

# A Narrative Timeline Of AA History



Public Version

Member's last names changed to last initials

(Last names are retained for members well known to the public)

Update Version - April 2004

(Work in progress)

This paper used the work *Timelines in AA History* by Archie M of TN as a starting point. Data from additional source references (listed below) plus narrative have been added. Contributions were received from Ron C, Art B, David S and Barefoot Bill L.

**Arthur S, Northeast Texas Area Archives**

**SOURCE REFERENCES:**

12&12	<i>Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions</i> , AAWS
AABB	<i>Alcoholics Anonymous</i> , the Big Book, AAWS
AACOA	<i>AA Comes of Age</i> , AAWS
ABSI	<i>As Bill Sees It</i> , AAWS
AGAA	<i>The Akron Genesis of Alcoholics Anonymous</i> , by Dick B (soft cover)
BW-RT	<i>Bill W</i> by Robert Thompson (soft cover)
BW-FH	<i>Bill W</i> by Francis Hartigan (hard cover)
BW-40	<i>Bill W My First 40 Years</i> , autobiography (hard cover)
CH	<i>Children of the Healer</i> , Bob Smith and Sue Smith Windows by Christine Brewer (soft cover)
DBGO	<i>Dr Bob and the Good Old-timers</i> , AAWS
EBBY	<i>Ebby the Man Who Sponsored Bill W</i> by Mel B (soft cover)
GB	<i>Getting Better Inside Alcoholics Anonymous</i> by Nan Robertson (soft cover)
GTBT	<i>Grateful to Have Been There</i> by Nell Wing (soft cover)
GSC-FR	<i>General Service Conference - Final Report</i> (identified by year), AAWS
GSO	<i>General Service Office - Presentations and Literature</i> , service pieces, AAWS/GSO US/Canada
Gv	<i>Grapevine</i> - identified by month and year
HT	<i>Harry Tiebout - the Collected Writings</i> , Hazelden Pittman Press (soft cover)
LOH	<i>The Language of the Heart</i> , AA Grapevine Inc
LR	<i>Lois Remembers</i> , by Lois Wilson
MMM	<i>Mrs Marty Mann</i> , by Sally and David R Brown (hard cover)
MSBW	<i>My Search for Bill W</i> , by Mel B. (soft cover)
NG	<i>Not God</i> , by Ernest Kurtz (expanded edition, soft cover)
NW	<i>New Wine</i> , by Mel B (soft cover)
PIO	<i>Pass It On</i> , AAWS
RAA	<i>The Roots of Alcoholics Anonymous</i> , by Bill Pittman, nee <i>AA the Way It Began</i> (soft cover)
SI	<i>Sister Ignatia</i> , by Mary C Darrah (soft cover)
SD	<i>Slaying the Dragon</i> , by William L White (soft cover)
SM	<i>AA Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service</i> , AAWS
SW	<i>Silkworth - the Little Doctor Who Loved Drunks</i> , by Dale Mitchell (hard cover)
WPR	<i>Women Pioneers in 12 Step Recovery</i> , by Charlotte Hunter, Billye Jones and Joan Ziegler (soft cover)
www	<b>Internet Sources</b> (e.g. Google, Microsoft Encarta, US National Archives & Records Administration NARA)

Page numbers follow the source reference: e.g.: PIO 111, 113 = Pass It On pages 111 and 113  
 PIO 170-175 = Pass It On pages 170 thru 175

**Note:** Consumer Price Index (CPI) conversion factors are used to convert dollar amounts to 2003 dollar values. The values (shown as "\$nnn today") are the approximate dollars needed today to equal the purchasing power of the value converted. The CPI conversion data are from Robert C Sahr, Political Science Dept, Oregon State U, Corvallis ([www.orst.edu](http://www.orst.edu))

Abbreviations:			
AA	Alcoholics Anonymous	GSC	General Service Conference
AAWS	AA World Services Inc.	OG	Oxford Group
AFG	Al-Anon Family Groups	MRA	Moral Re-Armament
GSB	General Service Board		

- Appendix 1: Authors of Big Book Stories
- Appendix 2: Estimated Counts of Groups and Members
- Appendix 3: Royalties On Literature Sales

