

# The Lichliter Site Project

## A Model for Revealing Hidden Archaeological Collections

### Project Overview

The Dayton Society of Natural History (DSNH), with the help of a generous grant from the Council on Information Resources for 2014-2016, is in the process of cataloging a large collection of archaeological artifacts from the Lichliter site near Dayton, Ohio. The materials are from the Late Woodland, a virtually unknown time period to archaeologists and anthropologists. An amateur archaeologist, John Allman, led an excavation at this site during the 1950s, and his notes are still extant at DSNH and at Ohio History Connection. Virginia Gerald, the DSNH's first Curator of Anthropology, led excavations at this site throughout the 1960s and into 1970 with students and other professionals every summer. Our task is to decipher all of the information Virginia left behind – field notes, artifacts, and maps included.



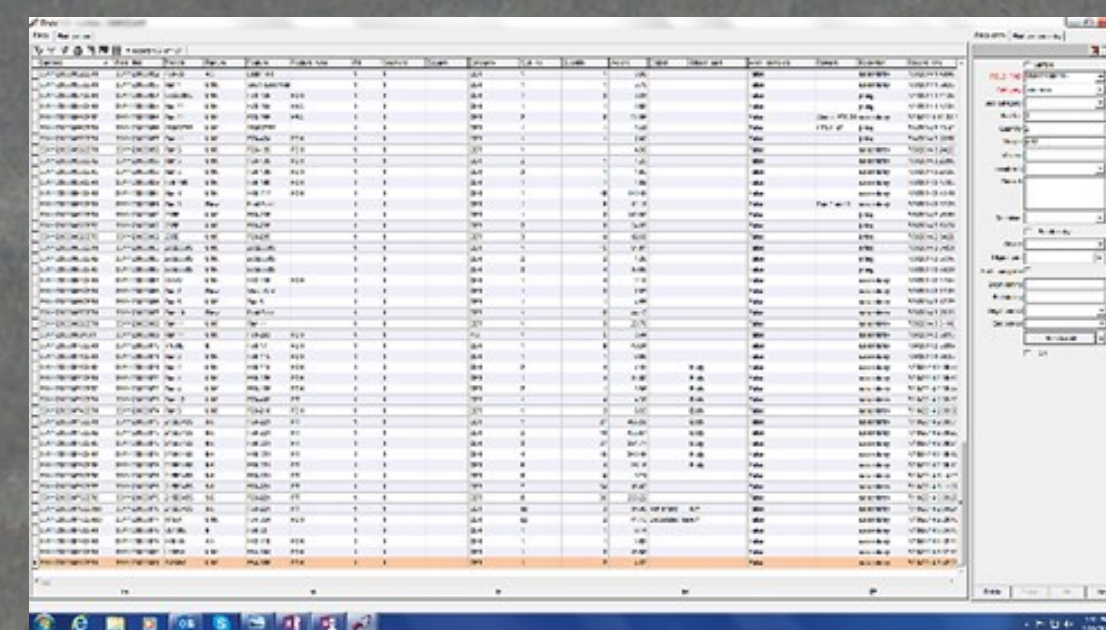
**1963:** Three students and Virginia Gerald (right) taking part in the excavation of the Lichliter Site outside Dayton, Ohio in 1963. The excavation lasted from 1962 to 1970; every summer, elementary to college aged students from the Midwest participated. After completing the excavation, Virginia Gerald retained all of the artifacts in her possession for the next thirty years.

**2012:** Virginia Gerald, along with her family and their dog, returned the Lichliter collection to the DSNH in an RV with a trailer attached.

**2013:** The DSNH was awarded a \$91,000 grant from CLIR to process the artifacts from the Lichliter collection. The project is slated to last until 2016.



**May 2014:** The staff at the DSNH trained on QLC's ArcheoLINK software. This European program enables the user to link archaeological artifacts, maps, and notes in one place. Its main functionality is for field use during excavations; however, the DSNH is using it in a curation setting and is one of the first museums in the United States to do so.



**June 2014:** DSNH staff and interns re-housed over 9,000 artifacts into archival bags and jars; this was essential for preservation. This step also enabled us to do an inventory of how many artifact types and archival resources were present. The number of artifacts and quality of research exceeded our original estimations. Artifacts comprised 60% of the total 50 cubic feet of material; archival material comprised 40%.

**August 2014:** The cataloging process involved much trial and error. We began to enter artifacts into ArcheoLINK by artifact type; however, this proved to be impossible because Virginia Gerald had separated artifacts into too many categories for our purposes. This forced us to reorganize and reverse the entire excavation by placing artifacts in their correct proveniences physically.

### Stats

Grant: \$91,000

Artifacts processed so far: 6,900  
(will most likely be 10,000 total)

Man hours so far: 1,300

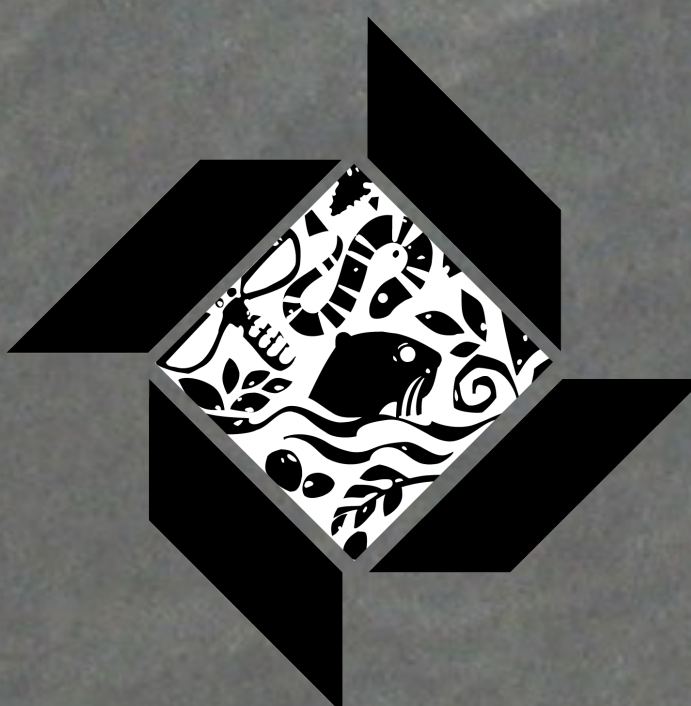
60% artifacts, 40% paper



### Conclusions

The DSNH has cataloged over 6,900 artifacts in ArcheoLINK to date, with over 1,300 staff and intern hours logged. We are currently working on cataloging the remaining artifacts in ArcheoLINK; completing this step will enable us to make permanent housing for them in the summer of 2015. We are also planning on presenting and publishing our results as a case study at regional archaeological conferences and in an article.

The Lichliter Site is one of the only Late Woodland sites in the Midwest. This is the culture that appeared right after the decline of the well-known Hopewell culture (which is often identified by their many mounds, such as those in Ross County, Ohio). Archaeologists and anthropologists don't know much about Late Woodland, so the site is very important to understand, which is why the access we are providing is essential. *This project will serve as the first case study in applying ArcheoLink as a collection management solution for archaeological research collections.*



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**CLIR Hidden Collections Symposium 2015**