

# The Time Traveler

Scioto County Past and Present **By Kaitlin Setty**



## Trial Over A Cat

**Enjoy this story from**

### **The Story of Portsmouth by Elmer Sword**

In 1862, the ownership of a housecat turned into a court trial in Scioto County. A cat that belonged to William P. Martin had vanished in February. He could not find the feline anywhere until he discovered that it was in the possession of a man named, Giles Gilbert. After not being believed, Martin took the case to court. He brought in four witnesses who testified that the cat belonged to him, but Gilbert brought in eight witnesses that claimed the cat belonged to him. Eventually, Gilbert was asked to appraise the value of the feline, and he said it was worth \$10.00. The jury awarded him the money, and the cat was returned to Martin. After everything, getting the cat back cost him \$97.00. As soon as the trial was over, the cat went back to Gilbert's place and stayed. Martin did not try to get the cat back this time.

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## Tween Programs

### Limited Space

Please contact Local History at  
740-354-5304 to register

**March 10, 2022 @ 4:30 pm**  
Cupcake Liner Birds

**March 15, 2022 @ 4 pm**  
Yarn Painting

**April 7, 2022 @ 4:30 pm**  
Emoji Dog Bookmark

**April 12, 2022 @ 4 pm**  
Fruit Bowl Bird Feeder



## Timeless Treasure: Rarden Public School Photo

Our March/April 2022 Timeless Treasure is this black and white photo of Rarden Public School. The photo shows the two-story school building with faculty and students. It was built about 1900 on the east end of Rarden.



## Haverhill

Located in Green Township, Haverhill was the very first settlement in the area. It was originally settled by Jean G. Gervais in 1797 as the best spot for a town out of the 4,000 acres he owned. He called it Burrsburg in honor of Aaron Burr, chairman of the Senate Committee. When New England emigrants came to the area, they gave the settlement the name of Haverhill to honor the town in New Hampshire. Truth be told, there is no record of plats for Burrsburg, and the name Haverhill stuck. The first plat recorded for Haverhill was for a man named Thomas Davisson on April 27, 1848. Lawson Drury was the first postmaster to carry mail through the settlement. He was also the first ferryman in town.

### Who am I?

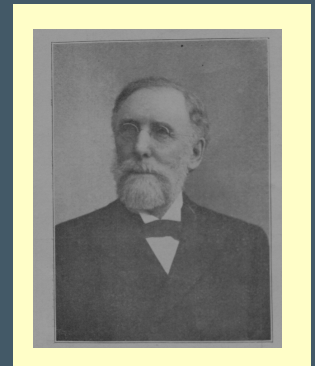
Clue 1: I was born in Portage County, Ohio on January 10, 1829.

Clue 2: I went to the Cleveland University and took on extra work as a mathematics instructor.

Clue 3: After I graduated, I became a teacher at Cleveland High School. Shortly after, I was promoted to the position of principal.

Clue 4: In 1856, I left Cleveland Schools to take a job as the Superintendent of the Public City Schools of Portsmouth, Ohio.

Clue 5: In 1863, I was the President of the Ohio Teachers Association.



Hold your copy up to a mirror to view the answer!

*Henry Clay Tompkins*

### Do you know this place?

Clue 1: This place sprung up on the River Road in the 1800s.

Clue 2: It was located at the mouth of a popular creek in Nile township.

Clue 3: A schoolhouse was built directly beside the creek and served as the main learning center for the children in this settlement for many years.

Clue 4: A post office was established here and continued for over 50 years. After closing, the mail was transferred to the post office in nearby Friendship.

Answer in the next issue!





## Casey Cubs, 1930



## Casey Cubs Undefeated

Too much Baker was the cause of Scotoville's downfall at N. & W. field Monday evening, as the tall, fair haired pitcher of the Casey Cubs was just about the whole works. Not content with making 13 of the up-river boys disturb the ozone. Shine poled out the zippy single in the fifth inning that scored Jack Spltzer and Paul Russell ahead of him, thus putting the game on ice. The Cubs gave him excellent support, their only wobble being responsible for Scotoville's lone tally. It was by far the best played game of the season and gives the Casey Cubs a clean slate for the season...it being their last game. The final game of the American Legion Junior league schedule will be played at Labold field Wednesday at 5:45 p. m. when the Cardinals and Trinity lock horns.

