



The Fossil

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President's Message

Walter Ernest "Pop" Mellinger: Amateur Ambassador

by Ken Faig, Jr.

Illinois Boyhood

Walter Ernest Mellinger was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on Oct. 12, 1866, the son of James Huey (or Hughey) Mellinger (born Oct. 9, 1822, Shelby Co., Ohio; died July 2, 1897, Chicago, Illinois) and Emma Grace Fowler (b. June 22, 1842, New York; d. Feb. 13, 1916, Grand Rapids, Michigan). Walter's father was a physician. The 1870 census enumerated James and his family in Philadelphia Ward 2: James Mellinger, age 47, physician, born Ohio; Emma Mellinger, age 26, housekeeper, born New York; Edgar Mellinger, age 16, born Illinois, at school; Cora Mellinger, age 10, born Illinois, at school; Walter Mellinger, age 3, born Pennsylvania; Louisa Fowler, age 40, born New Jersey, at home. (Edgar and Cora were half-siblings of Walter—see below.) Ten years later, James and his family had removed to Chicago: J. H. Mellinger (head), age 57, physician, born Ohio; Emma Mellinger (wife), age 37, born New York, housekeeper; Cora Mellinger (daughter), age 20, born Illinois; Walter Mellinger (son), age 13, born Pennsylvania; Herbert Mellinger (son), age 11 months, born Illinois. Walter's parents are buried in Chicago's Rosehill Cemetery.

Father's Marriages; Walter's Half-Siblings & Sibling

James Huey Mellinger was in fact married at least four times. He married

- Aug. 8, 1846 (Cass Co., Indiana) Sarah Ann Julian (b. Sept. 6, 1827, Rush, Cass Co., Indiana), the

daughter of George W. Julian (1801-1878) and Sarah Stafford (1800-1843);

- June 9, 1855 (Cook Co., Illinois) Louise G. Guthrie;
- Dec. 17, 1857 (Cook Co., Illinois) Carrie M. Smith (b. 1834/35 Ohio);
- Aug. 30, 1865 (Philadelphia) Emma Grace Fowler.



I do not know whether the first three wives died or were divorced from James. The Field and Ronda Young family trees on Ancestry helped me with James Huey Mellinger's marriages.

The 1850 census enumerated the household of James Mellinger, age 27, born Ohio, physician, in Columbus, Adams Co., Illinois. Also in his household were: Sarah A. Mellinger, age 22, born Indiana; Horatio E. Mellinger, age 7 months, born Illinois; Hannah Julian, age 19, born Indiana; Thomas B. Julian, age 14, born

Indiana; Mary A. Julian, age 12, born Indiana; and George Julian, age 49, born South Carolina, farmer. George Julian was Sarah Mellinger's widowed father and Hannah, Thomas, and Mary Julian her siblings. The 1860 census enumerated in Chicago Ward 6: J. H. Mellinger, age 37, born Ohio, physician; Carrie Mellinger (wife), age 25, born Ohio; Cora Mellinger, age 7 months, born Illinois; and H. Hutchinson, age 9, born Ohio.

I have not found any further data for Walter's half-sibling Horatio (or Horace) E. Mellinger (b. ca. Nov. 1849, Illinois). Half-sibling (James) Edgar Mellinger (b. Feb. 25, 1854, Chicago; d. Oct. 10, 1932) married April 5, 1874 (Plum Creek, Dawson Co., Nebraska) Elizabeth H.

Painter (b. June 22, 1853, Philadelphia; d. Aug. 5, 1938), the daughter of John W. Painter and Mary E. Millen, and had a large family. Half-sibling Cora Anna Mellinger (b. Dec. 1859, Illinois; d. July 18, 1941, Portland, Oregon) married Nov. 29, 1883 (Chicago) Henry David Ponnay (b. April 1856, Montreal, Canada; d. May 11, 1920, Los Angeles), the son of John L. D. Ponnay (1822-1888) and Mary Ann Morgan (1832-1924). They had sons Harry Ponnay (b. Oct. 1884, Chicago) and Richard Ponnay (b. June 1888, Chicago). They removed to Portland, Oregon in the mid-1890s but were separated or divorced before 1908-10, when Henry D. Ponnay appeared on Los Angeles County voter rolls.