## Origin of the Word "Alcohol"

From the Arabic *al-kuhul*, a term applied to members of a group of chemical compounds and, in popular usage, to the specific compound ethyl alcohol, or ethanol. The Arabic word denotes *kohl*, a fine powder of antimony used as an eye makeup. The word *alcohol* originally denoted any fine powder. The alchemists of medieval Europe later applied it to essences obtained by distillation and this led to the current usage. It was not until the 18<sup>th</sup> century that the word came to designate the intoxicating ingredient in liquor. (SD xiv, www Encarta)

1774

Publication of Anthony Benezet's *Mighty Destroyer Displayed*, the earliest American essay on alcoholism. (SD 4-5)

1784

Dr Benjamin Rush (1746-1813) of Philadelphia, PA was a member of the Continental Congress, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and Surgeon General of the Continental Army during the Revolution. He is often called both the father of American psychiatry and the father of the American temperance movement. Rush wrote a 36-page paper titled *An Enquiry into the Effects of Ardent Spirits on the Human Body and Mind*. It described habitual drunkenness as a "progressive and odious disease" and asserted that total abstinence "suddenly and entirely" was the only effective treatment. In 1810 Rush called for the creation of "Sober houses" where alcoholics could be confined and rehabilitated. (GB 43, 168, 1996 GSC-FR 15, SD 1-4)

1700's (late)

From the latter 1700's to early 1800's, American alcohol consumption (and number of alcohol distilleries) increased enormously. A growing number of prominent people (e.g. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams) called for a change in drinking practices. Momentum was picked up by religious leaders who changed the notion of "temperance as moderation" to "temperance as abstinence." This began the growth of American temperance societies. (SD 4-5)

1820s

By the 1820s people in the US were drinking, on average, 27 liters (7 gallons) of pure alcohol per person each year, and many religious and political leaders were beginning to see drunkenness as a national curse. (www NARA)

1840

Apr 5, a group of six drinking club friends (William Mitchell, John Hoss, David Anderson, George Steers, James McCurley and Archibald Campbell) at Chasels Tavern in Baltimore, MD formed a total abstinence society. Pledging "not drink any spirituous or malt liquors, wine or cider" they named themselves the *Washington Temperance Society* (in honor of George Washington). They later became known as *Washingtonians*. They sought out new prospects ("hard cases") and held weekly meetings at the tavern until the owner's wife objected to the increasing loss of their best customers. They had a 25-cent initiation fee (\$5 today) and member's dues of 12 ½ cents per month (\$2.50 today). (SD 8-9, www Milton Maxwell paper)

Nov 19, the Washingtonians held their first public meeting. Growth of the movement was extremely rapid. Widespread and enthusiastic support came from thousands of existing temperance societies. This was due to the great success the Washingtonians had in mobilizing public attention on temperance by relaying their "experience sharing" of alcoholic debauchery followed by glorious accounts of personal reformation. One of the movement's leaders noted, "There is a prevalent impression, that none but reformed drunkards are admitted as members of the Washingtonian Society. This is a mistake. Any man may become a member by signing the pledge, and continue so by adhering to it." (SD 9, www Milton Maxwell paper)

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**1841**

May 12, the Washingtonians organized the first *Martha Washington Society* meeting for women and children in NY. They provided moral and material support to reform female inebriates and assisted the wives and children of male inebriates. This was the first temperance movement in which women assumed leadership roles. The movement also spawned juvenile auxiliary groups. Freed blacks organized separate Washingtonian societies. (SD 10)

**1842**

Feb 22, Abraham Lincoln spoke to the Springfield, IL Washingtonians. He praised the movement and criticized earlier temperance movements that defined the alcoholic as incorrigible: "I believe if we take habitual drunkards as a class, their heads and their hearts will bear an advantageous comparison with those of any other class. There seems ever to have been proneness in the brilliant and warm-blooded to fall into this vice." (SD 9, GSO) Lincoln is also quoted as saying that intoxicating liquor was "used by everybody, repudiated by nobody" and that it came forth in society "like the Egyptian angel of death, commissioned to slay if not the first, the fairest born in every family." (www Encarta)

**1843**

Mid-to-end, the Washingtonian movement peaked after having reached all major areas of the US. Estimates of its membership vary and are contradictory. The sole requirement for membership was to sign a "total abstinence pledge." Members included teetotalers, temperance advocates, a large segment of adolescents (under 15) and drinkers of various types whose numbers far exceeded that of the "drunkards." A reliable estimate of the number of alcoholics in the mix is impossible to derive. Over the lifetime of the movement, hundreds op4menholealmtt.1(u)1.I as

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**1865**

Bill W's grandparents William C Wilson and Helen Barrows were married. (RAA 136)

**1870**

Bill W's father, Gilman (Gilly) Barrows Wilson, and mother, Emily Griffith, were born. (BW-RT 12)

**1872**

Oct, Jerry McAuley opened the Water St Mission in the notorious Fourth Ward of NYC. It marked the beginning of the urban mission movement. The movement, which spread across America by the Salvation Army, focused its message to the Skid Row alcoholic. When McAuley passed away (in 1884) S H Hadley succeeded him. Hadley's example of recovery from alcoholism was cited in William James' book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Hadley's son, Harry, later collaborated with Rev Sam Shoemaker to establish a rescue mission at Calvary Episcopal Church in NYC. (SD 74-77, EBBY 65)

**1873**

Jul 22, William Duncan Silkworth was born in Brooklyn, NY to Isabelle Duncan and William Silkworth Sr. (SW 3)

**1878**

Jun 4, Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman was born in Pennsburg, PA. (RAA 114, NW 32)

**1879**

Aug 8, Robert Holbrook Smith was born in St Johnsbury, VT to Judge and Mrs Walter Perrin Smith. Note: Bob had a much older foster sister, Amanda [Northrup], who became a history professor at Hunter College, NY. (DBGO 9, 12, 14, CH 2, NG 29-30)

**1881**

Mar 21, Anne Robinson Ripley was born in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, IL to Joseph & Joyce Pierce Ripley. (Gv Jun 1950)

Oct 29, Rowland H was born, the oldest son of Rowland Gibson and Mary Pierrepont Bushnell H (www)

**1885**

Sep, Dr Bob entered the Summer St Elementary School in St Johnsbury, VT. (DBGO 12)

**1886**

Aug 29, T Henry Williams was born in South Woodstock, CT. (AGAA 65)

**1888**

Lois Wilson's parents, Dr Clark Burnham and Matilda Hoyt Spellman, were married. (LR 2)

Mar 18, Henrietta Sieberling was born in Lawrenceburg, KY, to Judge Julius A and Mary Maddox Buckler. (AGAA 83)

Summer, Dr Bob (turning 9) had his first drink from a jug of hard cider. (DBGO 13)

**1889**

Jan 2, Bridget Della Mary Gavin (Sister Ignatia) was born in Shanvilly, County Mayo, Ireland. (SI 44, 306, LOH 372)

**1890**

Aug 15, Elvin Morton Jellinek was born in NY. (GB 171)

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### 1891

Mar 4, Lois Burnham was born at 182 Clinton St in Brooklyn, NY. She was the eldest of six children from a distinguished and affluent family. (WPR 54)

### 1893

Dec 27, Samuel Moor Shoemaker was born in Baltimore, MD. (www)

### 1894

Sep, Dr Bob (age 15) entered St Johnsbury Academy. (DBGO 15, GB 34)

Sep, Bill W's parents, Emily Griffith and Gilman Wilson, were married (PIO 13, BW-RT 15, RAA 137)

Dec, Bill W's uncle, Clarence Griffith, died of tuberculosis in CO. (BW-RT 31, BW-40 25, PIO 28)

### 1895

Nov 26, Bill Wilson was born in East Dorset, VT in a room behind a bar in the Wilson House (formerly the Barrows House) a village hotel run by his grandmother. (BW-RT 15, CH 4, NG 10, PIO 13, 407, RAA 138).

### 1896

Jan 2, Harry Morgan Tiebout was born in Brooklyn, NY. (HT vii)

Apr 29, Edwin (Ebby) Throckmorton T was born in Albany, NY. (EBBY 20).

