

February 4, 2020



**Gangster In Our Midst**—available at local bookstores, [Amazon](#), [Walmart](#) & [Barnes & Noble](#)  
Website: [www.bettybrandtpassick.com](http://www.bettybrandtpassick.com)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BettyBrandtPassick/>  
[Twitter@BBPCOM](https://twitter.com/BBPCOM)

E-mail: [bbpassickauthor@comcast.net](mailto:bbpassickauthor@comcast.net)

## Gangster Blog

### A fun, entertaining read (testimonial)

“Gangster in our Midst” by Betty Brandt Passick is an historical novel set in Oxbow, Iowa, a small-town Midwest-American city during the Great Depression and Prohibition eras, and weaves together a story of the courageous men, woman and children who lived and worked in the area and their encounters with a shadowy mystery man rumored to have ties to organized crime boss Al Capone, which makes it a fun, entertaining read with characters the author brings to life through local dialogue and history that fits the time and place. You get a real sense of community, loyalty, caring and compassion as the story develops. You feel their pride, their emotions, their morality through the author’s story and her words.

— Mary Jo Wiseman, Author

### Author Workshop: “Writing a Memoir”

Whether you want to write a memoir of 50 pages or 400 pages (like mine), the basic steps are the same: Research, Interviews, Personal Stories, Genealogy, Photos, Permission to Use, etc.

**Sat., Feb. 29, 10:30-11:30 am**, Oakdale Library, 1010 Heron Ave N., Oakdale, MN 55128, 651-430-0504, [registration](#).

### This & That

— One new book clubs will be reading *Gangster in Our Midst* in 2020 (more to follow). **NOTE:** a downloadable [Study Guide](#) is available from the website.

— 30th Annual Midwest Book Awards sponsored by Midwest Independent Publishing Association (MIPA) gala, June 7th.



‘Three Fingers’

**COMING!**  
**Sequel to**  
**Gangster in**  
**Our Midst:**  
**Spring 2020!**

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

|  |   |
|--|---|
| A fun, entertaining read (testimonial) .....       | 1 |
| Author Workshop: “Writing a Memoir”—Feb. 29 .....  | 1 |
| This & That.....                                   | 1 |
| When Someone Dies, a Book of History is Lost ..... | 2 |
| Author Events .....                                | 2 |



## When Someone Dies, a Book of History is Lost

The term “cash store” came about in the United States late in the nineteenth century, according to one Harvard business administration publication, because customers paid for their purchases with cash, store credit, skins, and wood.

In 1902, two brothers, M. E. (Michael) ‘Bee’ Leehey and J.T. Leehey purchased the 3,000 sq. ft. mercantile store, established in 1899, at the corner of First and Main streets in Fairbank from F. J. Everett & Co., according to the 1976 *Fairbank Times Bicentennial* newspaper.

They called their business Leehey's Cash Store and offered a comprehensive line of dry goods, notions, gents' furnishings, shoes, and nationally known lines.

The Leehey brothers were two of eight children born to John and Ellen (O'Conner) Leehey who had immigrated from County Kerry, Ireland, sometime before 1870.

In 1911 Bee bought out his brother's share of the business. Bee--and his wife Alice B. (Murphy) Leehey--kept the store afloat for a total of forty-three years...through the Great War (1914-1918), Prohibition (1920-1933), and the Great Depression (1929-1939).

It's likely their daughter "Allie B." waited on the town's gangster, Louie La Cava, who frequented Fairbank between 1920-1980. Many locals believed he worked for Chicago's Kingpin Al Capone.

Allie B. went on to graduate Immaculate Conception High School and to marry Fearl Cowlshaw in 1935, who, at the time, was president of Fairbank State Bank. They had three daughters of their own. Allie B.'s obituary states she retired as the first librarian at Fairbank's public library, then housed in what had been the Coffin Café and 'Fats' Barber Shop, four doors east of Leehey's Cash Store.

I still vividly recall the day my public school teacher walked our elementary class downtown to introduce us to the library--when each of us in the class got our first library cards. I hadn't known Allie B. until that day. I didn't know she would be someone I would want to interview for a book I'd publish in 2017 (*Gangster in Our Midst*).

Allie B. died in 2007 at age 95. They say whenever someone dies, a book of history is lost. That was true of Allie B...so very true.



Leehey Cash Store, Fairbank, Iowa

Photos (2): Howard Durham, Fairbank historian



Alice "Allie B." (Leehey) Cowlshaw

## Author Events

(January-June, 2020)

### Writing Workshops:

— Sat., Feb. 29, 10:30-11:30 am —  
“Writing a Memoir”, Oakdale Library,  
1010 Heron Ave North, Oakdale, MN, 651-  
430-0504 ([registration](#))

— Spring, 2020 ([pending](#)) — “Writing a  
Memoir”, Bremer County Historical  
Society, 402 W. Bremer Ave, Waverly, IA

### Book Readings

— Spring ([pending](#)) — Book Signing,  
Decades, 25 South Frederick, Oelwein, IA  
— Spring 2020 ([pending](#)) Author Talk  
(*Gangster*) — Rotary Club/Lions, Oelwein,  
IA

— Spring ([pending](#)) — Author Talk  
(*Gangster*), Landmark Commons Retirement  
Community, 1400 Maxhelen Blvd.,  
Waterloo, IA

— 2020 ([pending](#)) — Author Talk  
(*Gangster*), Cicero Public Library, 5225  
West Cermak Rd., Cicero, Ill