Walter's full brother Herbert Victor Mellinger (b. July 12, 1879, Chicago; d. Oct. 28, 1952, Saratoga, Santa Clara Co., California) was a 1902 graduate of the University of Chicago and received his medical degree from Rush Medical College in Chicago in 1906. He married Susan Landon Todrig (1884-1933), the daughter of Bahamian-born Aubrey Todrig (1838-1911) and Katharine Landon (1847-1933), in 1907. He seems to have preceded his brother Walter to California by a year or so, receiving his California medical license on June 13, 1919. He and his wife made their home in Los Angeles. I did not find records of any children. The widowed Herbert Mellinger died at the Odd Fellows Home in Saratoga.

Ancestors

Walter's paternal grandparents were William Mellinger (b. July 15, 1797, Nelson Co., Kentucky; d. June 27, 1869, Lockington, Shelby Co., Ohio) and Jane Huey (b. June 28, 1798, Kentucky; d. Sept. 2, 1871, Washington, Shelby Co., Ohio), who married in Miami Co., Ohio on March 18, 1819. They raised a large family of at least seven children.

The Vorhees family tree on Ancestry does not identify any parents for Jane Huey, but identifies the parents of William Mellinger (1797-1869) as John Mellinger (b. 1774, Pennsylvania; d. 1840, Shelby Co., Ohio) and Margaret Demoss (b. 1777, Frederick Co., Maryland; d. May 4, 1849, Lockington, Shelby Co., Ohio), who married in Bardstown, Nelson Co., Kentucky on Feb. 18, 1795. The Vorhees Family Tree does not identify any parents for John Mellinger (1774-1840) but identifies the parents of Margaret Demoss as Peter Demoss (b. Nov. 11, 1752, Berkeley Co., Virginia; d. Sept. 20, 1841, Pendleton Co., Kentucky) and Catherine Houseman (b. Aug. 16, 1758, Frederick Co., Virginia; d. July 4, 1842, Pendleton Co., Kentucky). The tree even pushes one generation further back for Peter's parents Charles Demoss (b. Nov. 2, 1731, Baltimore Co., Maryland; d. June 9, 1786, Berkeley, James Co., Virginia) and Fannie ____ (b. 1733, Monmouth Co., New Jersey; d. ca. 1765, Berkeley, James Co., Virginia).

So we note a gradual migration of Walter's ancestors from the East Coast to Kentucky and from thence to Ohio.

Early Amateur Career – Two Presidencies and One Defeat

Walter was an early recruit to the amateur journalism hobby. On July 8, 1885, the Prairie State Amateur Press Association, meeting in Galesburg, Illinois, elected Walter as its president. Exactly one year later, the Western Amateur Press Association, meeting in Davenport, Iowa, elected Walter as its president. Walter ran for president of the National Amateur Press Association in 1890, but proxy votes at the National's Indianapolis convention awarded the presidency to Will S. Dunlop of Milwaukee. However, defeat in Indianapolis did not lead Walter to forsake the hobby. The same year, he began publication of his magazine *The Amateur Writer* in Chicago. He was also associated with the amateur magazine *Commentator* in Chicago in 1890. Then, in 1894, he began publication of *Bohemia* with Alfred J. Robinson in Chicago. He and Henry C. Johannes followed with *The Outlook* from Chicago in 1899.

Verses, a 56-page volume of poetry published in Cleveland, Ohio in 1902, was written by George Walter Mellinger (b. July 30, 1872, Plain Township, Wayne Co., Ohio; d. Jan. 7, 1944, Cleveland, Ohio), who was not closely related to Walter Ernest Mellinger. George Walter Mellinger was the son of William Mellinger (1843-1921) and grandson of Christian Mellinger (1819-1894)

Marriage & the Hetherington Family

Walter married Oct. 12, 1887 (Miami Co., Ohio) May Ellen Hetherington (b. May 1867, Ohio; d. Sept. 17, 1935, Los Angeles Co., California), probably the daughter of James Hetherington (b. June 1842, Pennsylvania; d. Dec. 1915, Piqua, Ohio) and Ella M. Smith (b. March 1844, Ohio; d. June 1926, Piqua). James Hetherington followed his father William Hetherington (b. 1815, Pennsylvania; d. July 1877, Miami Co., Ohio) and his paternal grandfather James Hetherington (b. 1783, Ireland; d. 1851, Miami Co., Ohio) as a brick mason. James' mother was Mary Ann (Mitchell) Hetherington (b. May 3, 1821, Pennsylvania; d. Mar. 11, 1909, Piqua, Ohio) and his paternal grandmother Mary Catherine ____ (b. 1787, Pennsylvania; d. 1851, Miami Co., Ohio). Many of the Hetherington family are buried in Forest Hill Cemetery in Piqua, Ohio.

