



The Captain's Log

Spring 2022

PRESERVING NORTHEAST OHIO'S PAST, WRITTEN AND UNWRITTEN

Message from the President

by Eric Olson

It has been a busy spring here at SHiP! We are starting the planning and design process for our fall exhibit on the history of the Portage Path. The exhibit runs from October 7 through December 17, 2022 at the Summit Art Space. Keep an eye out for announcements about the exhibit. We are putting together a call for artists that will be released later this month or next.

As the weather warms up, the shovels go in the ground. Field season is upon us. This summer, SHiP will likely be working on several field projects around Northeast Ohio. Additionally, some of our SHiP board members are doing their own field work. I highly recommend anyone

interested about fieldwork opportunities this summer contact either myself, Dr. Tim Matney, or Dr. Phil Wanyerka. There are several interesting projects lined up this summer, and I am sure one of use would be glad to have you help out sometime!

This summer, we are in the process of organizing a few lectures about the history of the portage path to coincide with the fall exhibit. Stay tuned for more details as they develop.

I am very proud of the work that our Shipmates and board have been doing since our last issue of *The Captain's Log*. My term as president ends in May, 2023. Between now and then, SHiP will be looking for a new president to take the helm when I step down. I will still be quite active within the organization (and probably still editor of the newsletter), but it is my hope that a new president will bring a different perspective to the organization as we look to the future.

Become a Shipmate!

Considering becoming a Shipmate? Shipmates are actively preserving the past through archaeological fieldwork, historical research, publication, inventory, and nomination of historic properties, and serving on committees. Dues are \$10 annually. Dues support the ongoing mission of SHiP, so consider joining today! For membership questions, contact Robert Trattner (rtrattner@ttmlaw.com), or go to <https://www.neoship.org/become-shipmate/>

National Preservation Month

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Check out the National Park Service's webpage for more information on what to do for National Preservation Month: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/preservation-month.htm>

April 29

9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Ohio Archaeological Council Spring Membership Meeting

The OAC's spring meeting will be hosted in a hybrid format at the Columbus Public Library main branch. Presentations will include current research in archaeology from many different archaeologists and educators. The meeting will be live streamed on the OAC YouTube channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCihQNObsGAzCtTT_euQ1kA

For questions, please email Elizabeth Hoag (ehoag@cia.edu).

May 6

9:30 AM to 12:15 PM

Cleveland Documenters in Action

Join Lila Mills and Lawrence Daniel Caswell of Cleveland Documenters to learn about the critical work this team is providing and how you can become involved.

Mills, associate director of Neighborhood Connections, the home of Cleveland Documenters, is focused on the overall goals of Cleveland Documenters and is responsible for establishing partnerships with local people and organizations, paying Documenters once documents are published, and editing documents.

Cleveland Documenters is in partnership with Chicago-based civic journalism lab City Bureau and made possible with support from the Visible Voice Charitable Fund of the Cleveland Foundation.

For a Zoom link, contact elaine.baptie@ursuline.edu

May 14

2:00 PM

Collections at the Connection: Natural History and Archaeology

Have you ever wondered just how old is that trilobite fossil you've had in your attic for decades? Are you curious about the oldest piece of natural history in our collection? Come out to the Ohio History Center to learn more! Join our curatorial team, with special guest Dale Gnidovec of the Orton Geological Museum, as we help our visitors to determine what it is they think they have in their own personal collection. Do you have something at home that you think is part of Ohio's natural history or archaeological past? Let's work together to solve those history mysteries!

For more information, visit: <https://www.ohiohistory.org/events/collections-at-the-connection-natural-history/>

Small Cemeteries Project: An Update

by Caitlyn Conley

Every time I passed a cemetery as a child I would hold my breath. I cannot recall who first told me of this specific superstition, but I do remember what the consequences were if the dead caught you drawing breath past their domain. One of three things could happen: 1) you could make the spirits jealous and they will come and haunt you in your dreams, 2) you could breathe in a spirit and become possessed, or 3) you could die. Although these superstitions were a bit far-fetched for me as a child, there was a certain level of intrigue and excitement that made me cautious to the consequences and encouraged my participation.

As a historian and archaeologist cemeteries hold a new level of fascination for me. Back in early 2020, I was asked by SHiP to research information for the Small Cemeteries Project. I was tasked with helping to identify prehistoric and historic, private and public cemeteries and collecting metadata for each of these cemeteries throughout Summit County, Ohio. This

included information on the cemetery's location, coordinates, size, number of burials, ownership, date of establishment, media coverage, and history if possible. Once this metadata was collected, it was entered into ArchGIS by a fellow SHiPmate, Klansee Stevens, creating an interactive map of these cemeteries. It was created as a living map, meaning that as new information is found the map and its data can be updated and/or corrected.