Portsmouth Daily Times, 1929

## Louisiana Moore Ricker Diary Entries from June 25 and August 31, 1886

June 25th

Unusually stormy. All dark clouds have been moving about on every side of us and occasionally a hard shower fell. Will started about 8 o'clock to ride horse back to Henley and we had a card from him after dinner stating that he reached there safely at 11:30 AM. I have been busy mending and with Carl's lessons all day. He finds it hard to apply himself so a short lesson lasts a long time. Could not go to prayer meeting owing to the rain and my cough. Lizzie Ricker wrote a letter to her new cousin J. W. Moore, probably the first one he has received.

(Carl is Louisiana's youngest son)

August 31, 1886

Delightfully cool and pleasant. Have been busy all day doing little troublesome things which do not show when done. Flora Field left Ports. today for New York and Saturday will sail for Liverpool, her home being in London. Bertie Spry + Isabel Murray came down and joined with Margaret in writing her a letter to be read in shipboard. Great Earthquake in U. S. Shock here at 9:20 PM and again 15 min. later. The first I ever felt.

Answer to last issue's:  
"Do you know this place?"

Lyra

Story from Evans' History



## Local Mystery: Mentally Unstable?

On a cold December morning in 1908, Amaziah Webb visited the house of Lucy Burris, wife of his half brother. He came in while she was doing the washing and was visibly upset. He asked her for a pencil and paper then made the statement, "Lou, I want you to write my life three years back." Lucy Burris asked him why, and he replied that "Lucy has been having Adolf dodge the officers and she is the guilty one. If she don't draw the warrant, I'm going to kill her." The Lucy he was referring to was his other sister-in-law, Lucy Cole Webb. Lucy Burris told Amaziah that she did not have any time to write for him, and he left shortly after.

Knowing that Amaziah was prone to dramatics, Mrs. Burris didn't think too much about the incident. Amaziah was prone to strange episodes from a head injury from his youth. Later that day, Lucy Burris went over to Amaziah's mother's house to visit. Amaziah came into the house, sat down, and excitedly whipped out a revolver. He repeated the same threat against Lucy Cole Webb that he had earlier and then left the residence.

He went out and met with Charles W. Finney of New Boston after this. Finney claimed that Webb was in a panicky state. He said that he was in trouble with a woman on Front Street, and that he had to kill somebody. Finney said that he never believed Webb would kill anyone and thought that the whole thing was some kind of joke. As he left, Webb declared that Finney would hear from him before sunset. Finney didn't think more of the claim and went back to his business. It was well known that Webb had episodes sometimes where he would go off on angry tangents, but nothing would usually come from the outbursts.

After seeing Finney, Webb traveled around the area, making various stops to other people. He was spotted running up the hill near the railroad tracks by a man named Thompson Hodge. Hodge told authorities that he heard five gunshots, then saw Webb sprinting along the railroad tracks. The police quickly picked him up and brought him in for questioning. He was held and eventually the case went to trial as a quick wrap up. Webb had given no reason for the murder of his sister-in-law, but when his own mother was called to the stand, she offered an explanation. She said that about twenty years ago, Webb had gotten injured in a grain elevator accident. While working, a piece of metal flew from the machine and struck him in the head. Years of mental instability followed the incident. He would randomly throw things like buckets when he got angry and even vanishing for days before his family had to go searching for him. Once, he claimed he saw his dead wife in the clouds and tried to get into a hot air balloon to try to find her. No amount of questioning could shake Mrs.

Webb's beliefs about her son's mental state. Despite her best efforts to get him admitted to a mental institution, Webb was sentenced to life in prison and taken to the penitentiary in Columbus. Upon his departure from Portsmouth, his faithful mother brought his two sons to see their father off. Upon seeing them, Webb did not show any emotion. He had a carefree manner and even claimed he was glad to finally be going to Columbus to stay. He got out after serving only eleven years and returned to Portsmouth.