Mid-Career: A Daughter Is Born (1889), then Louisville (1897-1898), Chicago (1899-1905), and Grand Rapids (1907-1916)

Walter's and May's daughter Eva Blanche Mellinger was born in Ohio on Sept. 9, 1889. However, Walter E. Mellinger, stenographer, had already been listed in the

1888 Chicago city directory with house at 678 W. Van Buren. Walter and his wife traveled to Boston to attend the National Amateur Press Association convention in 1894 and they can be seen in the third row of the group photograph taken at that convention (reproduced in *Spencer's History of Amateur Journalism* and on page 7 of this issue). Walter strikes a debonnaire, confident pose while his wife May seems more reserved. The 1900 census enumerated Walter and his family at 917 Walnut Street in Chicago Ward 13: Walter Mellinger (head), age 33, dry goods clerk; Mae Mellinger (wife), age 31, 1 child borne, 1 child living; Eva Mellinger (daughter), age 11, at school.

Walter had a brief business interlude in Louisville, Kentucky in 1897-98. The 1897 city directory listed him as president & treasurer of the Southern Heating Company, residing at 1310 6th. M. H. Mellinger (Walter's wife) was secretary, boarding at the same address. In the 1898 city directory, Walter E. Mellinger was listed as manager of the heating department for E. H. Wehle at 1633 Brook, residing at 1310 6th. M. H. Mellinger was still listed as secretary of the Southern Heating Company, residing at 1310 6th. The 1899 city directory contained the information that Walter Mellinger had removed to Chicago.

The 1900 Chicago city directory listed Walter E. Mellinger as president, Conlon Company, 132 Lake, with house at 917 Walnut. The Conlon Company, George J. Conlon, president, and Christ Timmermann, secretary, steam heating, was listed at 132 Lake. The 1904 Chicago city directory listed Walter E. Mellinger at 142 Michigan Street under both "Steam Heat Apparatus" and "Hot Water Heating (Yaryan System)." The 1905 directory continued to list him under "Steam Heating Apparatus," with a new business address at 42 N. Wells.

The 1907 Grand Rapids, Michigan city directory listed Walter E. Mellinger with house at 244 Auburn Avenue. (His daughter Eva was listed as a boarder at the same address.) The 1909, 1910, and 1911 directories listed him as a traveling agent with house at 244 Auburn Avenue. The 1910 census enumerated at the same address: Walter E. Mellinger (head), age 43, born Pennsylvania, traveling salesman (plumbers' supplies); May H. Mellinger (wife), age 42, born Ohio, 2 children borne, 1 child living. (I do not know the identity of their deceased child.) Daughter Eva Blanche Mellinger was no longer in their household. She had married Sept. 8, 1908 (Grand Rapids, Michigan) Edgar Bertram Wicklander (b. Jan. 16, 1883, Chicago; d. Oct. 7, 1936, Los Angeles), the son of German-born Neils Wicklander and Swedish-born Bertha Neilson. The same year Eva was married, her father was elected the first president of the Grand Rapids Amateur Press Club.

The 1912 Grand Rapids directory listed Walter as a

From THE FOSSIL No. 40, September 1917

A Jolly Pontin Welcome to Walter E. Mellinger

Reported by Joseph Dana Miller

ON THE EVENING of June 29 a dinner at Pontin's was tendered to Walter E. Mellinger by a number of his old time friends, members of the Fossils. ...

Mr. Mellinger ... is a welcome addition to the ranks. He has caught the spirit. His opening remarks showed him at once *en rapport* with all the Fossil organization stands for. Though he departs soon for the West, we trust that this will not be the last time we may greet him. ...

