

The Ghoul of the Queen City

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

Two things irked William Cunningham in his final years. One was having his business undercut by a competitor. The other was reading about his own death in the newspaper.

“Cunny,” as he was known throughout Cincinnati, drove an express delivery wagon. His clientele were the physicians at the local medical colleges. Doctors trusted Cunny. They depended on him when they needed supplies delivered for their classes. Now Philip Shafer attempted to compete with Cunny, but Cunny wasn’t about to let some old German immigrant elbow him out and steal his business. He had no patience for Shafer’s nonsense and intended to put a stop to the German’s unethical practices.¹ Cunny was, after all, only trying to make a decent living for himself, his wife, and his nine-year-old daughter.² So on a cold, cloudy day in February 1870,³ he went straight to a reporter at the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*.

The reporter happily granted an interview with the well-known Cunningham to discuss the ethics of Cunny’s profession and what Shafer had done to make Cunny so irate. “Who is Shafer?” the reporter asked Cunny.

“Why, he’s the sexton of the Potter’s Field, out here, five miles on the Lick Run road.”

The reporter looked at Cunny’s bald head, fringed with silvery gray hair,⁴ and asked what the problem was.

“Well, you see,” said Cunny, “Shafer gets a dollar a piece for burying for the city, but he don’t bury worth a damn. He has a shanty out there in the graveyard, and when a corpse is taken out by Soards, or any of them fellows that undertakes for the city, Shafer puts the coffin into the shanty, locks it up, and when dark comes he unscrews the coffin, and if it is a good subject (and I tell you he knows a good one just as well as me), why he don’t bury it a damned bit, but bags it, takes it into town and sells it for less than the regular price.”

“Coffin and all?” asked the reporter.

Nicotine-infused spittle foamed at the corners of Cunny’s mouth.⁵ “Hell, no. What do they want with the coffin?”

“Who?” The reporter seemed confused.

“Why the Doctors!” Cunny was Cincinnati’s most notorious professional body snatcher—a resurrectionist, the papers called him. Some said he used to be a gravedigger, but now he was a “grave undigger.”⁶ For the past twenty-some years,

he had been supplying fresh cadavers for the anatomy tables of the Queen City's medical schools, as well as shipping bodies to physicians across the country. As Cunny's wife would tell the *Commercial Tribune* several years later, "It isn't any worse to go and get stiffs than to do anything else, for the doctors have to have them."⁷ Cunny received between \$15 and \$20 per corpse;⁸ in a good year, he made \$2,000⁹ (\$33,500 in today's currency¹⁰). And that was working primarily in the fall and winter. Body snatching was a seasonal profession.¹¹

Cunny explained to the reporter how his nemesis Shafer brought the bodies into town and sold them to some Dutchman over the canal. When the reporter asked Cunny how he knew this, Cunny lost his patience: "By God, haven't I seen him twenty times!"

The reporter asked if Cunny wouldn't do the same thing if he'd had the chance. "To be sure I would," Cunny said, "but I wouldn't cut down the price. That's a damn shame. Them Directors of the City Infirmary knows all about it. They've bin told that Shafer hez bin doin' this thing for more'n a year past, but they won't discharge him."

Shafer had been the sexton at Potter's Field for about four years. The sixty-three-year-old German had a wife and three teenagers living at home.¹² Shafer's daughter and two sons had jobs, but one of the sons also moonlighted with his father.

Cunny continued his rant: "The Directors were notified that Shafer was sellin' the bodies eighteen months ago, but they didn't budge. Mr. Wood is out now, and he was a gentleman. He would have investigated the matter, but the fellows that are in now don't care a damn. I tell you, between you and me, there's a power of influence in a five-dollar bill. Mind, I don't charge that they take anything from Shafer, an' I don't want anything said about this, but there's a man on that Board that I wouldn't put it past."

"Who is he?"

"Well, I ain't naming names, now, but I know him." Cunny's beef was with Shafer. "He gets a dollar for every one he buries—for every one that goes out to be buried—but you see, as I said before, he don't bury them a damn bit, but sells them, and then collects the dollar all the same." Cunny eyed the reporter. "I want this thing exposed in the paper. I take the *Commercial*, it's my paper, and I want you to give 'em hell. Will it be out in the mornin'?"

