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Gangster In Our Midst—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com) & Barnes & Noble
www.bettybrandtpassick.com
<https://www.facebook.com/BettyBrandtPassick/>

Gangster Blog

Recap of 2017-2018

With the busyness of Christmas behind me, I am taking a moment to send my wishes to you for a prosperous and healthy New Year!

And, to again say “thank you” for your support. I appreciate it if you purchased a book, hosted or attended a book event in IA, WI, and MN, sell the book—or have listened to me talk (endlessly, at times) about the excitement I feel in bringing *Gangster in our Midst* to the world, my first novel.

Now at year-end, I thought I’d do a recap of 2017-2018:

- ⇒ I published *Gangster in our Midst* in August 2017.
- ⇒ In August 2018, I published a second edition with more Louie La Cava stories I began receiving after the book’s publication.
- ⇒ My life got really busy with 30+ author talks with interviews and travel. As mentioned in my last BLOG, sales for the first 12 months were such that I sold \$5,000 worth of books (not counting AMAZON sales). Only 1 percent of authors reach this level, I’m told.
- ⇒ Most recently, I hired a designer to craft a new book cover to improve book sales on Amazon (see right bottom), available January 15, 2019.
- ⇒ I will offer an E-book on Kindle, where friend-authors tell me I should expect to see considerable sales. (Did you know that a burgeoning number of people no longer wish to drive to the library to check out a book, or purchase a paperback and wait for it to be shipped—instead preferring the immediacy of reading in the warm glow of a hand-held device?)

Added to my schedule in 2019 will be Illinois (and possibly Arkansas)... And, Book #4 is on its way!



“Three Fingers”

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Available: Jan 15, 2019

What does this story say about a town?

In *Gangster in our Midst*, the village of Oxbow (based on my hometown of Fairbank, IA) was faced with myriad societal and economic issues, even before the gangster, Louie La Cava, showed up on Main Street in the early 1920s.

I intentionally chose a few true stories to give the reader a sense of the complexities of day-to-day life... like the August 1928 newspaper accounting of the 5 1/2 month old male fetus found on the banks of the Wapsie River (right).

The article obliterates a myth that has perpetuated history: Morals were such that “back in the day” pregnancy outside of marriage didn’t happen.

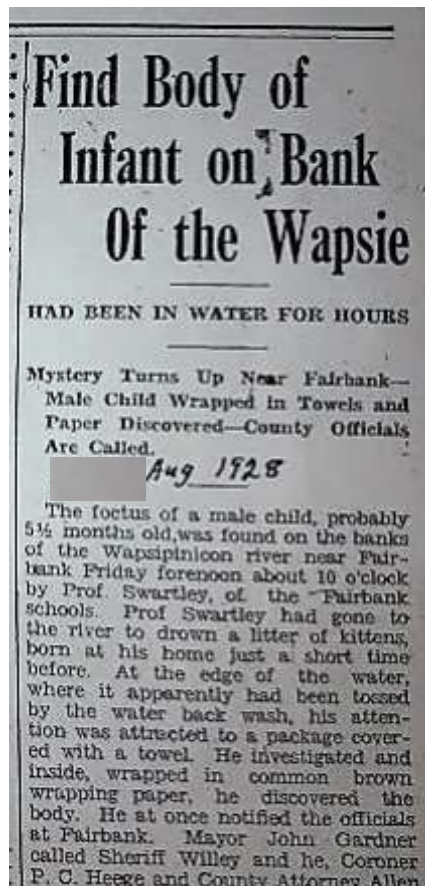
Well, it did happen, and typically stigmatized the woman, in particular. Some families—even whole towns—dealt with the circumstance better than others. Some pregnancies were the result of incest.

To hide undisclosed and unwanted pregnancies, unmarried girls and women in the Midwest often were sent to places like the [Willows Maternity Sanitarium](#) in Kansas City, MO to spend months in seclusion before giving birth, then gave up their baby for adoption.

This year, a few days before Christmas, I posted a piece of my Grandma Hilda and Grandpa Richard’s story on the [Forgotten Iowa Historical Society](#) Facebook page.

I knew from a young age that Grandma Hilda was pregnant when she, at age 19, and Grandpa Richard, 25, married in 1919. It was the kind of gossip that sneaked out in hushed conversations as women washed dishes at family gatherings. Whenever it got mentioned, Grandma’s cheeks would glow a soft pink. A chuckle followed.

The August 1928 article is a story a reader is likely to flip back to after finishing the book... to re-read, and imagine the scene of a lifeless fetus, the size of a man’s hand, being wrapped in brown paper then a towel, carried to the river on a warm August morning before sunrise, and lowered into the backwater. Was this action undertaken by the mother, a grandfather, or neighbor? Why dispose of the infant in the river? What followed? How does this story inform the reader of the heart of this community?



Author Events

— **Fri., May 3, 10 am** — Burlington Public Library, 210 Court St., Burlington, IA (319) 753-1647

— **Sat, May 4, 11 am-3 pm** — Burlington By The Book, 301 Jefferson, Burlington, IA 52601, (319) 753-9981

— **May 5/time: TBD** — Davenport Public Library, 321 N Main St., Davenport, IA, (563) 326-7832

— **May 5/time: TBD** — Moon River Magic, 915 15th Avenue, East Moline, Illinois

— **May/time: TBD** — Wapello County Historical Society, 210 W Main St, Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-8676

— **May/time: TBD** — Ottumwa Public Library, 102 W 4th St, Ottumwa, IA, (641) 682-7563

— **April**, — Sawyer Co. Historical Society & Museum, County Highway B, Hayward, WI, (715) 634-8053

— **Spring** — Cicero Public Library, 5225 West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill, (708) 652-8084 St, Burlington, IA, (319) 753-9981

— **Spring** — Cedar Valley Historical Society & Grout Museum, 503 South St., Waterloo, IA, (319) 234-6357

— **Summer** — West Des Moines Library, 4000 Mills Civic Pkwy., West Des Moines, IA, (515) 222-3400

Pending...

— Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — Gangster Museum of America, 510 Central Ave, Hot Springs, AR, (501) 318-1717

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Next Page Books, 1105 3rd St SE, Cedar Rapids, IA, (319) 247-2665

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Wild Carrot (gift shop and restaurant), 215 E Bremer Ave, Waverly, IA, (319) 352-2215

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Winneshiek County Historical Society, 211 Winnebago St, Decorah, IA 52101, (563) 382-4166

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Templeton Rye Distillery, 209 E 3rd Ave, Templeton, IA (712) 669-8793

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Rd, Coralville, IA, (319) 351-5738