And on this occasion, in the hours of welcome to Walter E. Mellinger, the splendid spirit lived again in all of us. We had found another congenial soul to whom all the Fossil organization means was revealed. And we were all happy in the knowledge. ♦

traveling agent with house at 163 Prospect Avenue. The 1913 directory listed Ernest W. Mellinger [sic], salesman, with house at 163 Prospect Avenue. The 1914 directory listed E. Walter Mellinger [sic], insurance agent, with house at 163 Prospect Avenue. The 1915 directory listed Walter E. Mellinger, commercial traveler, with house at 456 Crescent NE. The 1916 directory listed him as a traveler, with the same home address. Walter's mother Emma Grace (Fowler) Mellinger died in Grand Rapids in 1916.

Sunny California Beckons: 1920-1934

Walter earned a good income as a traveling salesman, and spent freely. The 1920 census found him and his wife living at 4214 Colonial Avenue in East San Diego, California. Walter was working as collector for an advertising club. The 1920 San Diego directory listed Walter as collector for the San Diego Cal Club, with the same home address. By 1921, he had formed the real estate firm of Dickensen & Mellinger with Edgar W. Dickensen, with offices at 4169 University Avenue in East San Diego. Walter and his wife May continued to reside at 4214 Colonial Avenue in East San Diego.

Walter had moved to Long Beach by 1924, where he and his wife resided at 4431 Barker Court (or Way). In 1924-25, he worked as executive secretary for the Long Beach Board of Realtors. The 1926 and 1927 Long Beach directories listed Walter as general manager of Long Beach Tourist at the same home address. The 1928 Long Beach directory listed Walter and May at the same home address, without any business connection for Walter.

The 1930 census enumerated Walter's household at 3730 Lugo in Lynwood, Los Angeles Co., California: Walter Mellinger, age 63, born Pennsylvania, secretary



Walter Mellinger was not successful when he challenged Assemblyman W. A. Doran in the 1920 Republican primary. From *The National City News* (National City, California), Aug. 13, 1920, p. 6.

(chamber of commerce); May H. Mellinger (wife), age 62, born Ohio. Walter and May owned their own home, valued at \$6,000. The 1934 Los Angeles County voter roll listed Walter and his wife at 3361 Elizabeth Street in Lynwood. They were both registered as Democrats.

Widower, Remarriage and Final Years: 1935-1954

Walter's wife May died on Sept. 17, 1935. They would have celebrated their forty-eighth wedding anniversary on Oct. 12, 1935. Walter remarried before the 1940 census enumerated his household at 3183 Poplar Street in Lynwood, Los Angeles Co.: Walter E. Mellinger, age 73, born Pennsylvania, four years of high school; Mary Mellinger (wife), age 69, eighth grade education, born England. Neither member of the household was employed. Walter had lived in the same house on Apr. 1, 1935; his new wife had lived in San Francisco, California on that date. The 1940 Los Angeles County voter roll listed Walter E. Mellinger, retired, and Mrs. Mary Mellinger, housewife, at 3183 Poplar Drive in Lynwood. They were both registered as Democrats.

I don't know how long Walter and his new wife Mary remained together. The 1946 voter rolls show him living at 3232½ Mulford Ave. in Lynwood and Mary was not on the rolls.

Amateur accounts indicate that he had to live on slender resources in his final years. He died in Alameda Co., California on Oct. 22, 1954, having marked his eighty-eighth birthday just ten days earlier. Alameda County occupies a substantial part of the East Bay in the San Francisco region—far away from Wal-

ter's longtime home in the Los Angeles area. Walter and his first wife May are buried in Roosevelt Memorial Park in Gardena, Los Angeles Co., California.

Daughter Eva (1889-1980) Follows Him to California; Grandsons Edgar and Donald Wicklander

Walter's daughter Eva and her husband Edgar Bertram Wicklander were recorded in Chicago in the 1910 and 1920 censuses. Edgar worked as a railroad clerk in 1910, but by the time he registered for the draft on Sept. 12, 1918, he was working as a department manager for Harris Trust & Savings Bank. The 1920 census recorded two sons, Edgar Wicklander Jr., age 8, and Donald Wicklander, age 2, in the family household at 1234 Glenlake Avenue in Chicago Ward 25.

