

Sept. 20, 2019



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

Scholarships Available: WOW Writers' Conference, Sept. 28th

A few (\$85) scholarships are available to attend the Women of Words 10th Annual Writers Conference ([link](#)), Saturday, September 28th, 8:30

am—4:30 pm, at Oak Knoll Luth Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka, Minn. Contact Kathi Holmes (WOW member), k.m.holmes@comcast.net, for more information

Reminder: Sign up to attend the “Panel of Mystery Crime Authors” session, 2:20-3:10 pm in Fellowship Hall.

Back by popular demand: “A Ray of Hope: Iowa's Oakdale Sanitorium”

Friends of the Library at [Clear Lake Public Library](#), 200 N. 4th St., Clear Lake, IA. invited me to do a second in a series, “A Ray of Hope: Iowa's Oakdale Sanitorium,” on Tuesday, September 24, 6:30 pm. Oakdale was built in 1908 to handle the growing numbers of Iowans seeking treatment for the ‘white plague’. Emma Bierkoff is a fictional character in *Gangster in our Midst* (2017) who undergoes treatment at Oakdale. The presentation will include stories of local lungers.



“Three Fingers”

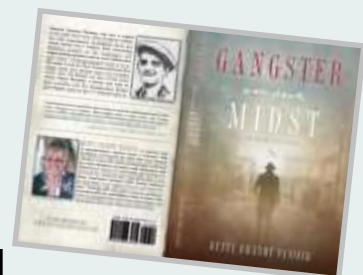
Bulletin Board

Current Projects (2):
— 2nd in a series of *Gangster in our Midst*

— plus, the screenplay

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Strawberry Point, Iowa Settlers — Another Great Immigrant Story

Next time you are looking for great immigrant biographies to read, type in the [“Wiltse Families in America”](#) on the Internet. You’ll find an extensive genealogy of Wiltse families from Luxemburg.

On Sunday, October 20, 7 pm, I will talk about “The Wiltse Family of Strawberry Point” at the Wilder Memorial Museum, 123 W. Mission Street. The event is free and open to the public.

My hour-long presentation will provide facts about these Wiltse family members, uncovered while conducting research for Gangster in our Midst. Primarily, I hoped to find evidence of whether Fairbank’s alleged gangster, Louie La Cava, had played a role in Chicago Kingpin Al Capone’s outfit—as many Fairbank locals believed. I found quite a story... It’s one for the history books.

I came across other fascinating stories, one linking Fairbank and Strawberry Point, separated by just twenty-nine miles, to a piece of pioneer history.

The History of Buchanan County notes Fairbank’s Wiltse Hotel was built in 1877 by Dr. Edwin Wiltse (and his bride Lucy Ann Dean) from Strawberry Point.

Edwin, born in Ontario, Canada, immigrated to the United States (when he was 3, about 1854) with his father, Alexander Wiltse. They resided in Colesburg for two years before settling in Strawberry Point.

Alexander’s wife, Phebe Wiltse, a daughter, Vidella, and son, Charles, eventually also immigrated to the U.S. Three more daughters were born to the couple by 1860.

So far, theirs was a typical immigrant story—until I learned both Alexander and Edwin went on to graduate Bennett College of Eclectic Medicine and Surgery (est. 1868), in Chicago. The senior Dr. Wiltse was likely among the college’s first graduating class and Strawberry Point’s first licensed physician.

I couldn’t help but wonder whether the father-son duo had hoped to have a joint medical practice. If that was their dream, sadly it would not come to pass.

Dr. Edwin Wiltse became Fairbank’s first licensed physician, working out his office in the Wiltse.

I will also unpack questions that arose in my mind about Dr. Alexander Wiltse, in particular—who is largely absent from Strawberry Point and Clayton County historical records.

I have a few thoughts on that fact, too.

Author Events

— **Tues., Sept. 24, 6:30 pm** — “A Ray of Hope” (Iowa’s Oakdale Sanatorium), Clear Lake Public Library, 200 N. 4th St., Clear Lake, IA, (641) 357-6133

— **Sat., Sept. 28, 8:00-4:00** — Women of Words 10th Annual Writers’ Conference, Oak Knoll Lutheran Church, 600 Hopkins Crossroad, Minnetonka, MN

— **Thurs, Oct. 17, 10:30** — St. Paul Police Historical Society, 389 Hamline Ave. N., St. Paul, MN

— **Sun., Oct 20, 7 pm** — “Wiltse Family of Strawberry Point,” Wilder Memorial Museum, 123 W. Mission St., Strawberry Point, IA, (563) 933-4615

— **Sat., Nov. 2, 9 am-3 pm**, “Holiday Open House” Barn Happy, 11310 Univ. Ave., Cedar Falls, IA, (319) 266-0888

Book Clubs

— **Beancounters**, Burlington, IA

— **Cicero Public Library**, 5225 West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill, (708) 652-8084

Book Festivals-Conferences

— **Sept 20-Oct 6** — Iowa City Book Festival, 123 S Linn St., Iowa City, IA, (319) 356-5245

— **Sept. 21, 9-4 (new)** — 10 Annual All-Iowa Writers’ Conference, Drake Community Library, 930 Park St., in Grinnell, IA

— **Oct 11-13** — St. Paul Art Crawl, 308 Prince St, St. Paul, MN, (651) 270-0563

— **Sat., Oct 12 (new)** — Twin Cities Book Festival (MIPA table), MN Fairgrounds, St. Paul, MN

— **May 1, 2020, Noon** — Torque Fest, 14569 Old Highway Rd, Dubuque, IA, (563) 588-1406

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

Book Readings

Date/Time: **TBD (new)** — The Zephyr Theatre, 601 Main St N, Stillwater, MN, (651) 342-1542

Pending...

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

Date/Time: **TBD** — Waterloo Public Library, 415 Commercial Street, Waterloo, IA

Date/Time: **TBD** — Waverly Public Library, 1500 W Bremer Ave., Waverly, IA, (319) 352-1223

— Date/time: **TBD** — Landmark Commons Retirement Community, 1400 Maxhelen Blvd., Waterloo, IA, (319) 296-7100