

# National Newspaper Association

A decade-by-decade journey through NNA's history



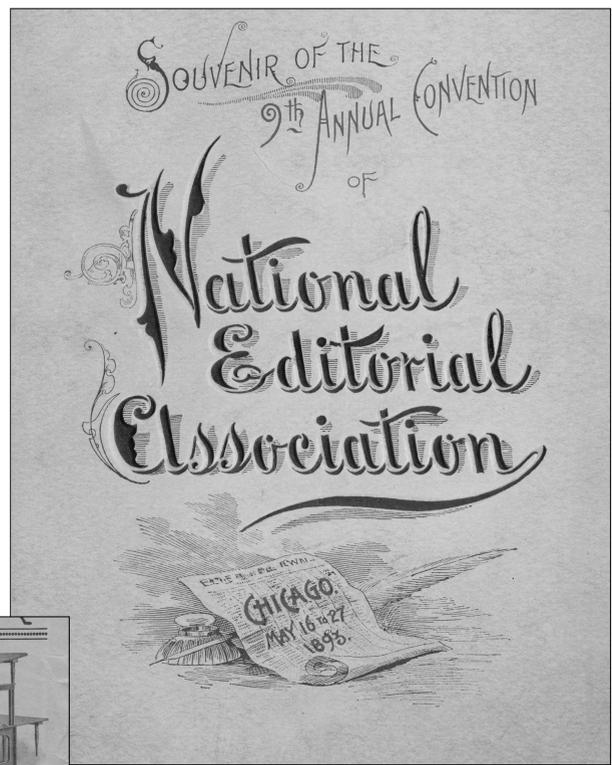
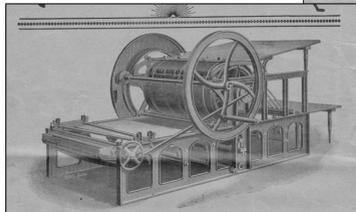
**The National Newspaper Association formed 125 years ago to serve as a meeting of the minds for publishers and editors of rural and community newspapers. Its story also is one of grass roots journalism and America's entrepreneurial spirit.**

1867

In Minnesota, 36 newspapermen, representing 31 publications from 23 towns came together on Feb. 20, 1867. They formed the Minnesota State Editors' and Publishers' Association.

Wisconsin newspapermen had formed a similar organization in 1853. But it was not until June 1867, when the two groups held a joint meeting in St. Paul that the first inkling for more cross-border meetings formed.

Other states had started their own state press associations during those early years.

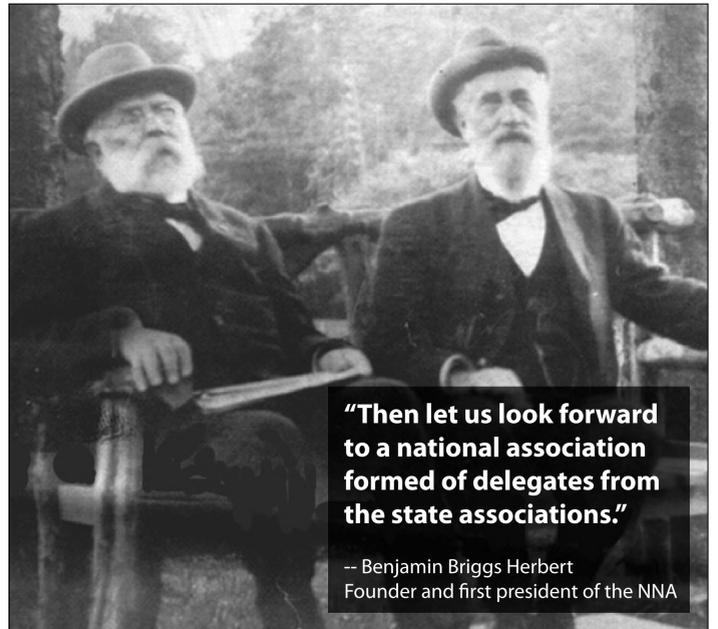


1879

The associations of New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania congregated. But it would be another five years before the idea came up again for state newspaper associations to join forces. And that meeting would form the National Newspaper Association.