The 1922 Los Angeles County voter roll listed Edgar and Eva Wicklander at 752 Loma Drive in Hermosa Beach, California. Edgar worked as a bank auditor, while Eva was a housewife. By 1924, Edgar, by then an accountant, and his wife, still a housewife, had moved to 5729 4th Avenue in Los Angeles. In both 1922 and 1924, both husband and wife were registered as Republicans. The Wicklanders remained at 4729 4th Avenue in Los Angeles when the 1930 census was enumerated. Edgar had become a real estate broker, while sons Edgar Jr., age 18, and Donald W., age 11, attended school. Sadly, Edgar Sr. died young, aged only fifty-three, in 1936.

The 1940 census enumerated the widowed Eva and her younger son Donald W., age 21, single, at their longtime Los Angeles address. Eva was working as a saleswoman for a cleaning & dyeing firm while Donald worked as a salesman for an engineering supply firm. Elder son Edgar Bertram Wicklander Jr. was working for the State of California when he registered for the

From THE FOSSIL No. 135, July 1952

Mellinger Moves to Northern California

My Dear Old Friend Cole,

As you know I was honored by being admitted as a member of the Masonic Home, Decoto [now part of Union City], California, May 5, 1951, so you may see, I have *retired*. I have found nobody here interested in A. J. or even in writing, but I am kept busy in my reading and studying and large correspondence, and am looking forward to many years here of trying to do some good among these dear old people.

According to Home records I shall be eighty-six on October 12 next, but the Doctor says he sees no reason why I could not top one hundred; that I have the vim, vigor, and vitality of a forty-five-year young man. So mote it be.

Affectionately,
Walter E. Mellinger



World War II draft. By the 1961-65 period, Eva and both her sons were living in Sacramento: Don W. (wife Dorothea L.) was an employee of Pacific Telephone; Edgar B. Jr. (wife Dorothy A.) was an accountant; and Eva, retired, lived at 210 43rd. Eva lived a long life and died on Feb. 6, 1980, age ninety, in El Dorado Co., California.

I did find a few bits of information concerning Walter's grandsons. Edgar Bertram Wicklander, Jr. (b. Apr. 8, 1911, Chicago; d. Apr. 21, 1997, Honolulu, Hawaii) was a 1928 graduate of Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles. He married (1) Dorothy Alden Garrett (b. Jan. 21, 1911, Tacoma, Washington), the daughter of George S. Garrett and Nora Grant. He and his first wife had children (all born in Sacramento, California): Carol Ann, born May 29, 1939; Neil Alden, born May 18, 1949; and Alan Grant, born Dec. 1, 1951. Edgar served as a commander in the U.S. Navy. He married (2) Chong Sik (b. Feb. 11, 1937, South Korea; d. Apr. 7, 2019, Honolulu, Hawaii).

Donald Walter Wicklander (b. May 12, 1918, Chicago; d. Mar. 6, 2010, Fairhope, Baldwin Co., Alabama) married Aug. 13, 1940 (California) Dorothea Loraine Bullock (b. Oct. 2, 1918, Madison, Indiana; d. March 17, 2005, Fairhope, Baldwin Co., Alabama), the daughter of

Thomas B. Bullock and Helena M. Bondurant. Donald was working for Timm Aircraft Corporation in Los Angeles when he registered for the World War II draft.

Closing Reflections – “Pop” Mellinger

Walter Ernest Mellinger helped to spread optimism in late nineteenth century amateur journalism. He was doubtless less active once he moved to California, but he still had friends in the hobby. While he lived in Los Angeles, he had his wives May and Mary, his daughter Eva, his son-in-law Edgar, his grandsons Edgar and Donald, his brother Herbert, and his sister-in-law Susan to keep him company. Life's prospects have a way of diminishing toward the end. Walter's daughter and grandsons had probably removed to Sacramento by the 1940s. Local amateur journalists probably helped to make Walter's final years happier. After all, he had been a well-traveled ambassador for the amateur journalism hobby in the 1880s and 1890s. He would probably be better-remembered within the hobby today if he had secured the presidency of the National Amateur Press Association in 1890. However, fellow amateur journalists must have valued his advice, since they consistently referred to him as “Pop” Mellinger over the years. ♦

From *THE FOSSIL* No. 144, January 1955

My Friend “Pop”

by Walter S. Goff

THE DEATH OF Walter E. (Pop) Mellinger on Oct. 12 is a particularly hard blow to me. For several years we were associated in the publication of the *Quarterly Review*. During these years he was at my home practically every month. He it was who taught me the real meaning of amateur journalism and what it stands for.