"Can't say, Mr. Cunningham."

"Well, I want to see it, for it ought to be exposed, and there's no way to do [that] but by the paper."

After disclosing Shafer's unethical practices, Cunny felt better. He'd done a service not only to the public, but to his profession. One way or another, he'd get Shafer—even if it meant snatching Shafer's own stiff some day and selling it.¹³ Cunny rose and shuffled off using a cane. One of his legs was lame from a charge of buckshot he'd received in a cemetery one night.¹⁴



Old Cunny had operated his business in Cincinnati without much ado. True, he was now legendary, the local bogeyman for ill-behaved children. They feared the hulking man and whispered tales of “Old Man Dead.” But Cunny had kept a low profile with the authorities until recently. He had been arrested in January of 1870, although the charge had nothing to do with resurrecting the dead. While drunk on whiskey, he fired an “enormous revolver” on Central Avenue, apparently at no one in particular. When Officer Bird booked Cunny at the Ninth Street Station House, Cunny had \$70 on him, “a sum slightly larger than usual for station house visitors.”¹⁵

Cunny was born in 1820 in Virginia to foreign-born parents (likely Ireland, since newspaper reporters often referred to him as Irish).¹⁶ He had arrived in Cincinnati when he was about twenty-five.¹⁷ It’s unknown how, exactly, he got his start as a purveyor of bodies, but Cunny soon became a necessary evil, a benefit to humanity and medical science.

In the 1830s, four medical colleges had operated in Cincinnati; by the end of the Civil War, the Queen City boasted six¹⁸—all needing bodies. Today, when medical students enter class to learn practical anatomy and surgical techniques, they work in a hygienic lab with cadavers disinfected and prepped for study. In the nineteenth-century, cadavers came fresh from the grave with mouths gaping open and abdomens bloated. Rarely were corpses embalmed. Anatomy professors resurrected bodies themselves, sometimes initiating freshmen with clandestine field trips.¹⁹ Over time, it made more sense to hire someone like Cunny for more than driving his express wagon, which turned Cunny into a successful entrepreneur. By 1881, however, Ohio state lawmakers, spurred by a plethora of desecrated graves, passed an anatomy act, making provisions for unclaimed bodies to go to medical colleges.²⁰

Some estimate that more than five thousand bodies were stolen from their graves to meet the medical colleges’ needs in nineteenth-century Ohio.²¹ People feared being a victim of body snatching and ending up on the anatomist’s table, a fear on which coffin manufacturers and undertakers capitalized. They advertised specially made coffins to discourage resurrectionists and to ease families’ minds. One company made caskets from galvanized sheet-metal with locks on the lids. Phil K. Clover patented his “Clover Coffin Torpedo,” which contained explosives.²² Some families hired grave watchers to keep a nightly vigil until the body had decomposed enough that the medical schools wouldn’t want their loved one. But cunning Old Cunny wasn’t deterred by all that. In his younger days, he might work the graveyard shift at well-to-do cemeteries like Spring Grove and Wesleyan, but now he preferred paupers’ graves.



As the demand for cadavers grew, Cunny expanded his business. His reputation spread, and doctors from all over sought his services. He gladly obliged by

shipping bodies out of state. In mid-January 1870, when the temperature was a brisk thirty-four degrees—perfect for shipping his contraband—he pulled his wagon up to the United States Express Company’s office on Race Street.²³ He lifted out of the wagon a heavy box addressed to Dr. Hardy, Leavenworth, Kansas. Cunny had marked the box “Glass, handle with care,” and sent it C.O.D. with \$30 due him. After Cunny left, the curious clerk, who’d heard of Cunny’s nocturnal escapades, decided to examine the contents of the package. Company rules did not permit the shipment of corpses, except under certain circumstances and according to strict regulations. The clerk removed the lid and found an old burlap bag packed in sawdust. Inside the gunnysack was the body of a black woman folded in half to fit into the sack and the box. Cunny was an expert at shipping bodies; he had filled the woman’s ears with red lead to prevent fluid leakage, and he had made a cut on the side of her neck to drain her blood from the carotid artery. Then he injected a solution of arsenate of soda to preserve the body.