The task seemed manageable enough at the time, but we were all unawares of the pandemic on the horizon. Libraries and archives shut down, the limited staff of cemeteries became illusive, and the ability to talk to someone face to face was something of the past. However, I was lucky enough to be able to reach out to the Summit County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society in lieu of access to Summit County Library's Special Collections in order to gather some of the information needed. The rest was gathered through hours of phone calls, e-mails, and internet research.

The histories and legends of some of these cemeteries were captivating, which would lead to the creation of SHiP's Cemetery Saturdays. Each Saturday in the month of October (2020) SHiP created a short video featuring a specific cemetery in Summit County. We featured Glendale Cemetery, Oakwood Cemetery, New Infirmary Cemetery, and Columbia Road Cemetery—all of which are available to view on our Facebook page. Currently, I have been tasked to write a short book to companion our work on the Small Cemeteries Project of Summit County. SHiP hopes that the Small Cemeteries Project of Summit County can be used as a template and expanded to surrounding counties.

To this day, I still sometimes catch myself holding my breath as I drive past a particularly eerie looking cemetery with older headstones, but now I do it for a whole new reason. I hold my breath in anticipation of what that cemetery might tell us of its history, the history of those who are buried there, and the history of the area in which it is located.

Storage Organization and Artifact Analysis Honors Project

By Rebecca Glatz

For one of my final projects before I graduate, I have been working on some of the collections the Department of Anthropology has at the University of Akron. My project



A selection of ceramics from the John Brown House collection at the photography station.

started with a general inventory of the collections and then a more in-depth look at one of the collections of my choice that was approved by my faculty advisor, Dr. Timothy Matney. In the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology storage room, there is a wall of shelves that currently houses the anthropology collections. The collections are stored in boxes that have labels on them, including box numbers that I had put

on them as part of my project. The collection I chose was the John Brown House collection. I chose this collection because John Brown is a famous person in American history, but I did not know he had a part in Akron history. I wanted to learn more about John Brown's time in Akron while also taking on the task of going through the archaeological material to figure out what excavation these artifacts were found in and how the artifacts fit into the history of the John Brown House. I started by photographing all the artifacts and inputting information (like artifact number, their location in the boxes, notes about condition, and type of artifact) into a spreadsheet that would be used to fill in the master database at the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology.

I photographed all the artifacts by bags and created numbers for the bags to make it easier to find specific artifacts from the four collection boxes. A lot of the artifacts were tiny fragments of ceramic or glass which made the process longer between photographing and logging the information.

There have been a lot of issues with the project mostly because there has been a lack of good record keeping. There was some documentation in the boxes but nothing with names of who did the work and when they did the work or even where other than the label on the boxes saying the title of the project is the John Brown House. It has been an interesting learning experience because I have learned a lot of concepts in archaeology and the archive/museum fields. I have learned



An example of artifacts after rehabilitation (i.e. putting in fresh bags and getting new labels).

that archaeological excavations are only useful when good documentation is done in the field and in the lab. It has been an interesting project since I have gotten to learn about the side of archaeology not spent in the field and archival work that is done behind the scenes. With the very little documentation about the context of the work that was done to collect the artifacts has made this project rather challenging, I can use this as an example of what not to do as learning experiences and make sure good notes are taken in the field and in the lab for future projects.

Rediscovery of Clinton

By Hanna Curtis

For my senior honors project I worked with the archaeological archives that are in the Cummings Center for the History of Psychology at the University of Akron. This collection includes everything from past archaeological excavations that the faculty may have participated in or ran.

For this project I worked with my classmate, Becca Glatz. We started by labeling the collections boxes with specific numbers that the Cummings Center could use to identify different collections. We also put a brief description of what is in the collections. After this we moved on to specific sites in the collection. This is where we began to work separately. I chose the Clinton Lock #2 collection, which contained five boxes of artifacts from the 1998 excavation. Many of these artifacts consisted of glass and ceramics from windows or vessels that had been long forgotten and thrown away. Other artifacts were more specifically associated with the canal, such as a long chunk of wood that possibly belonged to a canal boat. Another unique artifact from this collection was a brass part of an oil lamp. This piece pulled the wick up into the main part of the lamp to dim or brighten the light from the lamp.