I first met Pop in Chicago at a meeting of the old Chicago Amateur Press Club. My memory of this meeting centers around the picturesqueness of his attire. Wearing Prince Albert frock coat and carrying a cane, and withal a demeanor that was all Mellinger, he made an unforgettable impression upon me. Of all who attended this meeting I think only Jennie Irene Maloney (Mrs. Plazier) and I survive.

He was a member of the Masonic order for over fifty years, and I well remember him in his Knight Templar uniform, sword and chapeau, marching proudly down Woodward Avenue in Detroit many years ago at a conclave.

Another remembrance of Pop is on a train returning from an Easter convention where we had had rather a rugged time. We decided to get out a paper together. And thus was born the *Quarterly Review*. I may say at

this late day we both took great pride in its publication.

It is hard to realize that he has passed to that bourne from which no man returns. To me he has not. He is still a living, vibrant personality – my friend. ♦

In Fond Remembrance

by Edward H. Cole

WALTER E. (“Pop”) Mellinger[’s] activity began in 1884, and probably of no amateur journalist may it be more accurately asserted that he maintained his interest until his death. He was affiliated with not only the National and the United amateur press associations and The Fossils, but with a host of local clubs in the Middle West. His publications, in his own words, were “too many to recount.”

As a highly successful traveling salesman for over thirty years, he had opportunity to visit many parts of the country and never failed to make contact with local amateur journalists. Consequently, he was one of the most widely known amateur journalists.

His extraordinarily genial nature won friends readily; his enthusiasm and energy overflowed to others and created interest and activity. In 1915 he moved to California, where he became secretary or president of many Chambers of Commerce, Advertising Clubs, Realty Boards, and other organizations.

Though adversity heavily beset him, and his for-



Walter Ernest Mellinger (center) flanked by W. Emory Moore (left) and Hyman J. Bradofsky (right) at *The Fossils' Los Angeles Chapter Reunion, April 24, 1948.*

tunes, like those of many another, became a casualty of the Great Depression, he never lost his ebullience of spirit, his capacity for friendship, his zest for life. Even when age and health necessitated spending his last years in a Masonic Home and infirmities made writing almost impossible, his friends received warm notes of affection from him and boyishly boastful reports of remarkable physical condition; he anticipated living to a hundred.

A few months ago, however, word went about that he was incurably ill, and his passing in October gave to those who loved him the knowledge that his days of pain were done and that in some happier clime his spirit was again free and buoyant. ♦

From The National Amateur Vol. 77, No. 3, March 1955

Walter E. Mellinger

WALTER ERNEST Mellinger, well known as “Papa” or more often as “Pop” Mellinger, passed on October 22, 1954, in his 88th year, at the Decota Masonic Home in California. Over seventy-five of those years were spent as an amateur journalist. His love of the hobby never seemed to dim and his attendance at the conventions was always a “must” with him.

“Pop” Mellinger was born in Pennsylvania, but he lived a good many years in Chicago. A boy printer at the age of twelve, he later became publisher of a high school paper. Instead of entering the newspaper business, as he long dreamed of doing, he learned the steam and hot-water heating trade, becoming a salesman, and finally operated his own heating contracting business. After a business misfortune in 1904 he again became a salesman and traveled in a Michigan territory, later making his home in Grand Rapids, where he lived for fourteen years before moving to California. While living in Grand Rapids, he was active in amateur journalism and brought in many new recruits.

In California he became associated with the Lynwood Press, founded the Long Beach Realty Board, and was secretary of the Lynwood Chamber of Commerce.

In our own hobby he had a long career of publish-

ing, and his outstanding work in this field was his co-partnership with Walter Goff on the *Quarterly Review*. He carried on to the last his determination to stay young in spirit, and live with hope as his beacon.