The clerk didn’t call the police but dispatched one of his porters to summon Cunningham back to the Express Company’s office. The porter stopped at Cunny’s residence, rooms he rented over O.F. Gordon’s drug store on the northeast corner of 8th and Central Avenue,²⁴ but the only person home was an Irish woman, likely Cunny’s Irish-born wife, Mary. She told him he could find Cunny down in the stable at the rear of the drug store along the alley. When the porter entered the “workshop,” Cunny recognized him from the Express Company office.

“What in the hell is the matter now?” asked Cunny. “Have the police been smelling around? I don’t see how that job smelt already, for I only syringed her but last night.”

The porter told Cunny it was the office clerk who’d sent him, and Cunny needed to come and take the box away. It didn’t smell, but the clerk wasn’t accepting it for shipment.

“Oh, is that all?” asked Cunny. “I’ve shipped more’n a hundred of them things away by American Express. I can damn soon have her away, only you know I didn’t want any perlice mixin’ up in this thing.”

Just as the porter returned to the office, Cunny pulled up his wagon. He jumped down from the rig, cursing under his breath. He wasn’t about to lose \$30. He retrieved the box, loaded it back onto the wagon, then drove straight to one of the local medical colleges, delivering the stolen goods to the back door.



Even a well-paying job and a supportive wife couldn’t guarantee Cunny a relationship free from domestic discord. Cunny’s wife, Mary, who an acquaintance described as “a great, bony, brawny, alligator-looking woman,”²⁵ also enjoyed her whiskey. On a steamy August evening,²⁶ police snatched both Cunny and Mary and took them to the Ninth Street Station house to sober up

and cool down. A reporter found Cunny sitting somberly in his cell, wearing a white linen suit and sporting an ugly cut on his bald dome. His shirt was saturated with blood. Cunny said the fight was his wife's fault, that he'd been sitting in their apartment over the drug store, quietly smoking his pipe, when he heard a racket outside. He looked out the window and saw Mary fighting with a couple of people, assaulting them with a brickbat and rocks. When a policeman tried to subdue and arrest Mary, Cunny ran downstairs to assist his wife. In the process, the newspaper reported, he "accidently ran his head against a club in the watchman's hand," causing the wound on Cunny's head. Both husband and wife were hauled to the station and charged with disorderly conduct.²⁷

Eight months later, the couple appeared before 'Squire Cormany. Mary claimed that although Cunny had once been a loving husband, he'd now "taken to the flowing bowl to soothe his wearied soul." They didn't want a divorce, though, perhaps because they were never legally married. The newspaper called their relationship "a partnership in a marriageable way," and no marriage of the couple was recorded in Hamilton County.²⁸ Both Cunny and Mary told 'Squire Cormany that they merely wanted to dissolve their relationship quietly without legal action. Mary didn't object when Cunny said he wanted custody of their daughter, Kate, who was now ten. All Mary wanted was a note from Cormany saying she wasn't beholden to the spouse who no longer loved her. Cormany gave her the note, and Mary "left in a joyous frame of mind."²⁹ Four days later, "Mrs. Cunny" was arrested and sent to the City Workhouse for twenty days.³⁰ She would be in and out of the workhouse a few times over the next decade, often for drunkenness.³¹ Eventually, after Cunny died, Mary, along with another woman and a couple of men, started their own body-snatching business.³² What later became of Mary and Cunny's daughter is unknown.



Age crept up on Cunny, and at fifty-one with a bum leg, he wasn't as quick and agile as he used to be. In his prime, the large, muscled man had no problem conducting his business without detection and keeping up with the demand from the medical colleges. Now, even with helpers—two black men—Cunny had trouble staying ahead of the law.

About two o'clock on the morning of February 2, 1871, Officers Miller and Wollenhaupt intercepted Cunny's wagon near the tollgate on the Reading road. The trio were in possession of two dead bodies. The police took the men into custody, and the bodies were sent to undertaker John P. Epply for identification. When a policeman searched Cunny, he had in his pockets several papers, including a note that read

Hartwell [the site of the City Infirmary],³³ January 27, 1870
Two men dead. Will be buried to-morrow. One died Sunday,
the other Monday.

Yours, H.
Gents—Please deliver this to Cunningham.

Plus he had two receipts for delivered goods dated in December 1870, and signed by John L. Cleveland, a physician who taught anatomy at the Medical College of Ohio.³⁴

Cunny and his accomplices were charged with unlawfully removing dead bodies, and bail was set at \$300 each.