1885

The Minnesota newspaper group, led by Benjamin Briggs Herbert, broached the notion for a national newspaper organization. Herbert was editor of the Red Wing (MN) Advance-Republican. The next day, the group of editors issued a resolution to form the National Editors' and Publishers' Association, now known as the National Newspaper Association. A snowstorm delayed the start of this first meeting, but Herbert (pictured on the right) gathered 50 newspapermen and two women at the February meeting. The association's bylaws were written and Herbert was picked to lead the fledgling organization.

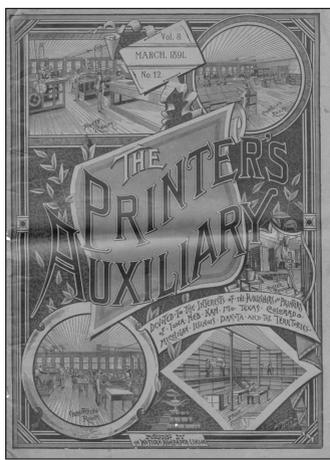


**"Then let us look forward to a national association formed of delegates from the state associations."**

-- Benjamin Briggs Herbert  
Founder and first president of the NNA

1886

The next meeting of the association was set for Cincinnati in 1886, but the group's secretary had gone to Washington as the aide to a U.S. senator and no longer cared about the association. "He failed to answer his letters and telegrams from Herbert; and he had either lost or destroyed the association's constitution, bylaws, minutes and membership list." Herbert persevered, single-handedly putting the organization back together again, and holding the convention in Cincinnati.



At the NEA's Denver convention in 1887, members created a publication that would later become the National Printer-Journalist.

1887

1894

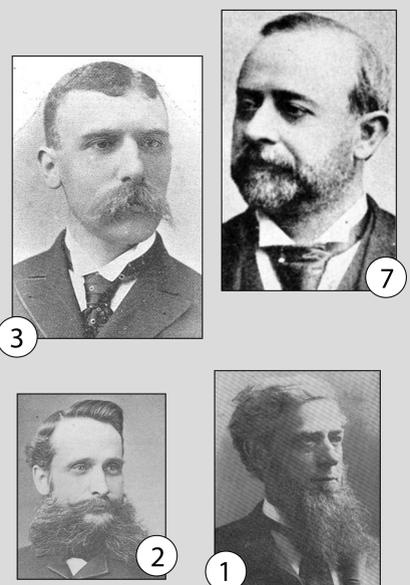
By the end of its first decade, the association was well established. This program for a banquet at the 1894 NEA convention is signed by several of the convention participants.



## Presidents of NNA's first decade

1. B.B. Herbert of the Daily Republican in Red Wing, MN, 1885
2. C.H. Jones of Lockwood Press in New York, NY, 1886
3. Gov. A.B. White of the State Journal in Parkersburg, WV, 1887
4. James R. Bettis\* of the Arkansas Democrat in Little Rock, AR, 1888
5. Charles A. Lee of the Pawtucket Gazette & Chronicle in Pawtucket, RI, 1889
6. E.W. Stephens of the Columbia Herald in Columbia, MO, 1890
7. W.S. Capper of the Mansfield News in Mansfield, OH, 1891
8. B.J. Price of the Hudson Star & Times in Hudson, WI, 1892
9. Walter Williams of the Columbia Herald in Columbia, MO, 1893
10. T.O. Bunnell of the Dansville Advertiser in Dansville, NY, 1894

\*No photo available



## Presidential connection

The only U.S. president who was a working newspaperman, Warren G. Harding, attended his first NNA convention in 1891, when he was editor of the Marion (OH) Star at age 19. It was not until after he became president that he bought the Star.



## Education minded

Walter Williams was elected in 1893 as the ninth president of the association at the age of 29. He had already been president of the Missouri Press Association and would later found the journalism school at the University of Missouri.