclure, Opinions, 1:42.

\(^{11}\)Ibid., 1:62.
discussions, containing complicated ideas, out of the reach of all their senses.\textsuperscript{12}

And he agreed with Pestalozzi, as in Morf’s Principle II, that language must relate directly to things and the child’s own experiences with them, not to the ideas and meaningless words of others. Pestalozzi had said of language:

When [language is a] spontaneous and faithful expression of thought, it is at the same time its principal means of development, and it gives strength and precision. But, when from childhood, it is only the repetition or imitation of the language of others . . . then it makes thought inert, it paralyzes and extinguishes.\textsuperscript{13}

Where Pestalozzi believed that "Teaching should aim at development and not dogmatic exposition," Maclure agreed, lamenting the fact that "All teachers of men, as well as instructors of children, tell their pupils what to think, but none tell them how to think."\textsuperscript{14}

Maclure held that a system of education that began with sensory experience of the individual child would capture the child’s attention, and that "Attention is the only medium through which instruction passes into the mind; without it, nothing makes a lasting impression on any of the mental

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 1:95

\textsuperscript{13}DeGuimps, \textit{Pestalozzi}, 151.

\textsuperscript{14}Maclure, \textit{Opinions}, 2:99.
faculties."\(^{15}\) It was therefore the role of the teacher "to find out the inclination of his pupils, and teach them any and all the useful lessons he may find they study with pleasure."\(^{16}\) Or, as he wrote in November 1834, "The lessons ought to be made to suit the nature of the child, not the child constrained and new modeled to suit the lessons."\(^{17}\)

Maclure’s summers at Yverdon made a lasting impression on him. Pestalozzi’s pupils were "cheerful, energetic." Totally absent was "a cry or any demonstration of pain or displeasure, nor even an angry word from either teacher or pupil." He continued, "One of the most beneficial consequences, is the pleasure all Pestalozzi’s pupils take, in mental labor and study." Because the children’s interest was appealed to, Maclure concluded that education may "with great ease and pleasure, be so conducted, as to render . . . all the useful and necessary operations of both males and females, a pastime and amusement, converting life itself into a play."\(^{18}\)

If, as Pestalozzi believed, the relationships between pupil and teacher were to be "based upon and ruled by love,"

\(^{15}\)Ibid., 1:66.

\(^{16}\)Ibid., 1:66.

\(^{17}\)Ibid., 2:384.

\(^{18}\)Ibid., 1:61.
discipline took an entirely different approach. DeGuimps reported:

The confidence which the pupils had in their masters, their love and gratitude to them, took the place of rule and discipline; no rewards or punishments were used unless in exceptional cases, meanwhile obedience was complete because it came from the heart. Besides, the children were gay and happy; they loved all their exercises and lessons almost as much as play; it was not unusual to see some of them leave their recreation to study together, grouped around a picture or a map.¹⁹

Maclure commented on the atmosphere at Yverdon, remarking that "all was bottomed on free will, by the total exclusion of every species of correction."²⁰

Maclure had commented once that his classical education had been "flogged" into him, and so was doubtless well aware of the detrimental effects of corporal punishment, which substituted fear for the free will he had so approvingly observed at Yverdon. Of fear, he wrote: "fear, that dreadful enemy to human happiness, that cancer of the mind, that unceasing torment through all its innumerable ramifications."²¹ Always cognizant of the qualities needed for effective participation in a democratic society, Maclure found reason to recommend the absence of fear in the Pestalozzian environment:

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¹⁹DeGuimps, Pestalozzi, 129.

²⁰Maclure, Opinions, 1:61.

²¹Ibid., 1:49.
The pupils, never actuated by the motive of fear, are left with all their instinctive courage undiminished, and are without fear, brave as heroes; a qualification indispensable in a country of freedom, being necessary for the preservation as for the obtaining, of liberty. In as much as the Pestalozzian system ought to be feared and rejected by all despots and tyrants, it ought to be courted and encouraged by all those who possess and know the value of freedom.22

A not-altogether-flattering, but perhaps not inaccurate, picture of children who are constrained by fear and by work that is of no intrinsic interest is painted in his essay of 13 August 1828:

One of the most injurious effects of the old artificial system of education, as I call it to distinguish it from the Pestalozzian method, which may be denominated the natural system, is the imprisoning of children for four or five hours in the day to a task of irksome and disgusting study, which nothing but fear of punishment could force them to perform; after which they are let loose on society for eight hours, full of revenge and retaliation against their jailers, exerting all their ingenuity to do mischief indiscriminately to all older than themselves, from considering them all as accessory [sic] to their persecution and confinement.23

Although lessons at Yverdon were never more than an hour in length and so the attention of the children was never "fatigued," they were at their lessons far more than four or five hours of the day. In the same essay, Maclure reported that "they were constantly occupied with something useful to themselves or others, from 5 o’clock in the morning to 8 o’clock at night, with the exception of four

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22Ibid., 1:95.

23Ibid., 1:60.
half hours at meals, at which all the teachers ate with the pupils."

For Pestalozzi, the relationships between teacher and students had to have a foundation in mutual love and respect. At Yverdon the masters and pupils interacted on an informal and continual basis; they ate, played, worked, hiked, traveled together throughout the year. There were no punishments or rewards to set one student against another.

In such an environment, students knew true equality. The teacher's role was to model that equality. Maclure contrasted the teacher of the traditional methodology with that of the natural method of Pestalozzi as follows:

What a lesson of strife, ill nature and hatred, are the violent passions of the angry pedant, strutting magisterially through the school room, to the weak faculties of the children, who like little apes, imitate what they see, and retaliate on the weaker on the first occasion. Contrasting this with the satisfaction and moral gratification of the teacher who is the friend and companion of his pupils, ought to be sufficient to abolish fear and punishment, which engender only revenge, and make a teacher not only unpopular in his school, but mix with his character some features of the executioner, estranging him from society. 24

Equality, for Maclure, was "the true source of morality." Of morality in schools, he said:

Morality is easier taught in schools where nearly a perfect equality exists, than in schools where the distinction of rank creates jealousy and envy on the part of inferiors, and assumed superiority, bordering on contempt, without being supported by merit, from the

24Ibid., 1:122.
usurpations of the others. This tends to sour the temper of both, and alienate them from that social intercourse, so necessary for acquiring those friendly and amiable habits, which strew the rugged path of life with flowers.\textsuperscript{25}