### 1898

Dr Bob first met Anne Robinson Ripley during his senior year at St Johnsbury Academy. (DBGO 16, GB 34, WPR 3) After graduating from St Johnsbury Academy, he entered Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH. (CH 2, DBGO 348)

Dorothy Brewster Wilson, Bill's sister, was born. (PIO 15)

### 1901

The *Charles B Towns Hospital for Drug and Alcohol Addictions* opened in NYC. It was a private "drying out" hospital for the affluent. It initially opened on 81<sup>st</sup> and 82<sup>nd</sup> Sts. and later moved to 293 Central Park West. Towns also later opened an annex (behind the Central Park facility) at 119 W 81<sup>st</sup> St to provide treatment for patients of "moderate means." Hospital fees had to be paid in advance, or be guaranteed. Treatment fees for alcoholism ran from \$75 to \$150 in the main hospital (\$1,560 to \$3,120 today) and \$50 (\$1,040 today) in the annex. (SD 84-85, SW 125)

### 1902

Harvard professor William James' presented the Gifford Lecture Series at the U of Edinburgh. The lectures were published as *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. James was also called the founding father of American psychology. (GB 47)

Dr Bob graduated from Dartmouth College. During his school years, drinking was a major activity. In the eyes of the drinking fraternity, he was "summa cum laude." The school itself had a reputation as "the drinkingest of the Ivy League schools." (CH 2, DBGO 22, 348, NG 30, RAA 172, GB 34) After graduation, Bob went through three years of drifting and selling heavy hardware in Boston, Chicago and Montreal. (GB 35)

Bill W's mother, Emily, spent much of the year in FL with his sister Dorothy. Bill wrote several letters asking when she would be returning home. (BW-FH 18)

### 1903

Bill W's family moved to 42 Chestnut Ave in Rutland, VT. Bill attended the Church St School. (PIO 20)

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### 1904

Emily and Gilman Wilson's marriage was stormy. Others noticed that something was wrong. (BW-FH 12, BW-RT 17)

Oct 15, Margaret (Marty) Mann was born in Chicago, IL to Lillian Christy and William Henry Mann. (GB 119, MMM 13-16)

### 1905

Sep, Bill W's father, Gilman (after earlier having a bitter argument with Emily) took Bill on a late-night buggy ride and asked him to take good care of his mother and sister and be good to them. The next morning Bill's sister Dorothy told him their father had gone away. Prior to this there were extended absences of Bill's mother, Emily, described sometimes as "nervous breakdowns." (BW-RT 5-12, NG 10, BW-FH 12, 18-19, PIO 24) Bill's father left the family and departed for western Canada. Bill did not see him again for 9 years (summer of 1914). Emily sent word to her father, Fayette, to drive up to Rutland and get Bill and Dorothy. Emily remained behind in Rutland for a time to make arrangements. (BW-RT 11, 17-18, BW-40 12-13, BW-FH 12)

Fall, Dr Bob entered the U of MI as a 26 year old pre-med student. He drank with a much greater earnestness than he had previously shown. (AABB 173, CH 2, DBGO 25, NG 30)

### 1906

Bill W, his sister Dorothy and mother Emily, moved back to East Dorset to live with Bill's maternal grandparents, Fayette and Ella Griffith. (AACOA 53, BW-RT 11, 17, PIO 22, BW-RT 19, NG 10, RAA 130, BW-40 13, BW-FH 12)

The Rev Drs Elwood Worcester and Samuel McComb, along with physician Dr Isador Coriat, opened a clinic in the Emmanuel Church in Boston, MA. It introduced the use of spirituality, and recovered alcoholics as lay therapists, in the treatment of alcoholism. Among the noted lay therapists were Courtenay Baylor, Richard Peabody, Francis Chambers and Samuel Crocker. (SD 100-101)

Oct, while on a picnic, Bill W, and his sister Dorothy, were informed by their mother that their father had gone for good. The news was devastating to Bill. Emily left the next day for Boston, MA to attend an osteopathic medical school. (PIO 24-27, BW-RT 19-20, BW-40 13, BW-FH 19)

### 1907

Bill W's parents divorced. Bill considered this a "great disgrace and great stigma." (NG 309) There appears to be evidence that his father's drinking was a prominent cause of the divorce. (WPR 57, PIO 15)

Spring, Dr Bob left the U of MI due to his drinking to take a one-month "geographic cure" on a large farm owned by a friend. (AABB 173, DBGO 26)

Late summer, Bill W's grandfather, Fayette, challenged him saying, "nobody but an Australian bushman knows how to make and throw the boomerang." (AACOA 53, PIO 29-30, LR 19-20, BW-RT 28-29, BW-40 21-23, NG 11)

