

[Dapping, William Osborne]

WILLIAM OSBORNE DAPPING, C-A EDITOR EMERITUS, DEAD AT 89
Pulitzer Prize Winner in 1929

William O. Dapping, editor emeritus of The Citizen-Advertiser, died Friday evening in Auburn Memorial Hospital after a long illness. He was 89.

Funeral services for Mr. Dapping will be held at 10 a.m. Monday at the Brew Funeral Home, 48 South St. Rev. Raymond R. Nasemann of the Universalist-Unitarian [sic] Church of Auburn will officiate. Burial will be in Fort Hill Cemetery.

Surviving are a sister, Miss Caroline Dapping of Pequannock, N.J.; two nephews, Harold and George Latham, and one niece, Mrs. Frederick Pilch.

Friends may call at the funeral home from 3 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Sunday.

Born in New York

Mr. Dapping was born in New York City June 12, 1880, the son of William and Mathilda Lauterbach Dapping. He attended schools there, at Dryden, Auburn High School, Clinton Liberal Institute [a Universalist school], Hackley School and Harvard University.

While he was a Harvard student Mr. Dapping was manager of the varsity basketball team and did much to encourage that sport which was just achieving popularity.

The late Thomas Mott Osborne was instrumental in helping Mr. Dapping get an education, and the latter, in his school and college years, was practically a member of the Osborne family. He was never formally adopted, but in token of the close association Mr. Dapping took Osborne as his middle name.

After receiving a bachelor's degree at Harvard in 1905, Mr. Dapping joined the staff of The Auburn Citizen as a reporter. He became editorial writer, and managing editor of the newspaper, and secretary-treasurer of Auburn Publishing Co., owner of the Citizen-Advertiser and of Radio Station WMBO.

Active in newspaper organizations, Mr. Dapping was the first president of the New York State Associated Press Association, and held that office for 13 years. He was also president of the State Publishers' Association, and of the Associated Dailies of this state. He has been a member of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the World Press Congress, the American Newspaper Publishers Association, the National Conference of Editorial Writers, the Overseas Press Club, and the Silurians, a group of veteran newspapermen.

Was Chest Founder

As a citizen Mr. Dapping took active part in many local civic projects, and was one of the founders of the Auburn Community Chest. He worked with the late Fred L. Emerson in establishing the War Chest during World War I, and was a member of the Home Defense Committee then. He was chairman of the Finger Lakes Conservation Committee for many years.

For two terms he was president of the New York State Fish, Game and Forest League, and was widely recognized as one of the leading conservationists of the state.

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An honorary life member of the Cayuga County Sportsmen's Association, he served as its president for 11 years, and had been a leader in the old Owasco Lake Anglers Association which merged with the Sportsmen's Association.

Mr. Dapping was active in the creation of the Howland's Island Game Refuge and was a leader in advancing legislation that takes long-range action in conserving wild life. He helped secure the purchase of Howland's Island by the state.

Mr. Dapping served on a mayor's committee to set up the city manager form of government and on another group to revise and modernize the assessment system in Auburn.

When the 27th Division came home from Europe at the end of World war I he managed the details of the homecoming in New York Harbor and at Camp Merritt, N.J., and its subsequent reception in Auburn.

Started Radio Club

In the early days of radio Mr. Dapping started a radio club in Auburn which was instrumental in putting through an ordinance to protect against radio interference. He was [the] first president of the Cayuga County Radio Association.

Mr. Dapping was instrumental in the acquiring of WMBO-AM and its expansion. He also was a leader in the establishment and expansion of WMBO-FM.

He was co-chairman many years ago with the late Rev. Allan Macy Dulles of a committee to raise funds for buying the old Quinn Hotel, 3 North St., for the Salvation Army.

Among special awards which Mr. Dapping received during his lifetime was the Pulitzer Prize in 1930 for his reporting of the Dec. 11, 1929 Auburn Prison riot. He was recognized by the Associated Press for outstanding reporting of the riot and presented with a gold watch.

Mr. Dapping interviewed Warden Edgar Jennings in the hospital right after the riot in which the warden had been held hostage by convicts. Warden Jennings had been injured in the melee which followed the tossing of a gas bomb by a state trooper. Seven convicts and Principal Keeper George Durnford died in the riot and many were injured.

WORKED FOR AP

Mr. Dapping in his early newspaper days was a "stringer" for by the Associated Press, feeding copy to the nation-wide news bureau on local events of wider-than-local interest.

One of the many noteworthy news events Mr. Dapping covered during his reporting days was the execution of Chester Gillette, convicted and sentenced for the slaying of Grace Brown. The slaying was the basis of "An American Tragedy," Theodore Dreiser's literary classic. Gillette was executed in Auburn Prison. Mr. Dapping reported conversations in Auburn he had with the condemned man's mother who carried her fight for her son's life to Governor Charles Evans Hughes. Gillette confessed to the murder.

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Mr. Dapping was a founder-citizen of George Junior Republic at Freeville, having given up employment in New York City to join the late William R. George, the founder, in setting up the institution for training young people in the self-government plan. He was trustee and executive chairman of the board for many years.

Mr. Dapping's local affiliations included Kiwanis Club, Elks, Auburn Golf and Country Club of which he was president two years, Auburn Chamber of Commerce, and the Owasco Country Club.

VOTED FOR FDR

Casting his vote in the Electoral College in 1960 for President John F. Kennedy, Mr. Dapping was a Democratic elector from this state eight successive times. He cast his electoral vote for the late Franklin D. Roosevelt the four times that FDR was elected. He was designated "permanent secretary to The Roosevelt Electors" by his fellow New York State electors when Kennedy was elected. For the last several years he was the only survivor of the seven who voted four times for FDR.

At age 84, Mr. Dapping cast his seventh Democratic electoral vote for President Lyndon B. Johnson. Mr. Dapping believed that his was a record, at least for New York State.

In 1968 at age 88, Mr. Dapping was recovering from surgery and was named for the tenth time to the college. He was unable to cast his vote for former Vice-President and losing Democratic candidate Hubert J. Humphrey. State Democratic Chairman John. J. Burns was chosen to substitute for Mr. Dapping when Mr. Humphrey carried New York State.

Mr. and Mrs. Dapping observed their golden wedding anniversary June 3, 1961. Mrs. Dapping, the former Miss Ina May Fairchild, died in 1965. Mr. Dapping retired from active participation in the newspaper in June, 1960, when he was 80 years old. A testimonial dinner was given at Auburn Community College on June (13?) of that year. Prominent political figures and representatives of the press and of the civic life of city and county gathered to honor the man who was retiring after 55 years in the newspaper business.

He was honored by the PBA in 1968.

Citizen-Advertiser, Auburn NY, Sat. 2 Aug 1969

Transcribed on 19 Jan 2010 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY