

The Time Traveler

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



March is Women's History Month

Come into Local History and view some of the material we have available on the history of Scioto County's women!

***Access Newspaper Archive**

This in-house database allows users to view historic newspapers from all over the U. S. Come browse what they have for the Portsmouth Daily Times from 1858 to 1977.

***Women's Influence Subject File in Local History**

This file contains newspaper articles, photocopied images, and much more about local women and their influence in Scioto County.

***Pioneers of Scioto County by James Keyes (1880)**

This book was written by an early historian and has information about early men and women of the county.

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Tween Club

Our Tween Club meets every Thursday at 4:30 in the Copley Meeting Room at the Portsmouth Public Library to do crafts and other fun activities. Tween Club is for ages 8-12 and requires pre-registration. For more information visit the Local History Department, or call 740-354-5304.

Timeless Treasure: NuGrape Bottle

Our March/April Timeless Treasure is this green tinted, embossed NuGrape Bottle. Embossed on the bottle: "NuGrape, Imitation Grape, Not Grape Juice, Min. Contents 6 FL. OZ., Trademark Registered, Bottle Pat'd March 9, 1920." On the bottom of the base is: "Portsmouth, Ohio." On July 16, 1925, NuGrape opened at 820 Fourth Street in Portsmouth.

View this and thousands more of our historical items at <https://www.yourppl.org/history/> Have a timeless treasure of your own you'd like to share? Contribute images of your regional historic interest to our website!



Portsmouth Streetcars

On March 24, 1873, members of the Portsmouth Street Railroad and Light Company met in the office of Thomas Dugan. Those in attendance were Colonel Samuel E. Varner, Levi D. York, Enos Reed, A. T. Holcomb, and J. D. Clare. The meeting was held to discuss terms for the creation of Portsmouth's first Street Railway system. \$60,000 in stock was taken during this time, but the first articles of incorporation were signed on September 29, 1875. Construction on the street railway began in 1877, under Sampson E. Varner's son, William. He was the First Superintendent of the corporation when construction was started. Once finished, this line was often called the "G. O. P. Line" or the "Get off and Push" because it was operated by a horse-drawn car. It lasted for about fourteen years. The last horse draw car in the city was operated on July 21, 1891. For the next two years, the city was without a street railway. Until, August 22, 1892, when the City Council met with new plans. They wanted the city to have an electric streetcar route. Plans were set into motion, and by November 16, 1893, the

Story continued on page 3

Who am I?

- Clue 1: On July 9, 1942, I was appointed to be an officer for an Army Auxiliary.
- Clue 2: When I was only 22, I was the first Portsmouth woman to be selected for officer training in the Women's Auxiliary Corp (WAAC).
- Clue 3: On August 29, 1942, at Ft. Des Moines, IA, I was commissioned as Third Officer in the WACs, equivalent to Army Second Lieutenant.
- Clue 4: I spent 3 ½ years in the army and met my future husband while on tour in the European Theatre.
- Clue 5: I was a WWII Veteran.



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

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Do you know this place?

- Clue 1: This settlement got its name from an early land speculator, who originally owned about 2,000 acres in the area.
- Clue 2: Fairs were held in this rural community as early as 1895.
- Clue 3: A post office was established here on December 26, 1871.
- Clue 4: After operating for more than forty-six years, the post office was discontinued, and the mail was sent through Otway.

Answer in the next issue!

Streetcars Continued

electric line was operating. On this day, people lined the streets, and citizens exclaimed that, "It's like a little bit of Chicago here now!" There were four small cars that could hold twenty-four people each. About eleven days later, on November 27, 1893, the first trip was made to New Boston. After this track line was established, people would take the cars into Millbrook Park and enjoy the roller coaster, theater, and other amenities. By 1903, an extension was made from Millbrook Park to Sciotoville, and a round trip fare was just under fifteen cents. The streetcars provided transportation for residents throughout the city. The electric streetcars made their last run on January 12, 1939.

Louisiana Moore Ricker's Diary Entry

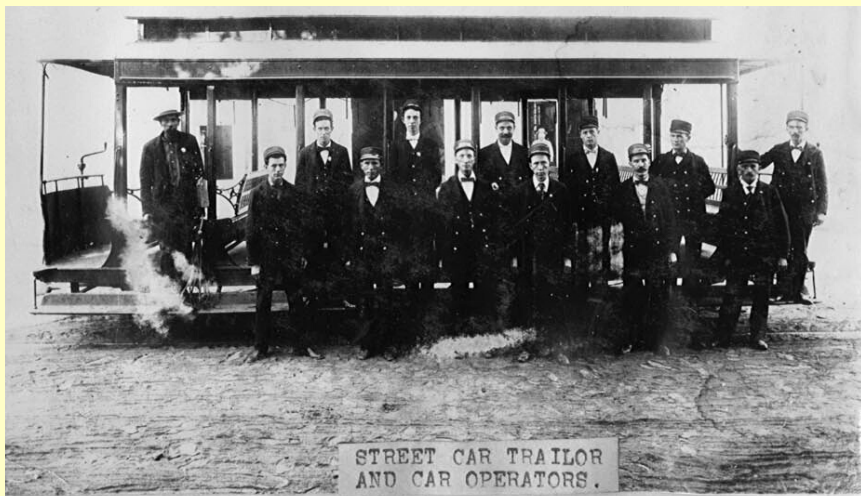
Below is a diary entry from May 19, 1902. Louisiana wrote about when the circus came to Portsmouth.