Fall, Dr Bob, after being allowed to take his exams, was forced to leave the U of MI due to his drinking. He transferred as a junior to Rush Medical College near Chicago. While at Rush his drinking was so bad his fraternity brothers called for his father. (AABB 173-174, CH 2, DBGO 26, NG 30, 316, PIO 25)

### 1908

Feb, Bill W made the boomerang his grandfather Fayette challenged him to make and perceived himself as a "Number One Man." (BW-RT 33-35) His grandfather then gave him his Uncle Clarence's violin and challenged him to learn how to play it. (AACOA 53, BW-RT 36-37, LR 20, BW-40 25-28)

Spring/summer, Bill W met his closest friend Mark Whalon (ten years his senior). (BW-RT 40, RAA 141, BW-FH 12, PIO 22)

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Jul, Frank N D Buchman arrived in England to attend the Keswick Convention of evangelicals. After hearing a sermon by a woman evangelist, Jessie Penn-Lewis, he experienced a profound spiritual surrender and later helped another attendee to go through the same experience. His experiences became the key to the rest of his life's work. Returning to the US, he started his "laboratory years" working out the principles he would later apply on a global scale. (NG 9, NW 32-45, PIO 130)

### 1909

The Akron Rubber Mold and Machine Co. was founded. It reorganized later, in 1928, as the National Rubber Machinery Co. In 1935, it became the center of a proxy fight that brought Bill W to Akron, OH. (BW-RT 211-212, CH 4, NG 26, PIO 134, RAA 142)

Late spring, Bill W's grandparents decided to send him (at age 14) to the prestigious Burr and Burton Seminary in Manchester, VT for his secondary education. Bill started classes that fall. He boarded at the school for 5 days a week and returned home by train to East Dorset on weekends. (PIO 33, NG 12, BW-FH 19, BW-RT 48)

### 1910

Dr Bob (age 31) received his medical degree, with high marks, from Rush U. Prior to graduating, the Dean of the medical school required Bob to return for two more quarters and remain absolutely dry. (GB 35) After graduation, Bob received a highly coveted 2-year internship at City Hospital in Akron, OH. (CH 2, DBGO 27, NG 30,)

Dr Bob started internship at City Hospital. For two years, he had no problem with drinking. (DBGO 27)

### 1911

Ebby T and Bill W first met. They were classmates at Burr and Burton Seminary for one year (PIO 34, GB 26)

Nov 12, Ruth Eva Miller (later Hock) was born in Newark, NJ. (WPR 77)

### 1912

Dr Bob (age 33) started medical practice at the Second National Bank Bldg in Akron, OH. He remained there until he retired from practice in 1948. It did not take him long to return to old drinking habits. (DBGO 28)

Lois Burnham graduated from Packer Collegiate Institute, an exclusive girl's school in Brooklyn, NY. (DBGO 28, 348, LR 12, PIO 40, BW-FH 13)

Sep, at the beginning of the school year at Burr and Burton, Bill W was president of the senior class, star football player, star pitcher and captain of the baseball team and first violin in the school orchestra. (BW-FH 19)

Nov 18, Bill W's schoolmate and "first love" Bertha Bamford, died from hemorrhaging after surgery at the Flower Hospital in NYC. She was the daughter of the rector of the Manchester, VT Zion Episcopal Church. Bill learned about it at school on the 19<sup>th</sup>. It began a 3-year episode of depression, which severely affected his performance at school and home. (AACOA 54, PIO 35-36, BW-RT 51-58, NG 12, BW-FH 19-20)

### 1913

Jan, Bill W failed nearly every mid-year exam and was forced to drop out of school. (BW-RT 58, BW-FH 19-20)

Apr, It was clear that Bill W could not graduate from Burr and Burton. He moved to Boston to live with his mother, Emily. (BW-RT-58)

Summer, Bill W's grandfather took him to PA for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Gettysburg. (PIO 38-39)

Summer, Bill W and Lois Burnham spent some time together while both their families vacationed at Emerald Lake near East Dorset, VT. Lois (4 ½ years older than Bill) was not especially interested in him at the time. (BW-RT 68, PIO 38-39, LR 13, 15) They met through Lois' brother Rogers. (PIO 48, BW-FH 23-24, WPR 56)



