

Mar 6, 2019



Gangster In Our Midst—available at
Local Bookstores, [Amazon](#), & Barnes &
Noble

Website: www.bettybrandtpassick.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/>

E-mail: bbpassickauthor@comcast.net

Gangster Blog

RIP, Dear Verlie

When Verlie (Hahn) Trower turned 100 on May 28, 2016, she had one request: She wanted a banner draped across Fairbank's Main Street. She also had a really nice party. Hundreds of people showed up.

She and I developed a special bond during interviews for *Gangster in our Midst*.

Her father, Bill Hahn, was town marshal, 1916-1949.

She was among the local children who attended movies at the Opera House with Louie La Cava—the town's gangster.

Intrigued by the movie projectors, she frequently stopped by to visit Charles Grantham, the owner.

She often found him repairing film with something he called banana glue. She recalled asking: "Did they really make that glue out of bananas?" His response: "No! That glue just has the odor of bananas."

Verlie was my inspiration when I penned these words: "Her faith informed her that people are basically good...what surprised her was that her faith extended even to a gangster, believing that in time the good people of the town would bring out the best in him."



Two Fairbank local girls—Verlie passed away this past Dec. 16th.



Her fictional character in the novel was "Vanessa."



"Three Fingers"

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

RIP, Dear Verlie	1
Oakdale Sanatorium— "A Ray of Hope"	2
Author Events	2



Available in
Paperback and E-book!



Photo: Oakdale Sanatorium in the 1900s, www.asylum projects.

Oakdale Sanatorium—"A Ray of Hope"

Dr. Edwin Wiltse was likely Fairbank, Iowa's first physician. His family, who immigrated from Canada in 1846, settled in Strawberry Point. In 1874, he graduated Bennett College of Eclectic Medicine and Surgery in Chicago—the same college as his father, Dr. Alex Wiltse, had graduated.

Initially Dr. Edwin practiced medicine in Fayette, but by 1877 he and his new bride, Lucy (Dean) Wiltse, "Dressmaker from Iowa," completed building Hotel Wiltse on Fairbank's Main Street (current site of the public library), where he had his office. The hotel was built before the railroad came to town so they had lumber hauled in by horse and wagon from remote places like North Dakota.

Likely he made house calls traveling on bumpy roads by horseback, and perhaps in his black bag were a stethoscope, a book or two, and instruments. Most physicians didn't own a clinical thermometer or hypodermic needle. Surgeries were limited to emergencies.

The couple divorced sometime before 1910 and the hotel was eventually sold. Dr. Edwin returned to Canada. This was an unfortunate turn of events, as the township, like the rest of America, was undergoing a tuberculosis epidemic. Had he stayed, he'd have found himself caring day and night for the myriad complaining of fatigue and night sweats, and coughing up a white phlegm.

The role of town physician then fell to Dr. Joseph H. Murphy, who came to Fairbank in 1890; also Dr. Lorraine Ward who additionally served as company doctor for the railroad in Oelwein.

In 1907, the state of Iowa built the Oakdale Sanatorium near Iowa City, close to the University of Iowa's College of Medicine, for the treatment of tuberculosis.

I invite you to hear more about this story on **June 23rd (1-2:30 pm)**, when I will speak at the **Johnson County Historical Society in Coralville**. My talk will be about the "ray of hope" the sanatorium offered to those who'd received the TB death sentence—Fairbank sent its share of "lungers" to Oakdale.

Author Events

— **Sat. Apr 6, 9am-3 pm** — Barn Happy, 11310 Univ. Ave, Cedar Falls, IA, (319) 266-0888

— Date/Time: TBD — Strawberry Point Public Library, 401 Commercial, Box 340, Strawberry Point, IA 52076, 563-933-4340

— Date/Time: TBD — Renewed Purpose, 104 E Bremer Ave, Waverly, IA, (319) 559-2073

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

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

— **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

— **Sun., May 5, TBD** — Moon River Magic, 915 15th Avenue, East Moline, Illinois

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

— Date/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

— May/time: **TBD** — Iowa City Public Library, 123 S Linn St, Iowa City, IA, (319) 356-5200

— **June 23, 1-2:30 pm** — Johnson Co. Historical Society, 860 Quarry Rd, Coralville, IA, (319) 351-5738

Book Clubs

— Fri. Apr 12, 2:30 pm, (new) — 2nd Tuesday of Month Book Club, Hawkeye Tech Book Club, Waterloo, IA

— Fri. May 7, 12-3 pm — 1st Tuesday of Month Book Club, Olivia, MN

Book Festivals

— April/Time: TBD — April Podcast, Legal Bits For Business with Atty. Julie Finch, St. Louie Park, MN

— Sat., Apr. 27, 1-6 pm, Books and Beer Pop-Up Bookstore -Cider Edition, Number 12 Cider house, 614 N 5th St, Mpls, MN, (612) 568-6171

— Sept 20-Oct 6, Iowa City Book Festival, 123 S Linn St., Iowa City, IA, 319.356.5245

Pending...

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

— Spring/time: TBD — Cicero Public Library, 5225 West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill, (708) 652-8084

— Date/Time: TBD — Libelula Books, 524 W Wellington St, Waterloo, IA, (641) 640-8007

— Date/Time: TBD — Maynard Library, 225 Main St W, Maynard, IA 50655, (563) 37-2330

— Date/Time: **TBD** — James Kennedy Public Library, 320 1st Ave E, Dyersville, IA 5204, (563) 875-8912

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

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

— **Date/Time: TBD** — Harrison County Welcome Ctr, 2931 Monroe Ave., Missouri Valley, Iowa, (712) 642-2114