If, for Pestalozzi, "Power must be linked to knowledge; and skill to learning," he found a soulmate in William Maclure. Pestalozzi’s educational philosophy was a holistic one. DeGuimps wrote that Pestalozzi "wished to join the work of the fields or the workshop to make them one, a living thing, attractive, a means of bread-winning and at the same time a strengthening and healthy exercise for the heart, the mind, and the body."\textsuperscript{26}

Useful, hands-on learning was Maclure’s watchword. His wish was to make "every place a school." He believed that children not only could be taught skills by means of which they could feed and clothe themselves, but they should be taught in that way. The "union of pleasurable ideas and the useful occupation of some mechanical art" would:

furnish the necessary muscular exercises, so conducive to health, while, at the same time, the gratification would be prolonged by the permanent benefit obtained by the utility of what is produced, and securing pecuniary independence in being capable of practicing a productive trade in case of necessity. The being taught to make shoes or coats, does not force the possessor of such knowledge to be a shoemaker or tailor, any more than learning mensuration or navigation obliges him to become a surveyor or sailor. They are all acquirements good to have in case of

\textsuperscript{25}Ibid., 2:209.

\textsuperscript{26}DeGuimps, Pestalozzi, 52.
necessity . . . and children ought to be trained, and educated to suit the probable situation which the circumstances of the next age may place them in. ²⁷

Or again he wrote:

An experimental school-farm ought to be bought in every district, and the exercise of the pupils be expended on the farm as productive labor, to feed and clothe themselves. ²⁸

In their broadest outlines, then, the pedagogical principles of Pestalozzi and those of Maclure are very much in agreement. Those areas where they differed will be addressed in due course, but first it is important to see where Maclure's understanding and approval of the Pestalozzian system led. It led to a continuing and unswerving commitment to spread Pestalozzian education in as many settings as he could devise. He supported Pestalozzi teachers; he contributed money, books, and scientific equipment and specimens to Pestalozzian schools; he recruited students for Pestalozzian schools. He loaned Pestalozzi the capital to continue his work at Yverdon when it seemed that the whole enterprise was crashing around his head. To Pestalozzi, Maclure was his "Edler, lieber Mann." ²⁹

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²⁷Maclure, Opinions, 1:147.

²⁸Ibid., 1:77.

Silber stated that "Pestalozzi entertained great hopes that through Maclure’s efforts and generosity his ideas would be realized in many lands."\textsuperscript{30} If, in the end, that was not to be the case, it was neither through lack of commitment to Pestalozzian ideas on the part of Maclure and his associates, nor the inadequacy of money and material resources available, nor the inexperience of his trusted associates, Joseph Neef, Marie Duclos Fretageot, or William Phiquepal. All of these were abundantly present as Maclure sought, through the talents and experience of these three individuals, to establish Pestalozzi schools in Paris, Spain, Philadelphia, and New Harmony.\textsuperscript{31}

Of the three educators, the life and thinking of Joseph Neef is the best documented. Franz Joseph Nicholas Neef (1770-1854) was born in Alsace-Lorraine where, as a youth, he decided to enter the priesthood. Already bilingual, having grown up where both French and German were spoken, he

\textsuperscript{30}\textit{Silber, Pestalozzi}, 309.

\textsuperscript{31}Emphasis is placed on those Pestalozzian schools that were brought into existence and about which more is known. During a short-lived period of liberal government in Spain, Maclure had purchased 10,000 acres of land in the area around Alicante, for the purpose of establishing an agricultural school for orphans, to be run on Pestalozzian principles. Teachers were hired; Maclure intended as well to support the Lancasterian school already operating in Alicante. The fall of that government and the return of the monarch, with the consequent confiscation of Maclure’s lands, aborted his experiment. This defeat and disappointment for Maclure has been related in Alberto Gil Novales’ most interesting volume, \textit{William Maclure in Spain}. 
mastered Latin, Greek, and Italian while studying at the Abbey of Murbach.

An ardent republican, Neef left his studies in 1791 to join the French army where he served with his idol, Napoleon. At the battle of Arcole, he was wounded by a spent musket ball that remained lodged between his right eye and nose for his entire life, frequently subjecting him to spells of fainting and dizziness. While recuperating in the military hospital, thoroughly disillusioned with war and with Napoleon, he read the works of Pestalozzi and resolved to join the Swiss educator and become a teacher upon his discharge. Pestalozzi, then at Burgdorf, took him on to teach French, German, classical languages, and gymnastics; he remained at Burgdorf until some time in 1802 or 1803, when he went to Paris, at Pestalozzi's request, to establish a school for orphans.

It was there that William Maclure visited his school in 1804. Maclure, as has been seen, was captivated by the Pestalozzian approach and was equally impressed with Neef. Unable to recruit the aging Pestalozzi to emigrate to the United States, he contracted with Neef to start a school in Philadelphia, agreeing to support Neef and his wife for three years while Neef learned English, planned the school, and began operations.

By 1808, Neef's English was proficient enough to write and publish his *Sketch of a Plan and Method of Education,*
which was designed both to familiarize Americans with the Pestalozzian approach and to entice American parents to send their sons to Neef’s school. By 1809, his English (and philosophical) skills were such that he translated the *Logic of Condillac*.

The school for boys opened at the Falls of the Schuylkill, five miles from Philadelphia, in 1809. Seventy-five boys were enrolled. Since Maclure was in Philadelphia for at least part of 1809, having presented his paper on his geological survey to the American Philosophical Society on January 20, it is hoped that he was on hand to witness the opening of his first educational venture for children before sailing for Sweden in the late fall.

The school at the Falls of the Schuylkill was in operation—apparently successfully—from 1809 to 1812. For reasons that are not clear, Neef then moved the school to Village Green, where he was beset by troubles. Neef and Maclure had agreed that the school would be small, enrolling only as many students as Neef could teach himself. But the school became still smaller as Neef became involved in religious controversy.

Even Pestalozzi, who was a deeply spiritual person, had run into difficulties because his religious teaching was deemed inadequate by townspeople, parents of students, and officials alike. He had accepted both Catholic and Protestant children, respected freedom of conscience, and
prepared pupils for the sacrament only if their parents requested it.

The people of early nineteenth-century America were no more open to the prospect of exposing their young to alleged "free-thinkers" and "atheists" than were their Swiss counterparts. And, as had been the case in Switzerland, the radical approach to teaching—so different from the orthodox methods of rote abstract learning—aroused suspicion and criticism.

