

May 3, 2024



Gangster Series—available through: [Amazon](#), [Indie Book Stores](#), [Barnes & Noble](#), [Walmart](#)
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Website: www.bettybrandtpassick.com
Facebook: <http://facebook.com/BettyBrandtPassick>
Twitter: <https://twitter.com/BBPCOM>
Linkedin: <https://linkedin.com/in/bbpassick>

E-mail: bbpassickauthor@comcast.net

Gangster Blog

English Valleys History Center — Apr. 21

Thank you to the **English Valleys History Center** board in North English, Iowa, for such a fun day on April 21st at 2 pm. Of the 44 in attendance, many said they either knew of or had visited my hometown of Fairbank.



Mother's Day 2024: "The Life of Mrs. Dr. Alexander Wiltse"

I'm looking forward to giving the fascinating historical review of Phebe Wiltse next week. The Dr. Alexander Wiltse family immigrated from Canada to Iowa in the mid-1850s, initially residing with relatives in the Delhi area before settling in Strawberry Point. Phebe ran her household, cared for her brood of children, and life in general while her physician-husband was out tending the needs of many immigrants arriving weekly to the area—Dr. Wiltse was also attracted to murder investigations.

The general public is invited to attend the free, sixty-minute program. Attendees are encouraged to dress in pioneer-era costume and bring a family heirloom or artifact to showcase. Refreshments will follow the presentations.

- Mon, May 6, 2 pm, Fairbank Public Library, 212 E Main St, RSVN: Angela Berg, 319-635-2487 **(CANCELLED)**
- **Mon, May 6, 7 pm, Delhi Public Library, 311 Franklin St, RSVN: Susan Button, 563-922-2037**
- **Tues, May 7, 11:15 am, Strawberry Point Public Library/ Wilder Museum, 401 Commercial, RSVN: Patty Lincoln, 563-933-4340.**



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Gangster Series



2021

Book 3: 2024!

Back Story: Walter Bierkoff (fact or fiction)



Leo Beierschmitt



Louie La Cava



Immaculate Conception Church, Org. 1858

Q. An attendee at the Muscatine Art Center on April 18th asked: Is Walter Bierkoff (Gangster in Our Midst) a real or fictional character?

Walter Bierkoff is a fictional character loosely based on a Fair-

A. bank farmer, Leo Beierschmitt. Though a Fairbank native myself, I only met this sweet, gentle man in 2016 when looking for people to interview who had grown up in the Immaculate Conception Church and school in Fairbank during the 1920-'30s. Leo was born and raised on the farm that his Catholic ancestors purchased in 1868, located a few miles west of town. Eventually, he became the fifth-generation owner of the farm, and a lifelong member of the church.

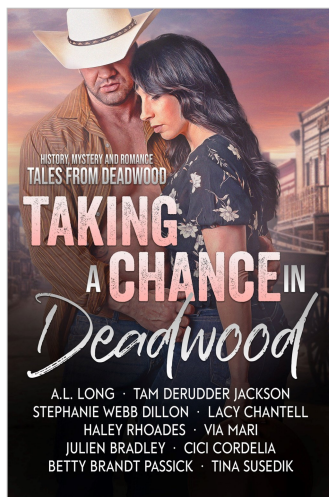
Leo noted, "The nuns were tough but sweet underneath. You had to behave yourself!" He got a ruler to his hand a few times, probably for talking back. Father John Halpin baptized him; Father Torpey followed Father Halpin, and Leo served as an altar boy for many years, played baseball on the old diamond south of the quarry next to the church (the priest was the coach). **Read more:** BettyBrandtPassick.com/blogs.

2024 Book Offering: Taking a Chance in Deadwood

Part of the thrill of participating in Wild Deadwood Reads in mid-June in Deadwood, South Dakota, has been the opportunity to submit a novella for the annual WDR anthology. The only criterion was the setting for the story had to be Deadwood. I submitted: "A Thousand Miles from Boyhood," a tale about the life of Wild Bill Hickok.

The book launch happens June 14th... Can't wait to get my hands on a copy of **Taking a Chance in Deadwood**.

I'll bring home a box of books with me, of course... I'm taking pre-orders now.



Author Events

2024

— **Deadline: March 15, 2nd Annual Wapsie Writing Contest**
Winners announced soon!

— **Thurs, May 16, 4 pm,** Wells Public Library, 36 Main St N, Wells, MN

— **Thurs, May 16, 6:30 pm,** Muir Public Library, 36 Main St N, Winnebago, MN

— **Thurs-Sat, June 13-15,** Wild Deadwood Reads Book Fair, Lodge at Deadwood, Deadwood, SD

— **Sun, Aug. 4 (was June 22), 9-3,** Dorset Books & Candy Shack Festival, 20471 State 226, Dorset, MN

— **Mon-Fri, Aug. 28-Sept. 1,** Bouchercon Nashville 2024, Gaylord Opryland Resort, Nashville, TN

— **Thurs, Sept/Oct, 6:30 pm,** Rosemount Area Arts Council/Robert Trail Library, 14395 S. Robert Trail, Rosemount, MN

— **Oct 5, 10-4,** Booksigning: Deep Valley Book Festival, Mankato, MN

— **Wed, Oct. 30, 1 pm,** "The Life of Mrs. Dr. Alexander Wiltse," Magnet 55+ & MPS Adult Community ed 55+, Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1200 Marquette Ave., Mpls., MN

— **Nov. 7, 14, 21, 28, 9:30-11:30 am,** Wartburg College, 2024 Lecture Series, Course Title: "Where does one begin to write — a journal, a story, a book?" Vogel Library, Waverly, IA

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