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Late summer, after an absence of several months, Bill W returned to Burr and Burton and took the senior exams. He failed his German class and could not receive his diploma. Bill's mother argued with the principal (James Brooks) who would not budge. Bill then went to live with his mother and sister in Arlington, MA (a suburb of Boston) where he made up his German course. (BW-FH 20, BW-RT 65)

Fall, Bill W's mother, Emily, decided that he should become an engineer and attend MIT. He attended Arlington High School to prepare for examinations for MIT. He was essentially repeating his senior year. (BW-FH 2-21)

### 1914

Early, Dr Bob (previously hospitalized at least a dozen times for his drinking) was unable to get sober. His father sent a physician from St Johnsbury to bring him home to VT. Bob stayed in VT for about four months. He did not touch a drink again until five years later when "the country went dry" (1919). (AABB 174-175, DBGO 28-29, NG 30)

Summer, the relationship between Bill W (age 18) and Lois (age 22) changed into a romance. (PIO 39, GB 27)

Jul/Aug, World War I (the Great War) started in Europe and Russia. (www)

Aug, Bill W went to British Columbia to visit his father, Gilman (their first meeting in 9 years). Bill also met Christine Bock whom Gilman planned to marry. (PIO 42, BW-RT 65-66)

Fall, unable to pass the MIT entrance exams, Bill W enrolled at Norwich U military college in Northfield, VT. (BW-RT 65, BW-FH 20-21) Norwich was considered second only to West Point in the quality and discipline of its military training. Total enrollment was 145 students. Bill was miserable at Norwich (PIO 40-42, LR 16, BW-RT 61, BW-FH 21)

### 1915

T Henry Williams went to Akron, OH to work as Chief Engineer for the National Rubber Machinery Co. (PIO 145)

Jan 25, after a 17-year courtship, Dr Bob and Anne Robinson Ripley married in Chicago, IL. They took up residence at 855 Ardmore Ave, Akron, OH. (CH 2, DBGO 29)

Early, at the start of his second semester at Norwich, Bill W hurt his elbow and insisted on being treated by his mother in Boston. She did not receive him well and immediately sent him back. Bill had panic attacks that he perceived as heart attacks. Every attempt to perform physical exercise caused him to be taken to the college infirmary. After several weeks of being unable to find anything wrong, the doctors sent him home. This time he went to his grandparents in East Dorset, VT. (BW-FH 21-22)

Spring, Bill W's condition worsened in East Dorset but doctors could find nothing physically wrong. He spent much of the early spring in bed complaining of "sinking spells." (BW-FH 22) Later, his grandfather, Fayette, motivated him with the prospect of opening an agency to sell automobiles. Bill's depression lifted and he began trying to interest people in buying automobiles. He wrote to his mother that he nearly sold an automobile to the Bamfords (the parents of his lost love). (BW-FH 23)

Summer, Bill W sold kerosene burners and played fiddle at dances, weddings and other affairs. Romance blossomed between him and Lois. (PIO 48, BW-FH 23-24)

Sept 11, Bill W and Lois became secretly engaged. (PIO 49, LR 1, BW-RT 79, BW-40 35, GB 27)

Fall, Bill W re-entered Norwich in a different frame of mind. He discovered a talent for leading his fellow cadets but his poor academic performance continued. He was also noted as being much better at giving orders than obeying them. The Commandant wanted to expel Bill but the school's musical director interceded. (BW-FH 24-25)

### 1916

Feb, Bill W (an onlooker and still a freshman) and his sophomore classmates were suspended for a full term from Norwich U for a serious hazing incident which started a fight between the freshman and sophomore classes. (PIO 49, BW-RT 87)

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June, the Norwich Cadets, as part of the VT National Guard, were called up to respond to the Mexican border troubles fomented by Pancho Villa. This caused Bill W and his classmates to be reinstated. The cadets were sent to Ft Ethan Allen for mobilization but returned to Norwich in a matter of weeks. (PIO 49, BW-RT 88-89)

Bill W's half sister, Helen, was born to Bill's father, Gilman, and his second wife Christine. (PIO 80)

### 1917

Jan, Lois moved to Short Hills, NJ to teach at a small private school her Aunt Marian started in her home. (LR 12)

Apr 6, the US declared war on Germany and entered World War I. (RAA 145, www)

