

October 26, 2019



***Gangster In Our Midst***—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#) & [Barnes & Noble](#)  
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## *Gangster* Blog

### *A pioneer doctor gets left out of history*

Among the 25 attendees at the Wilder Memorial Museum in Strawberry Point, Iowa on October 20, 7 pm, were eight Wiltse family members from the Midwest. They came to hear about the “Wiltse Family of Strawberry Point,” relatives most never knew existed.

Pictured are:

(front row)

Laura Knight Harreld, cousin of JoAnn Wiltse Bodeker; and Don Edmonds; (back row) Nolan Knight, son of Harold and Leonore Wiltse



Knight; Chris Knight Bockenstedt, granddaughter of Harold and Leonore Wiltse Knight/daughter of Nolan Knight; JoAnn Wiltse Bodeker, daughter of Robert Wiltse; (myself); and Rita Knight Hill, Hiawatha, daughter of Harold and Leonore Wiltse Knight. Not pictured: Roger Wiltse, Edgewood, and brother Bruce Wiltse, Chicago.

I wrote about the Wiltse family in chapter 16 of *Gangster in our Midst* (2017). Dr. Edwin and Lucy Dean Wiltse built the Wiltse Hotel in Fairbank in 1877. Edwin and his father, Dr. Alexander A. Wiltse from Strawberry Point, graduated Bennett College in Chicago. The senior Dr. Wiltse served his community as farmer/resident physician for the next twenty-five years, though largely he has been left out of Clayton County and Strawberry Point history.

“It was fun to hear the wonderment of the Wiltse family members regarding your presentation,” said Kris Morarend, Wilder’s director since 2017. “They learned of relatives from the 1850s first hand from you.”



“Three Fingers”

### **Bulletin Board**

**Current Projects (2):**

— **2nd in a series of *Gangster in our Midst***

— **plus, the screenplay**

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**NOTE ATTENDEES:**  
My stay at the historic (haunted) Franklin Hotel on Sunday evening was uneventful!



## “Insiders” helped take down Chicago Kingpin, Al Capone

Special Agent Frank J. Wilson had a “bulldog” reputation within the Internal Revenue Service as an investigator of tax returns and income. He wasn’t easily intimidated. J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Bureau of Investigation, chose Wilson in May 1930 to investigate Chicago Kingpin Alphonse Capone on tax evasion.

For 10 years, Capone had built his empire of brothels, gambling, and bootlegging, grossing an estimated \$30 million a year. Yet no income tax return was ever filed in his name.

The first big break in the investigation came when Wilson stumbled across ledgers seized in a raid six years earlier at the Hawthorne Smoke Shop, a gambling hall in Cicero. The ledgers referenced “Al,” and it wasn’t much of a leap to conclude they recorded the monthly incomes from gambling halls that went to Capone and his associates. Wilson already had the proof needed to arrest Capone on tax evasion charges.

Wilson moved Special Agent Michael F. Malone onto the case to try to infiltrate Capone’s inner circle. Getting witnesses wouldn’t be easy... important witnesses were ready to give perjured testimony to protect their leader and were so full of fear of the Capone organization that they evaded, lied and left town to prevent government subpoenas. (Among them was **Louie La Cava**, whose name was the only other, besides Capone’s, on his bank accounts. La Cava successfully hid for two years in Cleveland, Ohio before Agent Wilson found and served him with a subpoena.)

Malone identified a potential witness in the Smoke Shop after witnessing an argument between Capone and Chicago Tribune reporter **Jake Lingle**, who knew more about Chicago’s gangland than any other reporter. Malone was in the process of setting up a meeting when Lingle was shot dead gangland-style on June 9, 1930.

Another informant was **Eddie O’Hare** who ran dog racing tracks for the Capone syndicate in the Chicago area, among others.

About two weeks before the scheduled start of the Capone trial, O’Hare notified Wilson that Capone’s organization had a complete list of prospective jurors and was already “passing out \$1,000 bills.” The trial of The People vs. Al Capone opened on the morning of October 5, 1931 at the federal courthouse in downtown Chicago. Judge James H. Wilkerson switched juries with another trial held in the same building. Six days later, the jurors handed down a “guilty” verdict. Capone got 11 years for willful failure to file income tax.

In 1939, just days before Capone’s release from prison, O’Hare would pay the ultimate price for the leads he provided the government. While driving on a Chicago street, he was gunned down by two men in a passing car.

Louie La Cava seemingly never felt safe again either. When he and his wife built a home in Fairbank, Iowa in 1968, a half-dozen deadbolts and locks were installed on every door, a set of double locks on every window...along with, oh yes, a secret room. Even the outside garbage can had a lock on it. Louie died of old age in 1980 at age 91.



Frank J. Wilson

### Author Events

— **Sat., Nov. 9, 1-3 pm** — Barnes & Noble, Calhoun Village Shopping Ctr, 3216 West Lake St., Mpls, MN

— **December 7, time** — Landmark Commons Retirement Community, 1400 Maxhelen Blvd., Waterloo, IA

— **December 7, 5:30/6 pm** — Iowa River Brewing Co. 107 N. 1st, Street, Marshalltown, IA

— **Jan/Feb 2020 (pending)** — Waterloo Public Library, 415 Commercial Street, Waterloo, IA

#### Book Clubs

White Bear Lake Book Club, White Bear, MN

— **Clear Lake Public Library**, Clear Lake, IA

— **Beancounters**, Burlington, IA

— **Cicero Public Library**, 5225 West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill

#### Book Festivals-Conferences

— **March 26-29, 2020** — UW Madison Writers' Institute, Madison, WI

— **April 4, 2020, 10 am-2 pm (pending)** — North Iowa Book Bash, Diamond Jo Casino, Northwood, IA

— **May 1, 2020, Noon** — Torque Fest, 14569 Old Highway Rd, Dubuque, IA

#### Pending...

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Clayton County Genealogy/Historical Society, 119 N. Main St., Elkader, IA

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Iowa Odd Fellows & Orphans Home, 1037 19th St SW, Mason City, IA

— Date/Time: **TBD** — Waverly Public Library, 1500 W Bremer Ave., Waverly, IA