A couple of days after Cunny's arrest, two men appeared at Undertaker Epply's, saying they were from the coroner's office and claimed the bodies. The coroner, however, said he never received the corpses. The Miami Medical College did. There was talk around town that two medical students, or perhaps corrupt cops, had re-snatched the bodies from the undertaker. Either way, Cunny and his cohorts had to be set free. For prosecutors to demonstrate a crime had been committed and to secure conviction, they'd have to prove the bodies were disinterred without the consent of the deceased's relatives. They lacked that evidence, not to mention the bodies.

People assumed Undertaker Epply was in cahoots with the medical school, but he claimed to be out when the bodies were delivered to him. He said he would have never accepted them. Coroner J.W. Underhill reassured Epply in a letter, which was somehow leaked to the press and published in the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* on February 8, 1871:

Mr. J.P. Epply
My Dear Sir:

I told the bearer of your note that I would be down to see you in reference to this affair. Since then I have con[??] differently, in he has not already said anything to the Directors of the City Infirmary, please tell him not to do so. I think I would not mention the matter any further to any one.

If the objectionable material should be removed without your knowing any thing in particular about it, it will be the easiest way out of the difficulty. It is not necessary for you to guard it very particularly. You are not made the legal custodian of the affair, and were I in your place I should not care how soon the troublesome objects go away. I am satisfied no one will identify the material, as it belongs to paupers, already once paid for at the city's expense, and if these things should get up and go away you will never hear any thing more about them. The law is much more liberal on this subject than formerly. As to my duties in the case, I am satisfied I have no legal claim to them.

Very respectfully,
J.W. Underhill, Coroner

Cunny's territory was primarily Potter's Field and the graveyards associated with the Longview Lunatic Asylum and the City Infirmery. Authorities made little effort to investigate whether there had been any nocturnal disturbances, and these unfortunate souls typically had no family—or none who claimed them. Burials in paupers' graveyards weren't held to the same standards as those in cemeteries for paying clientele. Graves for the poor were shallow—about two feet below the surface.³⁵ Exhuming a cadaver was easier than pulling dandelions. Using spades, Cunny excavated a two-foot square of earth above the head of the coffin. With a few whacks of his pick axe, he broke the wooden box, looped ropes under the corpse's arms, then pulled and slid the stiff up and out of its presumed final resting place.³⁶

When he had worked alone, Cunny was known to sit a purloined body on the wagon seat beside him. He'd throw an old overcoat around the cadaver's shoulders and place a hat atop its head. While Cunny drove, he held the reins in one hand and kept his "friend" steady by wrapping his other arm around its waist. As the vehicle jostled them, though, he was unable to stop the cadaver's head from bobbing vigorously. When the body slumped, as it inevitably would when someone saw them, Cunny would give the stiff a loud slap across the face and yell, "Sit up! This is the last time, by God, I'll ever take you home when you get drunk. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, and with a wife and children to support!"³⁷



It was late August 1871,³⁸ just before the medical colleges would begin fall semester. A little past seven in the morning, while Officers McNeely and Stevenson patrolled Hunt Street, Cunny came rumbling passed them with great velocity in a rickety wagon pulled by a lame horse. A crowd of men ran behind the wagon, shouting, "Shoot him!" "Hang him!" "Stop him!," as they tried to overtake the vehicle. The officers guessed that at the beast's limping speed, he couldn't manage more than about six miles per hour. Cunny whipped the horse's rump and got another mile more per hour out of the poor animal. The officers followed in pursuit, and caught Cunny after a chase of two hundred yards. They discovered two suspicious sacks in his wagon, which reeked of a ghastly stench. The sacks contained the decomposing bodies of a man and a woman. Officers McNeely and Stevenson escorted Cunny to the familiar Ninth Street Station.

When the Director of the Infirmery heard about the affair and investigated, he identified the bodies as seventy-five-year-old, German-born Peter Stricker and fifty-three-year-old, Irish-born Hannah Coughlin, both paupers and former patients of the Infirmery.³⁹ They had died several days ago and had been buried in the Infirmery graveyard.