May, Bill W departed for officer's training at Plattsburg, NY. After eight weeks of artillery training at Ft Monroe, VA, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 66<sup>th</sup> Artillery Corps and sent to Ft Rodman outside of New Bedford, MA. (BW-RT 92-95, BW-40 38, 41, WPR 57)

Summer, Bill W (age 22) took his first drink at Emmy and Catherine (Katy) Grinnell's house in New Bedford, MA. It was a Bronx Cocktail (i.e. gin, dry and sweet vermouth and orange juice). He got thoroughly drunk, passed out, threw up and was miserably sick the next day. (AACOA 54, PIO 54-56, BW-RT 95-97, BW-40 42-43, NG 13-14, BW-FH 26)

Oct 12, Henrietta Buckler and J Frederick Sieberling were married in Akron, OH. (AGAA 83)

Dec, Congress approved the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the US Constitution for the prohibition of alcohol. (www, DBGO 30 says 1918)

### 1918

Dr Bob's father, Judge Walter Smith, died. (DBGO 10)

Jan, Frank Buchman met Sam Shoemaker in Peking (now Beijing) China. Shoemaker had a spiritual conversion experience and became a devoted member of Buchman's *First Century Christian Fellowship*. (NW 29, 47-52, RAA 117-118, AGAA 209)

Jan, Lois left her Aunt Marian's School in NJ. (LR 22, RAA 118)

Jan 24, spurred by rumor that Bill W might soon go overseas, he and Lois were married at the Swedenborgian Church in Brooklyn, NY. The wedding date was originally Feb 1. Lois' brother Rogers Burnham was best man. Bill's last stateside posting was at Ft Adams near Newport, RI. (BW-RT 100, PIO 58, 407, RAA 146, BW-FH 27, WPR 57)

Feb 15, Dr Bob and Anne's adopted daughter, Suzanne (Sue) was born. (CH 11, PIO 140)

Jun 5, Dr Bob and Anne's son, Robert (Smitty) was born. (CH 2, PIO 140)

Jul 18, Bill W sailed from Boston to NY Harbor on the British ship Lancashire. Later, on the voyage to England, an officer shared brandy with him. Detained in London, Bill visited the Winchester Cathedral and experienced a "tremendous sense of presence." He read an epitaph on the headstone of a Hampshire Grenadier (Thomas Thetcher) later to be cited in *Bill's Story* in the Big Book. (BW-RT 102-108, PIO 59-60, RAA 146)

Nov 11, Armistice Day. World War I ended at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month. (BW-RT 109, RAA 146, www)

### 1919

Jan, the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to the US Constitution, for the prohibition of alcohol, was ratified. (www)

Mar, Bill W sailed from Bordeaux, France on the S.S. Powhatan to NY Harbor. (BW-RT 109)

May, Bill W was discharged from the Army at Camp Devens. (BW-RT 109)

Summer, Bill & Lois moved into her father's home at 182 Clinton St in Brooklyn, NY. (BW-RT 113, LR 27, PIO 62, 407, RAA 147)

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Lois' father, Dr Clark Burnham, got Bill W a job as a clerk in the insurance department of the NY Central Railroad working for his brother-in-law Cy Jones. After "some months," Bill was fired. (PIO 63, BW-RT 119, BW-40 57) For several weeks, he worked on the NY Central piers near 72<sup>nd</sup> St in Manhattan, driving spikes into planks. Threatened with violence, because he would not join a union, he decided to move on. (AACOA 54, PIO 63, BW-RT 114)

Aug, Bill W and Lois set off for an extended month-long walking trip thru ME, NH and VT. Lois encouraged it partly to give them time to think and partly to get Bill away from drinking. (LR 27-30, PIO 64-65)

Oct, Congress passed the Volstead Act (National Prohibition Act) over President Wilson's veto. (www, GB 170)

### 1920

Feb, Lois got a job with the Red Cross at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. (LR 31)

Bill W and Lois moved into a one-room furnished apartment on State St (around the corner from Lois' parent's home on Clinton St). Bill, not finding what he wanted to do, was restless and increased his drinking. (LR 31)

### 1921

Frank Buchman was invited to visit Cambridge, England. His movement *The First Century Christian Fellowship* would later become the *Oxford Group* and receive wide publicity during the 1920's and 1930's. Core principles consisted of the "four absolutes" (of honesty, unselfishness, purity and love - believed to be derived from scripture in the Sermon on the Mount). Additionally the OG advocated the "five C's" (confidence, confession, conviction, conversion and continuance) and "five procedures" (1. Give in to God, 2. Listen to God's direction, 3. Check guidance, 4. Restitution and 5. Sharing - for witness and confession). (DBGO 53-55, CH 3) (GB 45 states Buchman dated the founding and name of the OG when he met with undergraduates from Christ Church College of Oxford U).