Discouraged, Neef moved from Pennsylvania to Kentucky in 1815, where he tried to establish yet another school; this also failed. He then tried to farm for a living. His fortunes changed again as Maclure and his Pestalozzian teachers and Philadelphian scientists, bound for New Harmony, Indiana, floated down the Ohio River on the keelboat, The Philanthropist.

Caroline Snedeker included the description of Neef as related by a Burgdorf student in her book, The Town of the Fearless.

"Neef was a giant with a crabbed face, a severe air, a rude exterior, but was kindness itself. When he marched with the air of a trooper at the head of sixty or eighty children, his great voice thundering a Swiss air, then he enchanted the whole house. I should say that Neef, in spite of the rudeness of his exterior, was the pupils' favorite; and for this reason he always lived with them and felt happiest when among them. He played, exercised, walked, swam, climbed, threw stones
with the scholars, all in a childish spirit. This is how he had such unlimited authority over them."^{32}

A second Pestalozzi teacher who joined his fortune with Maclure was Guillaume Sylvan Casimir Phiquepal D’Aurusmont (1779-1855). Phiquepal, who first became known as William Phiquepal in the United States and later as Phiquepal D’Aurusmont after he married Frances Wright, was born in the commune of Monsant, in the Department of Lot-et-Garonne. As a royalist, he had fought against the French Revolution and then come to the Americas. According to Anne Taylor, he had, as a young man,

sought his fortune in Martinique, but was forced to flee the Negro rising that occurred in 1791. He took refuge in Philadelphia where he survived by doing all kinds of odd jobs. During these years Phiquepal seems to have developed strong ideas concerning the education of the young. When Neef established his school at the Falls of Schuylkill, Phiquepal was a frequent visitor with the expressed intention of trying out his ideas on Neef’s pupils.^{33}

Doskey’s note on Phiquepal, however, states that Phiquepal was Neef’s assistant teacher in 1813 at the school at Village Green.^{34} It was in his work with Neef that he obtained his grounding in the Pestalozzian approach. It was also Phiquepal who, along with Neef, was a member of the

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^{32}Quoted in Caroline Dale Snedeker, The Town of the Fearless, 62.

^{33}Taylor, Visions of Harmony, 134.

^{34}Maclure, European Journals, 685.
Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and nominated Maclure for membership in the meeting of June 1812.  

He returned to Paris and, in 1814, at the age of thirty-five, he took up the study of medicine. According to Doskey, he "became the devoted pupil of Dr. Phillipe Pinel, who did so much to humanize the treatment of the insane." He could have succeeded Dr. Pinel as director of a women's hospital for the insane, but apparently chose to return to teaching. It must have been around this time that he resumed his acquaintance with Maclure, who, in 1820, asked him to operate a small school for boys in Maclure's own home in Paris, located at No. 20, Rue des Brodeurs, Faubourg Saint Germain.

By 1820, the Bourbon government had been restored and was suspicious of Phiquepal's educational activities; books by Pestalozzi sent by Maclure from Yverdon to Phiquepal were turned back by French authorities at the frontier. Eventually Phiquepal and Maclure were convinced that the prevailing climate of opinion in France was not conducive to Pestalozzian education, so Phiquepal and four of his students, including Achilles Fretageot, sailed for New York on the Caðniss on 4 November 1824.

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35 Patricia Tyson Stroud, Thomas Say: New World Naturalist, 33.
Although his intent had been to establish a school for boys along the lines of the girls' school already in operation under the direction of Madame Fretageot, that school had an extremely short life. By the following July Maclure had sailed for the United States, already under pressure from both Fretageot and Phiquepal to join with Robert Owen in New Harmony. Phiquepal was therefore on the keelboat The Philanthropist when it left Pittsburgh in December of 1825.

Phiquepal apparently had a number of great strengths as a Pestalozzi teacher. His particular expertise consisted in teaching the principles of a number of trades: carpentering; smithing; weaving; tailoring; shoemaking; hatmaking; and so on. His pupils learned these skills in rotation. He also developed several devices that facilitated Pestalozzian instruction, an arithomometer for teaching the principles of arithmetic and a sonometer, which was helpful in teaching music. No examples of these inventions are extant, so their exact nature is uncertain.

However, Phiquepal was temperamental and eccentric. He was asked to translate Neef's book into French, but apparently never completed the task. Of him, Anne Taylor said:

"Phi" as he appears in Maclure's correspondence was an absurd figure, a bustling, bristling, noisy, pompous
little man, a sort of humourless clown; Maclure's remarks about him are often exasperated.\textsuperscript{36}

The school Phiquepal set up in Paris combined the principles of Pestalozzi with Phiquepal's own "peculiar energy and character." Taylor's description continued:

The boys he accepted received a rigorous training, rising early and working late, besides coping with the moods of their instructor. He littered the place with reminders to himself, of which "Be Calm" was the most frequent. But his teaching attracted such fashionable attention that the Prince of Poland tried to lure him into his service.\textsuperscript{37}

Robert Dale Owen, Robert Owen's oldest son, was no fan of Phiquepal. In his reflective autobiography, \textit{Threading My Way}, he provided the following description:

[Phiquepal was] a man well informed on many points, full of original ideas, some of practical value, but, withal, a strong-headed genius, whose extravagance and willfulness and inordinate self-conceit destroyed his usefulness.\textsuperscript{38}

Marie Duclos Fretageot was quite a different matter. Much less is known about the background of this intriguing Frenchwoman, who became Maclure's trusted right-hand and the center of continuing controversy and gossip.

Mme. Fretageot had been married to and separated from Joseph Fretageot, who was apparently a hospitalized or institutionalized veteran of the Grande Armée. At the

\textsuperscript{36}Taylor, \textit{Visions of Harmony}, 134.

\textsuperscript{37}Ibid., 135.

request of a Quaker couple, she had adopted their son as her own, naming him Achilles Fretageot. At some point, she had been connected with a school in Philadelphia, but she was connected with Phiquepal’s school in Paris, first as a parent, then as a teacher, when she came to the attention of Maclure.

