

# WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

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## DIGITAL CURATOR JOINS WESTERN RESERVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY STAFF

### *Nationally-Funded Project Uses Computer Technology for Interactive Museum Display*

**History Center - 10825 East Boulevard - Cleveland, OH 44106**

Cleveland, Ohio -- Clio has set up "her" curatorial office within the exhibit galleries of Western Reserve Historical Society, which entails a touch screen computer and a few museum artifacts. She is always on duty during museum hours - ready to talk with any visitor about the artifacts surrounding her. Clio is a digital curator. Using state-of-the-art software, RFID chips and a touch screen, Clio explains the artifacts in her office through an interactive dialog with guests who care to spend a few minutes with her.

This WRHS pilot project to design a technology-based approach to history exhibits is now in the testing phase at the WRHS History Center in University Circle. Visitors are invited to meet Clio, an Artificially Intelligent Artifact Interpreter, test her knowledge about several objects from the Society's collections, and offer feedback on the exhibit. WRHS plans to further develop Clio based on visitor experiences.

The project offers an updated approach to teaching history, according to Dr. Gainor B. Davis, WRHS President & CEO. "Our challenge, as a History Museum and educational institution, is to develop new ways to excite the community, especially the young people, about history and relate it to their lives," said Dr. Davis. "The potential of the digital curator project to become the next best way to achieve this challenge is enormous."

Clio, named for the Greek Muse of history, asks visitors to bring an artifact to the scanner near her touch screen. The artifact is tagged with computer-readable devices, allowing Clio to analyze the item. Clio and the guest then launch into a question and answer discussion about the object, allowing Clio to place the object in historical perspective, portraying the way human curators and researchers approach history.

WRHS worked with local company LogicJunction to design this project made possible through grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Leonard Krieger Fund of the Cleveland Foundation. LogicJunction, based in Beachwood, Ohio, is a leader in interactive 3D software technology.

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*Founded in 1867, Western Reserve Historical Society is one of the largest nonprofit regional historical societies in the nation. WRHS inspires people to discover the American Experience by exploring the tangible history of Northeast Ohio.*

*WRHS receives public support with local tax dollars from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture, to preserve and enrich our region's artistic and cultural heritage.*