

NNA: The Second Decade

Journey through the National Newspaper Association's history

"Here we are, American editors, grunting our collar buttons off on the lever that moves the world, with the old handle flying up every few days knocking out our teeth, taking 50 percent of the legal rate for printing, while statesmen are taking a 150 percent of their pay."

"Here we are, galloping up and down the earth carrying other people's sorrows, and taking our pay in due bills on St. Peter -- and all for what? For the fun of getting the smell of news ink in our noses. For the joy of ripping open the familiar old exchanges..."

-- William Allen White, Emporia Gazette
NNA's annual convention, 1904



Community newspapers, often weekly publications, held strong during this decade in the face of what was projected to be a hard blow to their businesses. Rural Free Delivery was created in order to help big city dailies mail their papers to smaller communities.

Instead of crushing small papers, the mailing changes helped community publishers. Rural Free Delivery saved them money by allowing free delivery anywhere in America.

1897



At the turn of the 20th Century, small newspapers such as the Cheney (KS) Sentinel operated without electricity. Its office, (pictured above) included the editor and his assistant, two typists (far left), a heating stove, a Washington hand press and a worker to run it. A journalist's work station is pictured left in this photograph of William O. McCurdy, who established the Beeville (TX) Bee.

1900

The association's conventions during this decade allowed for writing beyond reporting the news. Poetry readings were popular at the time, and member and poet, William E. Pabor, often recited his works at the convention.

In fact, a line from one of Pabor's poems, became an unofficial slogan for the NNA. "A drop of ink on an editor's pen," so the poem goes, "Will reach the hearts of his fellow men/ And the thought it traces leaps and springs/ Till over the world its message rings."



1900

Rise of sports reporting

During NNA's second decade, sports reporting began to gain in journalistic importance. League organization occurred in baseball, college football and tennis, and the popularity of other sports such as golf, croquet, bicycling, roller skating and even rifle shooting began to rise. Most newspapers today – big and small – recognize the importance and popularity of sports reporting for drawing a larger readership or audience.



Newspaperwomen such as Abigail Scott Duniway, publisher of The New Northwest, continued their demands for equality at the turn of the 20th Century. At the NNA annual convention in 1903, Mary Holland Kincaid of the Milwaukee Sentinel said: "In the golden day of future journalism... the newspaper women will come into their right heritage. They will no longer be expected to manage beauty departments in which they are compelled to utilize their cherished literary talents in writing directions for removing freckles."

1903

Presidents of NNA's second decade

1. T.O. Bunnell of the Dansville Advertiser in Dansville, NY, 1895
2. R.H. Thomas of the Farmer's Friend in Mechanicsburg, PA, 1896
3. Louis Holtman of the Jeffersonian in Shelbyville, IN, 1897
4. Joseph M. MacCabe of the East Boston Argus in East Boston, MA, 1898
5. R.H. Henry of the Clarion Ledger in Jackson, MS, 1899
6. Matt Parrott of the Iowa State Reporter in Waterloo, IA, 1900*
7. F.B. Baillio of the Cleborne Review in Cleborne, TX, 1900*
8. Albert Tozier of the Northwest Pacific Farmer in Portland, OR, 1901
9. Garry A. Willard of the Boonville Herald in Boonville, NY, 1902
10. P.V. Collins of the Agriculturalist in Minneapolis, MN, 1903
11. W.W. Screws of the Advertiser in Montgomery, AL, 1904



*Parrott: journalist and politician

Matt Parrot died in 1900, while he held the position of NNA's 15th president. He was succeeded by F.B. Baillio. Parrot's career included stints as a newspaper owner, mayor of Waterloo, IA, lieutenant governor of Iowa and a senator for the state. He remains the namesake of his family-owned printing and office supply store in Iowa, the Matt Parrot and Sons Co.

