

Nov. 9, 2019



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

### A 'shout-out' to Women of Words (WOW) & Book Award

In March 2016 I began research for the book that would become my first historical crime novel, *Gangster in our Midst*...the neglected true story of the gangster who came to my hometown, Fairbank, Iowa in the 1920s.

On August 5, 2017, I launched GIOM at the Fairbank Public Library; 2) Parkview Assisted Living in Fairbank; 3) Oelwein Public Library. The first year I did 35+ public appearances and **sold \$5,000+ worth of books** — only one percent of authors reach this threshold, I'm told. Sales the 2nd year were also very good.

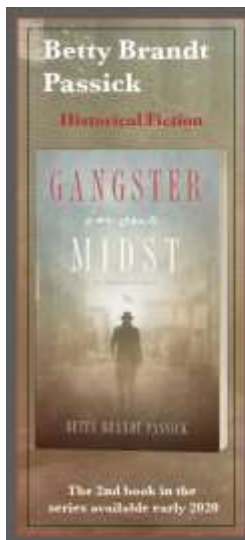
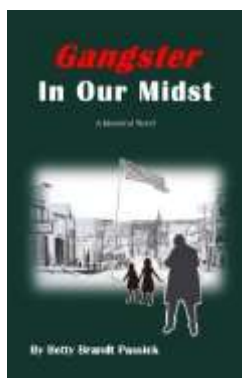
The book went through revisions: Second Edition: April 1, 2018 (re-edited to include additional gangster stories), ISBN: 978-0-6928153-5-9; Third Edition: January 15, 2019 (new book cover), ISBN: 978-0-9992635-3-2. It's available through local bookstores, Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Walmart in paperback, large print, and e-book.

If you're interested in reading unsolicited book comments posted on Amazon.com, [click here](#). More testimonials appear on my [website](#).

As I now write the sequel to GIOM, I feel the need to again say **THANK YOU** to neighbors, friends (old and new) and authors who have supported me on this journey. A special 'shout out' goes to **Connie Anderson**, Women of Words (WOW) co-founder (1997), **Gloria VanDemmeltraadt** and **Meg Corrigan**, WOW members. Recently I was notified **GIOM has won a book award**... more about this in the coming weeks.



'Three Fingers'

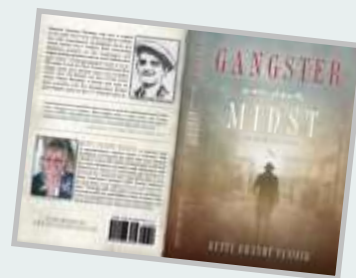


### Bulletin Board

Watch for the  
GI OM sequel:  
**Spring 2020!**

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## When Ill-considered Legislation Creates Powerful Gangs

In colonial times, Americans probably drank more alcohol than in any other era, no matter the geographic or economic differences.

According to Bruce Bustard, senior curator of Spirited Republic: Alcohol in American History, the initial ship that came over from England to Massachusetts Bay actually carried more beer than water.

So much for the bad rap Puritans have gotten over the years about being against drinking.

Wine and beer consumption was seen as a healthy substitute for water. Given the sanitary standards of the day this was probably true. An early morning tankard of beer was typical, even for children.

By the 1830s, at the forefront of thinking were women's rights and anti-slavery movements. Another very popular and powerful movement was the temperance movement. A growing number of people believed alcoholism had created serious problems for society in terms of unemployment and broken families. Alcohol reform movements like the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the well-funded Anti-Saloon League (ASL) began serious efforts to ban alcohol.

World War I seemingly served as the last 'nail in the coffin' of legalized alcohol. Dry advocates argued that the barley used in brewing beer could be made into bread to feed American soldiers.

The country remained polarized over prohibition when the 18th Amendment went into effect on January 17, 1920, making it illegal to produce, distribute or sell alcoholic beverages.

There were a few exceptions: alcohol for industrial, religious or medicinal use, and the government allowed farmers to produce wine for their own consumption—one of the ways the sale of illegal alcohol production began as a cottage industry. Farmers had easy access to a key ingredient for the manufacture of alcohol—corn.

Small-time operators soon faced competition from organized crime, who were fighting each other for market control with violence and murder. Kingpin Al Capone, who came to power in Chicago around 1923, is believed to have been responsible for hundreds of murders throughout the country before he went to prison for income tax evasion in 1931.

When I interviewed Fairbank locals as part of my research for Gangster in our Midst (2017), they easily recalled the names of area bootleggers—Levendusky, Allen, Fink and Mc Cunniff. But no one mistook Louie La Cava for a farmer bootlegger when the Italian American showed up in town in the early 1920s. He dressed well. Wore a nice fedora on his head. Had a fat Cuban cigar between his lips. Over time, they came to believe he worked for Capone.



Bill Rechkemmer bought the Opera House in Fairbank in 1929. After the repeal of Prohibition on December 5, 1933, he turned it into a beer tavern (currently the site of Costa's Sports Bar & Grill).

Photo: Courtesy of Howard Durham, Fairbank historian

### Author Events

- **Sat., Nov. 9, 1-3 pm** — Barnes and Noble, Calhoun Village Shopping Ctr, 3216 West Lake St., Mpls, MN
- **Sat., Dec. 7, time (pending)** — Decades, 25 South Frederick, Oelwein, IA
- **Dec. 7, time (pending)** — Landmark Commons Retirement Community, 1400 Maxhelen Blvd., Waterloo, IA
- **Dec. 7, 5:30/6 pm (pending)** — Iowa River Brewing Co. 107 N. 1st, Street, Marshalltown, IA
- **Jan/Feb 2020 (pending)** — Waterloo Public Library, 415 Commercial Street, Waterloo, IA