— George W. Macauley

WITH THE DEATH of Walter E. Mellinger we lost one of the few remaining links to the early days of amateur journalism. Born in Philadelphia, October 12, 1866 where his father, a surgeon, lived during the Civil War, he was raised and educated in Chicago where, in March of 1880, he bought his first printing outfit with a press of about 2x5 size, from an older boy. On this press he printed his first paper, the *Tom Thumb*; although he did not have enough body type to set a full page at a time.

In 1882 he and a high school friend read the famous *St. Nicholas* article and both of them determined to become amateur journalists. By this time he had made enough money by job printing to buy an 8x12 press and begin publication of the high school Journal which he continued until after graduation when he sold the outfit. His lifelong love affair with amateur journalism had begun, and in 1884 he made it legal by affiliating with the National Amateur Press Association. He also joined the United APA and The Fossils, the Masons and the Elks, and a host of local clubs in the Middle West and in California, where he and his wife moved in 1916, and to the last day of his life he delighted in his friends, and welcomed their visits.

He was editor and publisher of no less than twelve newspapers and magazines, did freelance newspaper writing and advertising when not engaged in publishing. His chief hobby next to amateur journalism was stamp collecting, and for some years he wrote a column on stamps for the Lynwood Press, being active in philatelic clubs.

“Pop” Mellinger was a typical extrovert, with a buoyant interest in life, and a cheerful out-going spirit that inevitably made him a “joiner” and was responsible for his host of friends. To do adequate justice to his interests and activities would require a volume in itself, but it is certain he was the eternal optimist, and never spent a bored moment in his life.

He attended eighteen conventions from 1888 to 1948; many local reunions; became a Life Member nearly fifty years ago; and carried on an extensive correspondence with various amateurs until his last illness forced its discontinuance. His beloved wife, May, had preceded him in death, They had one daughter, Eva, who attended some conventions before her marriage to E. B. Wicklander; she, and her two sons, Edgar B. and Donald W., and four great grandchildren survive. He was buried at Roosevelt Memorial Park.

— Willametta Keffer ♦

NAPA's 1894 Convention in Boston



Front row: Mrs. Ella M. Frye, Mrs. Edith Minitier, Miss Morton, Mrs. Hillman, C. W. Kissinger. Second row: Truman J. Spencer, Miss Robbins, C. R. Burger, J. H. I. Munro, Miss Cameron, Miss Hauck, Miss McCann. Third row: Miss Wynn, A. W. Dennis, D. B. Doyle, Mrs. Walter Mellinger, Walter Mellinger, Miss Butler, Miss Mabel Noyes, Miss Atwood, W. H. Thorpe, J. H. Chase. Fourth row: Miss Bowes, Miss Harriet Cox, Miss Cobb, D. G. Davis. Fifth row: James F. Morton, Edwin Hadley Smith, A. H. Nash, J. W. Foss, J. H. Ssover, Willard O. Wylie, E. T. Capen, M. F. Valentine. From *The History of Amateur Journalism* by Truman J. Spencer.

Official Editor's Message

January Issue Followup

by Dave Tribby

IN January, I reported on the academic paper "Terrains of Media Work: Producing Amateurs and Professionals in the 19th-Century United States" by the University of Georgia's **James F. Hamilton**. I sent Dr. Hamilton a link to that issue, and he had these comments:

What a wonderful surprise to hear from you and, by extension, today's amateur journalism Fossils! I'm very surprised you came across this pretty-specialized piece of academic research—not quite a best-seller widely talked about, that's for sure.

It sounds as tho you've already encountered prior

scholarship on the topic that this article relies on (thinking mostly of the admirable work by Petrik, Co-hoon, Harris, Isaac, and Lindey). And, it's one of the benefits of studying self-publishing, is that the evidence of the work has been **published**, and thus potential documentary evidence simply needing to be found.

Just an aside: This was one of the most challenging articles I've tackled. I first encountered amateur journalism while researching online a related topic. Its virtual absence from journalism history was both a puzzle (why so neglected by scholars in this field?) and, I felt, an opportunity to put this right. This was 2013.

After sufficient primary and secondary research and the wonderful surprise to find that the monster Google had digitized select autobiographies from practitioners in the 1870s-1880s (and also found thru it the Kelsey printer catalog), I began trying to write, and con-

sequently failed with three versions emphasizing three different main points and rejected by three different academic journals. I hadn't found the core of my argument, and what was the most crucial about this case.