They became fast friends; their life-long correspondence, which continued for years during their long absences from each other, is an invaluable source of information about Maclure, New Harmony, Pestalozzian education, Robert Owen, and the other Pestalozzians and other Harmonites. Fretageot had hoped to join Maclure in his educational project in Spain, but as the Alicante project was threatened, it became clear that that was not to be. She and Maclure turned thoughts of her future toward the United States. In 1821, again with Maclure’s backing, she established her boarding school for girls on Filbert Street in Philadelphia. Since Mme. Fretageot was an excellent teacher, the school prospered. According to William Kipnis, in his unpublished dissertation, "Propagating the Pestalozzian," there were eighteen students enrolled in July of 1823; by November the class had increased to twenty-six.\(^3\) Several scientists who were to

\(^3\)William Frank Kipnis, "Propagating the Pestalozzian: The Story of William Maclure’s Involvement in Efforts to Affect Educational and Social Reforms in the Early Nineteenth Century" (Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University, 1972), 73.
join Maclure, Phiquepal, and Mme. Fretageot on The Philanthropist gave classes to her students; Charles Lesueur taught drawing, and Thomas Say lectured to the girls on science.

Mme. Fretageot was an excellent mathematician and teacher. Caroline Dale Snedeker described her as "a vivacious eager little lady" and stated that "few men of her time and fewer women had her education and wit." Anne Taylor commented on her "shrewd judgment, common sense, and peculiarly Gallic toughness" that "outdid that of any of the men who went to Harmonie and put her in command in times of stress." She possessed "embracing warmth, irrepressible spirits when she was in health, a dashing sense of style." In contrast to his negative impression of Phiquepal, Robert Dale Owen was captivated by Marie Fretageot. Having just arrived in the United States, he wrote in his journal on Sunday, 13 November 1825: "Mme. F. is a highly remarkable woman, seems to have a truly mannish disposition and I believe she is going to fill her place in Harmony at her very best."

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40 Snedeker, Town of the Fearless, 228.
41 Taylor, Visions of Harmony, 83.
Apparently Robert Dale and Madame had a number of talks together while drifting down the Ohio in the keelboat. On December 29, Owen wrote that he had confided with her about the girl he had left behind and learned about Paris:

Had a long conversation with Mme. F. about my situation at home. From a description of Parisian manners which Madame gave me this evening, I am induced to think that many parts of them are most worthy of imitation amongst ourselves: for instance the perfect freedom from restraint or ceremony which characterizes their intercourse with one another, and their disposition to make the best of every situation and enjoy without excess the present moment; then again their civility even to perfect strangers and their easy politeness to one another. 

Perhaps those qualities explain part of the charm of Madame Fretageot herself, as well as those of Parisians in general.

Thus, they all—Maclure, Madame Fretageot, Phiquepal and his pupils, Lesueur, Say, as well as other distinguished scientists and Utopians—joined Robert Owen on the keelboat as it made its slow, and for a goodly period, ice-bound journey down to the Ohio River to New Harmony, Indiana, where Maclure's final, and most ambitious, educational enterprise was to take shape.

Arriving in New Harmony on 23 January 1826, the party from The Philanthropist was thrown immediately into the maelstrom of confusion, chaos, disorganization, and idealism that constituted the short-lived New Harmony experience. It is not the purpose of this dissertation to describe and

43Ibid., 253.
analyze the educational and political experience at New Harmony. The reader will relish the details found in the correspondence between Madame Fretageot and William Maclure in Arthur Bestor’s book, *Education and Reform at New Harmony*, as well as in Caroline Dale Snedeker’s tale, *The Town of the Fearless*, Gerald Gutek’s *Joseph Neef: The Americanization of Pestalozzianism* or Anne Taylor’s *Visions of Harmony*, among many other descriptions and analyses.

Suffice it to say that it was a disaster. But not at first. In March, Maclure wrote to his friend Benjamin Silliman at Yale that things were going better than they had had any reason to expect.

Already part of the boys’ school is so far organized that they make shoes for themselves, and will soon do it for the whole community. They will likewise have work-shops for tailors, carpenters, weavers, etc., in the school, all of which trades will be alternately practiced, by way of recreation from their mental labour of Arithmetic, Mathematics, Natural History etc. as a useful substitute for gymnastics; to which will be added agriculture and gardening. We have nearly 400 children belonging to the Society, besides strangers from the different parts of the Union. The girls are taught the same things as the boys, by Madam [sic] Fretageot, and are classed, alternately to work in the cotton and woolen mills, and in washing, cooking etc.\(^4\)

The Neef family arrived from Kentucky, and by May all three of the Pestalozzian teachers were hard at work. But trouble was brewing and the astute Maclure noticed it. The chasm between the group who had come down the Ohio and those

who had responded to Robert Owen's call to come and labor in the fields was widening. Bestor noted that Maclure "observed a tendency even more inimical to the education and scientific enterprise which was nearest his heart—a tendency to deny 'that those who work with their heads, or mental labor, are as productive as those who work with their hands.'"  

Maclure suggested that there be separate societies organized according to the occupations of the individuals with each. Owen accepted the idea, as did the New Harmony community. Accordingly, the School Society emerged as a separate entity in May of 1826, as did the Agricultural and Pastoral Society and the Mechanic and Manufacturing Society.  

Once established, unfortunately, each of the other societies refused to pay tuition in the form of goods to the School Society. And Maclure's attempts to keep his society out of the fray dissolved by August of 1826 when, after an open break with Owen, he was appalled to learn that Owen had persuaded the community to adopt a whole new educational organization.  

By the time Owen left New Harmony for good on 1 June 1827, a scant sixteen months since the heralded arrival of The Philanthropist, the Utopian experiment was at an end.

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Fretageot, Neef, and Phiquepal had all fought with each other and were teaching in separate schools. Madame's expressed disdain for Neef was such that Maclure, loyal as he was to her, defended him heartily. Gerard Troost, the Dutch chemist who had accompanied Maclure from Philadelphia, said of Neef: "I have been for seventeen years acquainted with Neef. I have found that everyone whose mind was not blinded by fanaticism, who was not envious of the real merit which he possessed, was the friend of Neef."[^46]

In the summer of 1827 the Neefs departed for Cincinnati where they hoped once more to establish a school. Neef was persuaded by his friend Benjamin Tappan to attempt the school in Steubenville, Ohio, instead; Neef complied, but the school was not successful. Neef moved his family to another farm in Jeffersonville, Indiana, but by 1834 they were back in New Harmony, where Neef remained for the rest of his life, supported by the Maclure estate.[^47]

However, the philanthropic activities of William Maclure were not at an end. Maclure was in residence in New Harmony from April 1827 until the following November, when he left for Mexico. During this period he initiated a long-dreamed of project, a School of Industry for orphans. Boys


[^47]: Ibid., 66.
and girls over the age of twelve were enrolled in this enterprise at no cost to themselves and received the rigorous and practical education that Maclure had always advocated. The students in this program became the printers who printed: first, *The New Harmony Gazette*; then, second, *The Disseminator of Useful Knowledge: Containing Hints to the Youth of the United States—From the School of Industry*. It was in the latter that the numerous essays of Maclure’s were first published before being collected into the *Opinions on Various Subjects*. The young printers were also responsible for the extremely important issuance of the works of Lesueur and Thomas Say.