Cunny was arraigned before Judge Straub, who asked whether he pled guilty or not guilty of the charge of removing bodies from the cemetery. Cunny balanced himself on his good leg, supported by his cane, looked the judge in the eye, and responded, "Not guilty, of course." Judge Straub held Cunny for trial

with bail set at \$300. The next morning, Doctors E.B. Stevens and William Clendenin became his sureties. Cunny walked out of the jailhouse, the scent of freshly dug dirt and human decay still wafting around him.⁴⁰

In mid-September Cunny was indicted on five counts:

The first charges him with unlawfully removing the body of Peter Stricker from its grave; the second, that, not being a professor or teacher in any medical college or school, nor a member of any county medical society, and without the consent of the nearest relatives of the deceased, or that of the Trustees of the township, he received the body knowing it to have been unlawfully removed; the third, that, under the same circumstance, he received it without the consent of the municipal authorities; the fourth, that he unlawfully concealed the body; and the fifth that he unlawfully secreted it.... It is understood that there will be another indictment brought to cover the case of the second body found in his possession.⁴¹

Cunny failed to appear before the court, so his bond was forfeited.⁴² His no-show might have been because he was gravely ill. By mid-October, Cunny was a patient at the Cincinnati Hospital. Along with suffering from an ulcer on his left leg, he had a severe cough. The newspaper reported that with his ailments, “he will himself be a ‘subject’ before the violets bloom again.” Cunny wasn’t concerned that he might be leaving the doctors in a bind while he was bedridden. He bragged to his fellow inmates on the ward that he had recently supplied the colleges with sixteen cadavers.⁴³

One morning while still in the hospital, Cunny opened the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* and saw the headline on page eight: “DEATH OF A RESURRECTIONIST.” The article reported Cunny’s recent demise. When he read that he had “lived in squalor and filth” and died like a “beast, putrifying and unclean, shunned and loathed by his fellow-men,” the other patients said he tore out three of his remaining nine hairs and swore he’d live long enough to have the stiffs of every person involved in reporting his death.⁴⁴

He never recovered his health, though, nor lived long enough to seek revenge, especially on his arch-rival, the cemetery sexton Philip Shafer. Cunny died of heart disease on Thursday, November 2, 1871, while still in the hospital—two weeks after his obituary appeared in the paper. His job-related stress, along with whiskey-drinking and smoking, had prematurely aged him. The age recorded in the Hamilton County death register was sixty-five. In reality, he was fifty-one.⁴⁵

But Cunny had his last laugh. A few months prior to his death, he had sold his own body to the Ohio Medical College for top dollar, \$50 to be exact. The doctors laid him in state on an anatomy table, so physicians around the Queen City could offer their respects.⁴⁶ In lasting tribute to a man who had long served medical science, anatomists then stripped his cadaver of muscle, gristle, and flesh. They wired, positioned, and displayed his bleached skeleton in the college

museum sitting on top of a gravestone. In one bony hand, he grasped a spade, the tool of his trade. Between his teeth, he clenched his pipe. The only thing missing was his wagon and an old gray lame horse.⁴⁷

As one acquaintance said about Old Cunny a few years later, “He appeared to be a pretty good kind of fellow—for a ghou!.”⁴⁸



Notes

¹ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 24 Feb. 1870. Additionally, the following sources provided background information for this essay: Linden F. Edwards, *Body Snatching in Ohio During the Nineteenth Century* (Fort Wayne, Ind.: Public Library of Fort Wayne and Allen County, 1955) and Otto Juettner, M.D., *Daniel Drake and His Followers, 1785-1909* (Cincinnati: Harvey Publishing Co., 1909).

² 1870 federal census, Ohio, Hamilton Co., Cincinnati, Ward 5, p. 392A.

³ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 24 Feb. 1870.

⁴ Physical description from *Cincinnati Daily Inquirer*, 19 Jan. 1870.

⁵ Description from *Cincinnati Daily Inquirer*, 19 Jan. 1870.

⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 19 Jan. 1870.

⁷ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 6 Dec. 1878.

⁸ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 4 Nov. 1870.

⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 22 Oct. 1871.

¹⁰ Measuring Worth, <http://www.measuringworth.com> (accessed 30 June 2013).

¹¹ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 25 Feb. 1870; *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 4 Nov. 1870.

¹² 1870 federal census, Ohio, Hamilton Co., Cincinnati, Ward 5, p. 428A.