Coming back to it after a few years' interlude and writing/publishing other topics, I presented a version in 2019 at an international conference that took place in Washington, D.C. The conference call/theme helped me start to see a useful case that centered on the broader changes in media work prefigured here. My key conceptual breakthrough came unbidden and in a flash thru revisiting Williams's case in *Culture and Society*, and thinking about the complexity he portrays in relation to the period of amateur journalism I was interested in. Once I clarified this, my case became instantly clear, the result which is what you have read.

So 2013-2020... Quite a journey. But it required every bit to, in my mind, understand the significance of amateur journalism of this time as a canary in the coal mine that prefigures and illuminates so many issues and possibilities for media work today.

Also in the last issue, I invited readers to check in and share what's been going on. There was one reply, from Fossil **Frederick Moe**:

I've recently moved to a former paper mill town, Groveton, N. H. My wife and I bought the Methodist parsonage which has never been privately owned since it was built in the 1870s. After years of debt, it was a house we could pay cash for. We now live in Coos County not that far from the Canadian border.

Working with homeless families in Vermont keeps me busy full-time. In my spare time, I tend to create radio shows with a small group of friends. Now would be a good time to dust off your shortwave, if you have one, or to buy a shortwave radio if you don't. My primary project is called "Imaginary Stations." Every couple of weeks, we decide upon a theme and then curate musical DJ sets based on that theme, come up with some fake call letters like CTRN (a train themed show) and edit the show into a (hopefully coherent) whole. These shows are broadcast on shortwave frequencies in Europe through Channel 292 and in North America via WRMI Radio Miami International. We have listeners from all over the world including Ukraine, Germany, the UK, Canada, and the USA.

When time and energy permit, I hope to be more active with amateur journalism. For now, I am content with occasionally writing my *Farm & Wilderness Report* which is graciously printed by Ivan Snyder. ♦

2022-2024 Fossil Board

by Dave Tribby

THE FOSSILS elect two of the three Board of Trustees members in July of even numbered years. (One trustee is voted by the Board as president, and does not stand for election because he automatically carries over to the next term.) Any member who wishes to run for office should file with Secretary-Treasurer Parson by June 30. Ballots are mailed to members by July 10 and must be returned no later than July 31. The next term of office runs from August 15, 2022, to August 14, 2024.

President Ken Faig has announced he is willing to stay in office for another term. As of mid-April, Trustee John Horn had agreed to continue, but President Faig had not yet heard back from Trustee Gary Bossler.

Amendments to the by-laws would also be voted on in the election. They must be proposed by at least five members and submitted to President Faig by June 10.

All details of the election procedure are documented in Article VII of The Fossils' by-laws, available on our website.

The Board has responsibility for appointing the other officers: official editor, secretary-treasurer, librarian, and webmaster.

Since 2012, only two candidates have filed for office in each of the election years. The Board then voted to appoint those two candidates without the need to prepare and mail ballots. If there are only two candidates, and no amendments, it is likely that precedent will be followed again this year. ♦

The Fossil

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION of The Fossils, a non-profit organization for anyone interested in the history of amateur journalism. Individuals or institutions allied with our goals are invited to join. Dues are \$15 annually, or \$20 for joint membership of husband and wife. Annual subscription to THE FOSSIL without privileges of membership, is \$10. For further information, contact the secretary-treasurer or visit our website:

www.thefossils.org

Fossil Board: 2020 - 2022

Ken Faig, Jr., PRESIDENT, 2020 Chestnut Ave. Apt. 405, Glenview, IL 60025; president@thefossils.org

Gary Bossler, 145 Genoa Avenue S.W., Massillon, OH 44646; gbossler@thefossils.org

John Horn, 24300 Chenal Parkway, #71, Little Rock, AR 72223; jhorn@thefossils.org

Appointed Officers

Official Editor: Dave Tribby, 1529 Fantail Court, Sunnyvale, CA 94087; editor@thefossils.org

Secretary-Treasurer: Tom Parson, 157 South Logan Street, Denver, CO 80209; s-t@thefossils.org

Librarian: Mike Horvat, 22275 SW 102nd Place, Tualatin, OR 97062; librarian@thefossils.org

Webmaster: Dave Tribby (contact information above)