Both Say and Madame Fretageot managed Maclure’s affairs after he left New Harmony. Say guided the scientific work and edited *The Disseminator*, while Mme. F. handled all of Maclure’s business affairs. The School of Industry finally closed in 1831; Madame Fretageot herself died in 1833 while on the way to visit Maclure in Mexico. Thomas Say died a year later.

In 1831, Phiquepal married Frances Wright, the outspoken anti-slavery reformer and feminist, and moved with her to New York where she and Robert Dale Owen for a time published *The Free Enquirer*, successor to *The New Harmony Gazette*. Miss Wright and Phiquepal were later divorced.

Thus ended William Maclure’s brave efforts to educate children. Given the dissension within New Harmony and the
misconceptions and untruths that circulated about it in the larger society, it is easy to understand Maclure’s frustration expressed in his 9 March 1828, essay, sent from Mexico:

The giving you an idea of the present state of this country . . . is more to shew our inferiority to half-savages, in many things, on purpose to do what I can to lower that inordinate vanity, which is a complete bar to improvement, the baneful effects of which I have been tormented with ever since I had the folly to suppose, that individual exertion against national prejudices, could meet with anything but disappointment. 48

One can only sympathize with the sense of failure implicit in the following statement:

The education of children has, as yet, been attended with little success, affording small gratification to the individual, who, from habit has chosen that as an amusement; he is irritated by the opposition of those whom he supposes are to benefit by his efforts, and mortified by the daily proofs that his labor is lost, and that any beneficial change, has been by the slow progress of the mass, on which his endeavors have little or no influence. 49

48 Maclure, Opinions, 1:245.

49 Ibid., 1:385.
CHAPTER VIII
SUMMING UP

If Maclure's philanthropic projects, into which he put so much faith and effort, floundered and failed, does that mean that he too was a failure? Novales believed that Maclure's repeated failures "represented an enormous creation, a fantastic contribution to our contemporary civilization." That seems exaggerated, but one can take the middle road between "an enormous creation" and futility. Wherever and whenever they take place, great educational innovations trickle into a stream of practice and mingle with like-minded ideas, eventually to spring forth in some newly-fashioned but philosophically similar guise. Froebel studied with Pestalozzi; the American kindergarten of today is different from that of Froebel, but yet shares many of the ideas common to both men. Maria Montessori read Pestalozzi and was influenced by him. Her approach flashed like a comet across early twentieth-century America and then disappeared, only to be resuscitated in the 1950s by Nancy McCormick Rambush in a new Americanized version. The central concepts of Pestalozzi, as echoed by Maclure, are embedded in the educational philosophy of John Dewey and Francis Wayland Parker and the other great Progressive
educators. And if the progressive school is currently in eclipse, it too will return in a modified garb. The pendulum of educational practice swings back and forth, fitting the mood, needs, and trends of the historical moment, but the central ideas never perish because they emerge from profound ideas about the nature of knowledge and of the human being. If the specific projects of Maclure sank into obscurity, surely individuals who observed the work of Neef, Fretageot, and Phiquepal in any of their settings incorporated those memories into a continuum of thinking and doing about education.

One can only speculate on the mix of circumstances that resulted in the failure of Maclure’s philanthropies. First of all, he was a man ahead of his time. Perhaps workingmen were not yet ready for the kinds of educational opportunities he wished them to have, or perhaps their needs at the time were different than he supposed. Certainly, given the strong and deep-seated sectarianism of the day, an educational approach, such as that of Pestalozzi, would be greeted with suspicion. Pestalozzi’s philosophy also looked upon the child as an individual deserving of respect, attention, and an education adapted to his or her unique nature. It is probable that society as a whole had not yet accepted this concept.

Secondly, one must look to the man himself. For a canny businessman to enter into such a loosely defined
relationship with Robert Owen as was the case is a bit surprising. There was a certain political and administrative naïveté about him. He chose his Pestalozzi teachers and set them up in business, then moved them about without regard to the importance of commitment or continuity. His frequent comings and goings must surely have affected the success, or lack of it, of his projects. It was as if he put a number of tops in motion, then moved on, assuming that the tops would continue to spin without further intervention.

He did leave a major legacy, however, and that is the ideas of this remarkable man. Those ideas, as expressed with such "fondness for innovation" and "startling sentiment," as Samuel G. Morton described them, are sometimes dogmatic, even wrong-headed, but more often sound and full of common sense, and occasionally prescient. They are unfailingly interesting.

First, a look at his educational ideas. This paper has reviewed how deeply committed Maclure was to the necessity of an educated citizenry in a government of universal suffrage and how he came to believe that the educational philosophy of Pestalozzi was the best approach to the education of that citizenry. Yet there are some rather startling omissions or departures from Pestalozzi's thought in the ideas of William Maclure. In his own way, he truly understood the centrality of sensory learning and concrete
experiences. He also approved of the outcomes of the Pestalozzian approach—the joyful, independent, problem-solving children who contrasted so sharply with the victims of rote learning of the day. But he was pretty vague about the journey between the beginning premises and the sought-for goals.

Two absolutely central concepts in the Pestalozzian system are: (1) the love relationship between parent and child, teacher and child; and (2) the necessity of fitting the teaching to the developmental stages of the child. These two basic beliefs never emerge in the writing of Maclure.

When he observed the close relationship between teacher and pupils, he commented on it approvingly, but he did not trace it back to its centrality in Pestalozzian thought. On the one hand, he acknowledged the need for teachers of "good will," yet stated that "By strictly limiting instruction to utility, nine-tenths of the learning of the old school is thrown to one side, and a common sense farmer or mechanic would be the best and most useful teacher."¹ For Pestalozzi, teaching was an art; at times, for Maclure, it almost appears to be a job.