Monday, May 19, 1902

Fine day but pretty warm. Ringling Bros. Circus in town and the parade occupied the attention of everybody most of the forenoon. It was the largest one ever here, I think. There were nineteen elephants in the parade and many animals in cages. I helped Della with the clothes so she could get through and be out in the afternoon. Wrote to Will at Cleveland. Mrs. Peebles + daughters came home from the South.

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

Haverhill



Street Railway Depot



Local Mystery: The Ironton Slayer of 1914

On May 15, 1914, the Portsmouth Times had a front page article proclaiming that "two women and a man are butchered by fiend." An entire family had been massacred on their farm in Ironton. The murderer was dubbed the "Ironton Slayer," and his deed was called "one of the most atrocious crimes in Southern Ohio." The victims: Nancy Massie, her daughter Mary, and her son Robert were all found on their farm in Greasy Ridge, Lawrence County, Ohio on the morning of Wednesday, May 15th. Authorities believed the murders had taken place several days prior, but the bodies weren't discovered until a neighbor, John Claire, passed the farm at 7 o'clock AM on Friday morning. Claire saw Robert Massie lying in the front yard, his skull crushed. The bodies of his mother and sister were discovered inside the house. Claire called the police, and an investigation was started immediately. Robbery was believed to be the motive, as the family was both wealthy and prominent. This had the community in turmoil. Bands of armed men patrolled the surrounding area, and they demanded lynching if the culprit was found. Many people from nearby counties walked and drove their "autos" to help with the search. Even with all these extra hands, neither the murderer nor his weapons were found. There appeared to be no leads in the case. That would all change though, as a suspect was suddenly picked up and arrested far away in Chicago. How could this have anything to do with the massacre in Ironton? Harley Beard confessed his crimes to Chicago authorities without much coaxing. A youth of only 18, he had worked for the Massie family as a farmhand for almost a year. He told the detectives that he "worked for them all winter" but they treated him "pretty rough, particularly Bob" (Robert Massie). According to Beard, there had been some strain upon their relations lately. There was a particular incident that led him to believe that he could come into some harm. The event occurred when he and Mary Massie got up early to "hitch the rig for Bob. He said he was going to Ironton or Arlington to buy some furniture." Beard told authorities that he went to his own room but was followed by Mary. He told her to leave, but she wouldn't go. A quarrel ensued, and she finally left. Some time later, Mary's mother, Nancy, came and scolded him for the argument. Beard claims that he left things as they were, but when Bob got home later, around 11 o'clock, the argument between Beard and Mary was brought back up again. Mary ran and told her brother that Beard had followed her into her room, and she was afraid that he might do something to her. While a confrontation between Bob and Beard did not happen that night, in the morning that was quickly remedied. According to Beard, while Bob was nailing a board, he attempted to hit the farmhand with a hatchet. Beard was able to avoid the first blow but not the second. Beard fled back to the house, and Bob seemed to drop the matter until later in the day. He approached Beard, laid the head of an axe on his shoulder, and warned him. He said that if he "ever monkeyed with his sister again" then he would "cut [his] head off." Beard tried to profess his innocence, but Bob would not hear it. The two men parted ways for the evening, but Beard was very "afraid that he would carry out this threat." He decided to take matters into his own hands and strike first before Bob could hurt him. The next morning, Beard took the stick he was using to bale hay and struck Bob on the head with it. When Mary and Nancy came to see what the commotion was about, Beard struck them both with the stick as well. He was going to just leave them, but he thought he saw Nancy move a little. He knew he couldn't take the chance, so Beard ran inside and grabbed a razor. He used it to slit the throats of both Nancy Massie and her daughter. Bob was left alone. His story, however, didn't match up with what investigators found at the scene. As John Claire mentioned, both the women were found inside the house. Police discovered that Mary's hands had been bound behind her back, and there were indications that she had been the first to die.



Harley Beard

Source: Lawrence County, Ohio Crime News

At any rate, after the crime, Beard fled to his sister's house in Chicago. There, he was caught and arrested. Sheriff Sloan of Ironton took an armed guard to retrieve the prisoner from Chicago. There was still talk of lynching, so the "Ironton Slayer" was brought to the Scioto County Jail until the mobs subsided. Beard was finally brought back into Ironton, to reside in the County Jail. He pleaded guilty to the three murders. His trial was quick, and he was indicted for his crimes and electrocuted in 1915.