¹³ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 25 Feb. 1870.

¹⁴ Description from *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 19 Jan. 1870

¹⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 13 Jan. 1870.

¹⁶ In both the 1860 federal census, Ohio, Hamilton Co., Cincinnati, Ward 8, p. 295, and the 1870 federal census cited earlier, Cunningham’s age and place of birth were consistently reported.

¹⁷ Based on the length of time Cunningham had resided in the city at his death. Lois E. Hughes, comp., *Hamilton Co., Ohio, Death Records, 1870-1873, Vol. II, Book A*, (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 1992), 119. See note 45 for a discussion of his recorded age at death vs. his probable age as reported in the federal censuses.

¹⁸ University of Cincinnati, “Former Cincinnati Medical Schools and Colleges,” University of Cincinnati Libraries, http://www.libraries.uc.edu/libraries/arb/archives/collections/Medical_Schools.html (accessed 30 June 2013).

¹⁹ Juettner, *Daniel Drake and His Followers*, 395.

²⁰ Linden, *Body Snatching in Ohio During the Nineteenth Century*, 1.

²¹ Linden, *Body Snatching in Ohio During the Nineteenth Century*, 2-3; David Burrell, “Origins of Undertaking: How Antebellum Merchants Made Death Their Business,” <http://www.historicalinsights.com/dave/OofUnder.html> (accessed 30 June 2013).

²² Linden, *Body Snatching in Ohio During the Nineteenth Century*, 19.

²³ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 19 Jan. 1870, and *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 20 Jan. 1870.

²⁴ The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, *1870 Williams, Cincinnati Directory*, http://virtuallibrary.cincinnati.org/vl_citydir.aspx?ResID=278 (accessed 30 June 2013).

²⁵ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 3 Jan. 1874.

²⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 29 Aug. 1870

²⁷ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 29 August 1870.

²⁸ I could find no marriage record for the couple in Hamilton County.

²⁹ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 27 Apr. 1871.

³⁰ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 2 May 1871.

³¹ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 22 Oct. 1871.

³² *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 6 Dec. 1878.

³³ Charles Theodore Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati and Representative Citizens*, 2 vols. (Chicago: Biographical Publishing Co., 1904), I:1031.

³⁴ Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, II:566-67.

³⁵ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 12 June 1878.

³⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 3 Jan. 1874.

³⁷ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 3 Jan. 1874.

³⁸ This story comes from the following newspapers: *Cincinnati Times-Star*, 30 Aug. 1871 and 31 Aug. 1871; *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 31 Aug. 1871; *Cincinnati Commercial Times*, 31 Aug. 1871; *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 1 Sept. 1871.

³⁹ 1870 federal census, Ohio, Hamilton Co., Springfield, Cincinnati Infirmary, p. 621B & 624B.

⁴⁰ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 31 Aug 1871.

⁴¹ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 12 Sept. 1871.

⁴² *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 2 Oct. 1871.

⁴³ *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, 20 Oct. 1871.

⁴⁴ *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, 22 Oct. 1871; obituary in *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 22 Oct. 1871.

⁴⁵ Hughes, comp., *Hamilton Co., Ohio, Death Records*, 119. I'm placing more evidential weight on Cunningham's ages as listed in the 1860 and 1870 federal censuses, cited earlier. Even though the censuses don't record who supplied the information to the enumerator, his ages on both were consistent. Additionally, both censuses were taken during his lifetime, when there was a good likelihood that he spoke to the enumerator. After all, Cunny went to work after dark, so it's not unreasonable to believe that he would have been at home when the census taker visited. If Cunny was prone to lying about his age, the odds that he would remember what age he gave from one census to another, ten years apart, seems unlikely.

⁴⁶ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 5 Nov. 1871.

⁴⁷ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 29 Sept. 1872.

⁴⁸ *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer*, 3 Jan. 1874.

Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, MFA, (www.NonfictionHelp.com) is a Certified Genealogist and the author of You Can Write Your Family History, Your Guide to Cemetery Research, and many others. Her work has appeared in Creative Nonfiction, Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Nonfiction, Portland Review, Phoebe: A Journal of Literature and Art, Steinbeck Review, and Hippocampus Magazine, to name a few. Sharon teaches creative nonfiction writing for the MA in English and Creative Writing program at Southern New Hampshire University.