And his ambivalence toward parents was monumental; as a good Pestalozzian, he mentioned that the parents are the

child's first teachers, then railed against parenthood as follows:

Removed from the constant temptation to excess given to children in the kitchens of their parents, by the foolish fondness of their mothers, while the absence of all vicious and depraved examples, so common in the admixture of children and adults, which are imitated with avidity by the young, their morals would be secure from that contamination unavoidable in mixed societies, where the vices of the old are perpetuated to the young.\(^2\)

The curriculum that Maclure outlined paid little or no homage to the nature of the child. Although his emphasis on physical exercise, the out-of-doors, and the exploration of nature was thoroughly in keeping with a whole body of thought about early childhood education, he quickly amplified this to learning accurately to estimate height to the exact foot, weight to the exact ounce, and corners to the exact angle, "without the trouble of surveying."\(^3\) A interesting but perhaps not quite realistic--or useful--goal for the young child.

Combining his neglect of the central love relationship between teacher and student and his indifference to the developmental stages of growth with a strong streak of realism, Maclure advocated what is one of the most puzzling aspects of his ideas--his support of Lancasterian teaching. If ever there were approaches absolutely diametrically

\(^2\)Ibid., 2:136.

\(^3\)Ibid., 2:199.
opposed to his Pestalozzian education, it would be those of Joseph Lancaster and Andrew Bell.

Putting Andrew Bell aside, as the darling of the Anglicans, and turning to Joseph Lancaster (1778-1838), more acceptable to the Quakers, we come to the monitorial system, or éducation mutuelle. This approach, which for a time gained fairly widespread acceptance in Britain and even parts of the United States, depended on the instructional leadership of a single adult, aided by numerous student monitors.

A brief summary of the system is found in The Lancasterian System of Instruction in the Schools of New York City by John Franklin Reigart:

Each act of school-life was regulated by a well-considered series of signals and commands, and there were many labor-saving devices. The government of the school was almost automatic.

No longer was the master in the thick of all his pupils' activities, as described so approvingly by Maclure in his essays about Pestalozzi and Yverdon.

Little was left for the master to do except to organize, to reward, to punish, and to inspire. The very essence of the system was the monitor. When a child was admitted, a monitor assigned him his class; while he remained, a monitor taught him (with nine other pupils); when he was absent, one monitor ascertained the fact, and another found out the reason; a monitor examined him periodically, and when he made progress, a monitor promoted him; a monitor ruled the writing paper; a monitor made or mended the pens; a monitor had charge of the slates and books; and a monitor general looked after all the other monitors. Every monitor wore a leather ticket, gilt, and lettered 'Monitor of the First Class,' 'Reading Monitor of the Second Class,' etc.
In place of a system "bottomed on free will," as Maclure extolled the Pestalozzian system, the Lancasterian discipline:

was based upon emulation and shame. Place-taking and prizes were utilized to an extravagant degree. The rod, of which Lancaster had a perfect horror, was replaced by what in many cases seem to be even more questionable devices; boys were labeled with badges of disgrace, shackled, suspended in a sack or basket, tied to desks or posts; while the incorrigible were sometimes tied up in a blanket, and left to sleep at night on the floor in the school-house.4

Maclure visited a Lancasterian school in Dublin on 29 June 1824. Of it he wrote:

We examined the Lancaster School in School Street. It is a large establishment for four hundred boys and two hundred girls . . . they have one master and one helper, and the school is separated into two rooms: one for the very young and one for older students.5

Given Maclure's pragmatism and the appalling illiteracy of the day, one has to assume that, for him, some form of education was better than none. Reigart cites the limited access of the poor to education in New York City. In 1826, twenty thousand children between the ages of five and fifteen attended no school whatever. There was no system of free public education; that awaited the efforts of Horace Mann. Education of the poor, such as it was, was "the


proper object of private philanthropy" which was "quite in accord with the educational and political ideas prevalent at the beginning of the nineteenth century." 6

Maclure, who from the beginning had advocated the imperative of free public education for all, acknowledged the economy of the Lancaster system and believed that somehow the Pestalozzian method could be "grafted on" to the monitorial approach. 7

Visiting a Lancasterian school in Lanark on 1 August 1824, the day after he visited Robert Owen's totally different school where children danced and sang, he observed with approval that:

There is a school under the direction of Mr. Wood where the arithmetic of Pestalozzi is very judiciously grafted on to the Lancasterian system. . . . I find it quite the fashion to help the young to gain instruction, though not always in the most approved plan, yet it all tends to advance the state of civilization. 8

Yet, there was more than a "better than nothing" quality to Maclure's support of Lancaster. There appeared to be a deep commitment to economy of scale. He wrote:

It is well ascertained that immense advantages are gained by all kinds of manual labor and manufactories being on an extensive scale. This is still more evident in schools where the saving of labor . . . is greater than in any species of art or trade. One

6Ibid., 4.
7Maclure, Opinions, 2:134.
8Maclure, European Journals, 724.
master by the monitorial system can teach five hundred children as easy as five, with the same expense of apparatus, only the locality must be larger. One professor can lecture to five hundred on chemistry, mathematics, mechanics, natural philosophy, etc., as easily as to five. Now that so much of the teaching of children is by substances and their representations of models and prints, the quantity, quality, and perfection that can be put to the making of every species of instruments . . . must be incalculably superior to any thing that the small parish schools can possibly afford to buy. By assembling the children into a numerous, and what may be called a scientific aggregation, the improvement in their health and physical constitutions, would keep pace with the rectitude of their moral conduct.  

It is quite apparent that Maclure was never in a Middle School lunchroom.

A host of questions arises. How, in such a system, would children learn natural history in the out-of-doors, as Maclure (and Pestalozzi) so feelingly espoused? In spite of the availability of "substances and their representations of models and prints," how would four or five hundred children avail themselves of them to learn through their senses? Where is the face-to-face participation so valued by Maclure in small settings like New England townships?

The man who so approved learning for its own sake, without rewards or punishments, could describe with approval his conversation with Mr. Joseph Devonsher Jackson, Secretary of the Kildare-place Society School in Dublin on

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9Maclure, Opinions, 2:136.
29 June 1824, where he learned that Mr. Jackson produced tickets with old, short proverbs with all languages on them. Said tickets are given to the boys as rewards, and when they acquire a number of them they are entitled to have them liquidated at one penny for five, two pennies for ten, four pennies for twenty, etc. They may use the money in the purchase of any useful article they may wish, but first proving that they understand the force and meaning of all the proverbs on the tickets.

As justification, Maclure explained:

'Tis a way of taking advantage of the energy created in the young mind by interest, and from the high opinion I have always entertained of the condensed common sense in these proverbs, the opener of the experience of anteriors, I am much pleased to see such a practical application. 10

Here Maclure had his opinionated glasses on. Had those tickets contained bible verses instead of proverbs, he would have been incensed and called it meaningless dogma that would have no intrinsic interest to the child. But to issue tickets with proverbs, of which he approved and which interested him, if not the child, only to motivate the child's performance, is far from one of the perceived strengths of Pestalozzi.