While looking through the boxes I photographed all the objects and wrote information about what each

bag contained in a shareable spreadsheet. This information includes the excavation unit the artifacts were recovered from, the bag number, the box number, a brief description of what is in the bag (i.e. glass, bone, etc), and the numbers corresponding with the photographs. This was recorded to better understand where everything in the collection is located now,



An object "rediscovered" during archival documentation of the Clinton Lock #2 documentation.

where it came from and what is in the collection. After this was completed the photographs and information will be used and put into a public database for the Cummings Center that can be accessed by the public. This will allow people to look at what's in the collections before starting their research on the collection. This makes it easier for research to be done on the collection by not just students but also allows external researchers to check the metadata. This solved the problem of not having records of the collections easily available. After all of this was done it was time to look more closely at the site itself.

This may sound like an easy task, since the Village of Clinton still exists today and the canal can still be seen in other parts of the state but, unfortunately, was not the case. The canal played a huge role in allowing the town to grow, but in 1913 when the canals finally shut down the economic prosperity of the town began to decrease, and Clinton was downsized to the tiny village we know today. Finding sources of information about the canal and the town were incredibly difficult. There were large gaps in the records that the University of Akron possessed. Although the artifacts allow researchers to make assumptions, the lack of historical data makes it difficult to know the timeline and history of the village.

While the Clinton Historical Society was not open at the time of my research with the help of local historian Beth Bailey, I was able to find some resources and get more historical information on the time. This is an incredibly important aspect of history and archaeology because it is easy for history to be forgotten forever but with archaeology and research about sites the history can be brought back to the people who reside in these once booming towns of industry. This work in the Cummings Center allows researchers to answer questions like how did the canal help the town grow? Who was living in the town during this period? And even how did the downfall of the canal contribute to the modern Clinton we see today?

In the next issue...

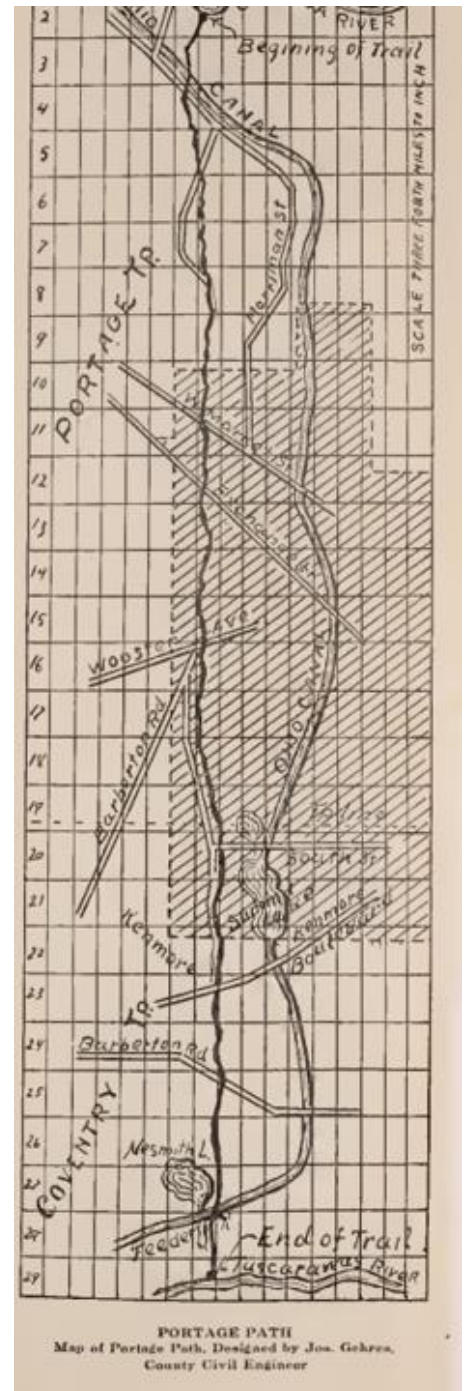
The next issue will be focused on the Portage Path. This will coincide with the fall exhibit at Summit Art Space. The exhibit, which will display materials that tell the history of the Portage Path, will run from October 7 through December 17, 2022.

The exhibit will, we hope, feature artwork by local artists. If you or someone you know has an interest in helping with the preparation of the exhibit or creating artwork (which will be up for sale at the exhibit), then please contact any of the SHiP board members for more details.

In the meantime, Shipmates will be busy this summer working in the field. That is, so long as the weather cooperates!

The Captain's Log

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A map of the portage path, from Peter Cherry's 1911 book *The Portage Path*.