

July 20, 2018

Gangster In Our Midst—available on [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B071K3K3K3)
www.bettybrandtpassick.com
www.facebook.com/BettyBrandtPassick/
[Twitter@BBPCOM](https://twitter.com/BBPCOM)



E-mail: bbpassickauthor@comcast.net

***Gangster* Blog**

Two Keefer Sisters from Knoxville

I came across the story of the murder of two elderly Keefer sisters from Knoxville, Iowa when doing research on the Great Depression. ("[The Depression Dilemmas of Rural Iowa, 1929 - 1933.](#)" Lisa L. Ossian, 2012)

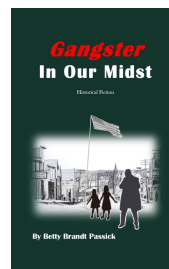
Ossian's book is available online — Ch. 6 contains the Keefer sisters' story. It's an interesting read.

I included their accounting in "GIOM" to convey the level of violence taking place in Iowa by 1932, the year Letitia Keefer, 70, and her younger sister, Jennie, 65, were shot and killed in their farm home.

Three years into the Great Depression people were in distress, fighting over money, land and status—presumably the reason Ossian titled Ch. 6: "Violence: Gangsters, Bandits, Mad Men, and Suicides: Fear, Anger, and Death within a Troubled Landscape."

As the story goes... a neighbor discovered the sisters' deaths (and robbery). Detectives managed to secure several fingerprints and collect four empty .22-caliber shells from the middle of the kitchen floor. Four months later—the murders were solved!

Iowa has had many toutable "firsts" since gaining statehood in 1846. In 1932 it had another, when the state logged the first "CSI" investigation and conviction in the nation based solely on ballistic evidence, proving the bullets from the rifle that killed the sisters belonged to the Keefers' hired hand (who'd also recently come up with the cash to catch up on his Model T payments).



July 1, 1928—Frank Yale was found slumped over the wheel of his new Lincoln near his New York home, gunned down by four men in a black Nash sedan dispensing one hundred .45 caliber bullets into his car. The police...

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GET BOOK EVENT POSTINGS FIRST ON FACEBOOK:

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➡ We're looking for a date when I'll be at the **Marion County Historical Society in Knoxville**. My presentation will be what Ossian calls: "**The Lonely Tragedy in Marion County.**"



Three Fingers



Once Upon a Crime Saturday, July 21, noon-2 pm

604 W 26th St., Minneapolis, MN 55405

Gangster In Our Midst | Betty Brandt Passick



From thrillers to cozies, nationally known **Once Upon a Crime** carries all kinds of mystery genres, and also hosts many author events.

First Professional Review of “GIOM”

Mary Ann Grossman from the *Pioneer Press* published her [review](#) (click link to read) of “Gangster In Our Midst” — just in time for my meet/greet/sign on Saturday, July 21st, noon-2 pm, at [Once Upon A Crime Mystery Books](#) in Minneapolis.

I’d requested this review...thinking it was time I learned what a professional book critic (thirty years experience) thought of “GIOM.” No surprises! (Her words pretty much echoed those of my editor.) All in all, I am pleased with Grossman’s review.

I wish everyone reading this BLOG could be in attendance at the independent bookstore on the 21st. I’m truly blessed to meet so many well-read people who come out for these events, those who are passionate about reading historical suspense — and hearing about our Iowa story.

Iowa Tourism

FYI—“Gangster In Our Midst” will soon be available at these Iowa tourism organizations—look for it the next time you visit one.

- Buchanan County Tourism, Independence
- Fayette Co. Economic Development and Tourism, West Union
- Iowa State Tourism Office, Des Moines

Coming to Barn Happy in Cedar Falls!

Just added to the schedule: **Wed., Jul. 25 & Thurs., Jul. 26,** 11 am-1 pm, Barn Happy, 11310 University Ave, Cedar Falls, IA.

Author Events

- **Wed., Jul. 25 & Thurs., Jul. 26,** 11 am-1 pm (**new**), Barn Happy, 11310 Univ. Ave, Cedar Falls, IA, (319) 266-0888
- **Thurs., Aug. 1,** 3:30-6:30 pm (**new**) — Harrison County Welcome Center, 2931 Monroe Ave., Missouri Valley, IA, (712) 642-2114
- **Sat., Aug. 4,** 1-3 pm — Local Authors Book Fair, Beaverdale Books, 2629 Beaver Ave., Ste. 1, Des Moines, IA, (515) 279-5400
- **Sat., Aug. 18** — Northeast Iowa Book Tour: “True Crime in Fairbank, Iowa” Northwest Iowa Book Tour: Cherokee Public Library (**10 am**), 215 S 2nd St, Cherokee, (712) 225-3498; General N.B. Baker Library, Sutherland (**noon**), 315 Ash Street, Sutherland, (712) 446-3839; and Spencer Public Library (**2 pm**), 21 E 3rd St, Spencer, (712) 580-7290
- **Wed., Sept. 12,** 530-7 pm — Metropolitan State University Library, 645 7th St E, St. Paul, MN 55106, (651) 793-1616
- **April-May 2019/10 am** — “First Friday” program, Burlington Public Library, 210 Court St., Burlington, IA 52601, (319) 753-1647
- Pending...**
- Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Waucoma Public Library, 103 1st Ave SW, Waucoma, IA, (563) 776-4131
- Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Marion Co. Historical Society, Knoxville, IA, (641) 891-6883
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Chapter2 Books, 226 Locust S., Hudson, WI, (715) 220-8818
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Decades, 25 South Frederick, Oelwein, IA, (319) 504-1464
- Date/Time: **TBD** — Majors & Quinn, 3038 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis, MN, (612) 822-4611

Book Fairs

- **Sat., Sept. 15,** 9 am-3 pm — [Iowa Author Fest](#), Capital Square, 400 Locust St., Des Moines, IA
- **Sat., Sept. 22,** noon-5 pm — [Marydale Festival](#), 524 Maryland Ave., St. Paul, MN, (651) 488-4485