There was no grey for William Maclure; there was only black and white. There were either facts or there were useless flights of the imagination. He said:

All our knowledge must be drawn from the facts that exist, evident to the senses of all, on the surface and within the reach of the comprehension of everyone the least practiced in observation. True logic is only the

10Maclure, European Journals, 704.
arrangement of facts, in a chain of reasoning, so that the last is supported by the preceding. ... The truths of the exact sciences of chemistry, natural philosophy, natural history, etc. are extensive, multifarious, and require much time to study; but the true interest of majority in legislation, is in a nutshell, and known to every individual, who has only to advocate his own interest, or the interest of his class, which, if the majority, must be just and right.\textsuperscript{11}

Facts, for Maclure, were the only truths. The facts, or positive knowledge, to be acquired through the five senses included knowledge of "matter, motion, and mankind." Maclure stated:

Positive knowledge of matter, motion, and mankind, is truth. The correctness of opinions depends on the accuracy of the observation, judgment, and experience of those who form them, and may lead to utility, or augment the mass of prejudice, according to the surrounding circumstances of those who opine. \textit{It is therefore probable, that positively useful knowledge, conveyed through the medium of our senses, ought to be the chief object of all systems of education.}\textsuperscript{12}

It would appear that, to Maclure, the true interests of humankind, both that of individuals or of classes, are self-evident, even more accessible than the truths of science. Such a surprising statement, which obviates all humankind has yet to learn about self and society, tells more about Maclure's inability to deal with the subtleties of human nature than it does about human nature itself.


\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 2:100.
Like a good scientist, Maclure emphasized the importance of careful observation, as it gives individuals the habit:

of diligently observing, and accurately examining, on all sides, every thing they wish to be acquainted with, and teaches them not to suppose that they know any thing, until they have thoroughly investigated all its properties; thus saving them, in the future occurrences of life, much trouble and loss, and restraining them from acting on a careless smattering of the qualities of both men and things. 13

But one must ask how close observation leads inevitably and naturally to judgment, further experience, and wisdom? Maclure would have had no answer because it would not have been a question he would have entertained. It would just be a "fact." Yet, to push him further, if facts about humankind were so self-evident, why, as he acknowledged, were there such varied and contradictory opinions?

Opinions are so various, contradictory and changeable, depending on incidents, temper, constitution and situation, many of them beyond our control, that they ought not to be the subject of a dispute. 14

Given his belief that truth lay only in facts accessible to the senses, there was no room for speculation. Even for this scientist, the necessary activity of hypothesis became associated with the negative terms of "imagination," "dreams," and "fancy."

Maclure, the geologist, remarked:

13 Ibid., 2:100.
14 Ibid., 2:102.
The earth and all that is on it must either be from eternity or was made. As far as our observations have gone, there are perpetual changes, but no principles of a creation or something out of nothing. We find the remains of animals, and perhaps vegetables, in a form which does not at present exist, and some of the animals at present existing; but their bones are not to be found among the remains of the extinct animals, which affords some reason to suppose, that there has been a succession of animal and, perhaps, vegetable life produced on or near the surface of the earth. . . . The bones of the larger extinct animals being found only in or near the alluvial, would induce a belief that they were a subsequent formation [from fish]; and no bones or remains of the human species being found in any strata which, from its relative position, can be supposed to be of an ancient date, leads to the supposition, that man was one of the last formations.\textsuperscript{15}

But Maclure would go only so far with his suppositions and no farther. He dismissed the conjectures that might lead ultimately to more positive knowledge about the nature of the material that formed the center of the earth, for example.

We have a great many suppositions and conjectures about the nature of the material which forms the centre of the earth, and the fashionable theory at present seems to be that it is liquid, kept so by heat; though the gradual diminution of the heat of the ocean in proportion to its depth, and the freezing of the earth in the north to an unknown depth is against it. The mysterious nature of heat affords scope to the imagination, and gives every new idea the merit of an invention.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 3:177.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 3:177.
For Maclure, only the visible and tangible counted. That was the stuff of truth, and truth did not change. The rest was dreams:

The vast variety of metaphysical, theological, and earthly dreams, that torment or amuse mankind, would fill some hundred or perhaps some thousand volumes; there are no bounds to imagination when unlimited by facts. . . . The earthly dreams have seized upon a part of all the sciences; form the principal materials of all the different religions; constitute the quackery of all professions, and the ingredients that make dupes of the ignorant by the cunning of the knowing. . . . The conjecture how nature made the earth, without any proof of its ever having been made, is the geological dream. 17

The scientific Maclure appeared most unscientific when he wrote:

What an immensity of the energy of intellect has been thrown away in endeavours to conjecture the nature of causes, that must be for ever hid from beings so constructed as we are, and to what a sophistical change of reasoning has the catenation of the two words, cause and effect, given rise. 18

This unwillingness to assign validity to hypothesizing or to the unraveling of cause and effect severely limits the solidity of Maclure's thinking. It brings him dangerously close, in our eyes, to that situation he himself most despised—instead of a "chain of reasoning [where] the last is supported by the preceding," there is an "arrangement of words" unsupported by logic, that is "an insult to the common sense of the audience." It would only follow that

17 Ibid., 1:58.
18 Ibid., 1:56.
there was no room for the humanities in Maclure's curriculum.

That is a further educational objection, shared by Lockwood, who said:

But in their eagerness to do full justice to the utilities which the New England schools ignored, Maclure and Neef eliminated the cultures from the New Harmony course of study and made their boasted curriculum as narrow as that it came to conquer. 19

Literature was "at best an ornament"; history "sounded aloud the praises of those far famed conquerors, those wholesale butchers of their species"; the fine arts, "such as painting and sculpture, when not representing realities positively useful, are fictions of the imagination." And of imagination, he wrote:

the flight of the imagination, has been applauded by those whose occupations could not bear the plain truth. . . . Realities may be warped and distorted by imagination; but can receive no explanation or elucidation from imaginary visions. In no instance can they be useful in common life. 20

Maclure, who attended the theatre often on his travels, saw the theatre useful only as a didactic agent, whereby one could "lash the vices of the age and cover with ridicule and opprobrium all actions, customs, habits or opinions that


20 Maclure, Opinions, 2:287.
militate against the comfort and happiness of the millions."  

There is in the entire body of *Opinions*, no mention of music or singing, yet at Pestalozzi's schools, in the words of DeGuimps:

Singing was also and always a true means of recreation. We sang everywhere, in the open air, when traveling, when walking in the evening in the court of the castle, and this singing together contributed much to keep up a spirit of good feeling and harmony amongst us.  

And from the pen of the man who spoke French, Italian, Spanish, and German came these words:

Loading the memory with the different sounds that other nations use to designate their objects or ideas is not useful for one in a hundred and learning the ancient dead languages is perhaps not useful to one in five thousand.  

One can only regret that the sternly practical approach to life was combined with the neglect of one of Jeremy Bentham's central principles, that is, to avoid the confusion of what is with what ought to be. History does not have to applaud the conqueror; it can celebrate the day-to-day of ordinary mankind. Literature, as well as the other arts, can be frivolous; they can also explore and illuminate the deepest and profoundest thoughts, aspirations, and visions for life of which humanity is

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21Ibid., 1:118.


capable. The peace and happiness of mankind, for which Maclure held such high hopes, is furthered by understanding among those who speak with different tongues and about different ideas.

On the other hand, there is so much that is, not only sound, but contemporary in the educational writings of Maclure. He lamented the fact that schools were shut for the summer, saying that "such a vacancy is a destructive custom which always forms an empty part in the minds of the students." Even yet, in spite of the research that indicates the regression in learning that takes place over the long summer vacation, the system is tied to the planting, tilling, and harvesting cycle of our rural forefathers.

His advocacy of science teaching in the schools, putting aside the exclusivity of the sciences in his curriculum, was nonetheless radical for the time, and even yet science receives too little emphasis in the American curriculum, particularly in the elementary years.

He anticipated the great philanthropic foundations when he said that: "The pleasure of possessing knowledge is only felt on giving it away to such as want it."25

24 Maclure, European Journals, 708.
25 Maclure, Opinions, 3:284.
Above all, his continuing demand for free and universal public education remains a dream not completely realized.

His cogent comments on so many aspects of economics and politics are equally to the point. For the media, he had contempt and criticism:

The editors, and of course readers, of our party newspapers, act a disgraceful part in these scandalous intrigues and disputes for power. They blow the flame of discord and disunion, by asserting scandalous and malicious calumnies and falsehoods against their opponents, whilst plastering with fulsome flattery and adulation their patrons or employers, all under the mask of public good, which they surreptitiously use to cover their cupidity.\(^{26}\)

One has only to read the daily paper, listen to comments on the radio, and observe the bias of media coverage to accept the contemporaneity of his thought. He commented on national politics, saying that "the intrigues for the next presidential chair have begun long ago, and extended further than ever." In the same essay, he continued:

When we contemplate the rapid increase of intrigue for office, violent in proportion to the power and patronage attached to it, which has taken place since the formation of our federal government, and look forward to the accumulation of influence and patronage that must accrue to the federal executive, by the immense population that must fill the void between the present settlements and the Pacific, something ought to be done to lessen the wages of party, and of course their violence and immorality, before it exceeds the bounds of peaceable reform.\(^{27}\)

\(^{26}\)Ibid., 2:174.

\(^{27}\)Ibid., 2:174.
Watergate, Iran-Contra, the Congressional post office, perhaps Whitewater--Maclure was on the mark.

His concerns about a strong federal government, discussed in the first chapter, focused on the issue of slavery, fifteen years before the outbreak of the War between the States:

Freedom and slavery are nearly on a par as regards the states and the senate; but the population of the free states will far out-number the white population of the slave states, and give a decided majority to freedom in the house of Congress, risking disputes and wrangling, during which the operations of government are suspended. On small matters, this may be settled by compromise, but in great and fundamental questions, such as emancipation or slavery, the parties are becoming more violent every day; and unless they are prudent enough to reform the federal constitution in time, there will most probably be a separation of the states of the south from those of the north. 28

He decried the sale of public lands for private gain; he lamented the materialism and greed of the American society; he believed in limitation of terms of office, all of which are issues current today. At a time when the general climate of opinion trumpeted that "bigger is better" and limitless expansionism was the watchword of the day, his celebration of the small and manageable social and political unit is reminiscent of E. F. Schumacher's Small Is Beautiful and resonates with the current American nostalgia for country and small towns, as well as the push for small schools and schools within schools.

It may perhaps be established, as a political axiom, that the smaller the political society, the better everything is administered for the interest of the many, and that the corruption and mal-administration of all nations, is in exact proportion to the extent of territory and number of beings over whom their rules domineer.\textsuperscript{29}

Finally, this practical Scot had the most idealistic and forward-looking vision of all, a dream of united nations, prophetically described in 1830:

But such a federation as joins the various governments of Switzerland, could unite in the bonds of friendship, every species of political association that has or can exist, and would greatly facilitate the extension of federalism, so as to include in a peaceable Union, the various contradictory and warlike elements that inhabit the north, in Europe, or in any other quarter of the globe; and would do for nations, what political associations, courts of justice, and laws have done for individuals: preventing them from recurring to force for the adjusting of their disputes. The union of this hemisphere in the bonds of federalism, would prove to the whole human family the immense advantages of liberty, by securing a perpetual internal peace, whilst the union of such a force would render an attack from a foreign enemy almost impossible.\textsuperscript{30}

What a remarkable mix of pragmatism, hard-headedness, dogmatism, idealism, and concern for the happiness and peace of mankind emerges from the picture of William Maclure. In gratitude for Maclure’s sponsorship of his scientific explorations of the west, the botanist Thomas Nuttall described the Osage orange tree and named it for William Maclure. Of \textit{maclura aurantiaca}, William Maclure said:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{29}Ibid., 1:83.
\vspace{1em}
\textsuperscript{30}Ibid., 1:445.
\end{quote}
the Maclura is a tree of a quick growth, from six to eight feet in a year, remarkable for thick set branches, large leaves and sharp prickles, fitting it for hedges; which at the height of five feet, gives a great facility for gathering the leaves, and serves at the same time two useful purposes, enclosing our fields and feeding silk worms.31

Whether intentional or not, Nuttall has provided us with a paradigm for William Maclure himself: large ideas, densely presented and always with sharp prickles, useful for the production of something beautiful--democracy--while at the same time separating and setting boundaries between classes of humanity, for to him the class struggle between the consumers and industrious producers was inherent in the nature of man.

31Ibid., 2:296.
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VITA

The author, Eleanor Ann Nicholson, was born in Chicago, Illinois.

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November 28, 1994

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