Feb, Lois started work at a better paying job at the psychiatric ward of Bellevue Hospital. Bill and Lois moved from State St to a 3-room attic apartment on Amity St. (LR 33-35, BW-RT 124)

May, Bill W answered a blind advertisement in the *NY Times* and received a reply from Thomas Edison to come to his laboratory to take an employment test of 286 questions. (PIO 64-66)

Jul, Bill W and Lois went on another camping trip over the (300-mile) Long Trail in the Green Mountains of VT. The trip was Lois' way to get Bill to stop drinking. On the trip, Bill decided to enter law school and later entered night classes at the Brooklyn Law School (a division of St Lawrence U). (LR 31, BW-FH 30, PIO 64)

Late summer, Bill W found work as a fraud and embezzlement investigator for the US Fidelity and Guarantee Co, and got his first glimpse of Wall St. Shortly after going to work at USF&G, he received an employment invitation from Thomas Edison but decided instead to stay around Wall St. (PIO 64, BW-RT 121-123, BW-FH 31)

Dec Bill W's grandmother, Ella Brock Griffith, died. (PIO 70, BW-RT 125)

### 1922

Ebby T's family business failed. (PIO 83)

Bill W's bouts with alcohol increased. More and more he drank alone. (BW-RT 124-125, CH 3, LR 34, PIO 67)

Frank Buchman resigned his job at the Hartford Theological Seminary to pursue a wider calling. Over the next few years, he worked mostly in universities (Princeton, Oxford and Cambridge). During the economic depression, students (particularly in Oxford) responded to his approach and were ordained ministers. Others gave all their time to working with him. (www)

Summer, Lois experienced two ectopic pregnancies (the first in Jun and the second in Jul). After the second misfortune, Bill W and Lois were obliged to face the fact that they would never have children. They applied to the Spence-Chapin adoption agency but to no result. In later years, they found out that they were denied the opportunity for adoption due to Bill's drinking. (PIO 67, LR 34, RAA 147-148, NG 315, WPR 59)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1923

Bill W's mother, Emily, married Dr Charles Strobel. (PIO 75)

Dr Bob and Anne adopted a daughter, Suzanne (age 5) the same age as their son Smitty. (CH 2-11, DBGO 35-36)

May, Lois experienced her third ectopic pregnancy which led to surgical removal of her ovaries. Bill W was so drunk he did not go to the hospital to see her. (BW-RT 128, LR 34, RAA 147, BW-FH 37)

Dec 25, Christmas, Bill W wrote a vow in the flyleaf of the family bible: "Thank you for your love and help this terrible year. For your Christmas, I make you this present: No liquor will pass my lips for one year. I'll make the effort to keep my word and make you happy." Two months later, there was another such vow. (BW-RT 127, RAA 148, BW-FH 33)

### 1924

Bill W's grandfather (and substitute father) Gardner Fayette Griffith, died. (BW-RT 128, PIO 70)

Bill W finished law school but never picked up his diploma. He showed up for a final exam so drunk he could not read the questions. He paid a \$15 fee (\$160 today) for the diploma but was required to attend a commencement ceremony to pick it up. He was unwilling to do that. (LR 31, PIO 67, 70, BW-FH 32, WPR 59)

Feb, Bill W again vowed not to drink. As time passed, there would be still other vows. (BW-RT 127)

### 1925

Apr, Bill W and Lois began a one-year motorcycle/camping trip on a three-wheeler Harley-Davidson with sidecar to evaluate businesses. Among the places they visited were GE in Schenectady, NY and Portland Cement in Egypt, PA. By winter, they were in FL and then headed north into Canada. Bill was one of the first "market analysts." His alcoholism progressed. (PIO 69-75, BW-FH 5, LR 37, 39, WPR 59-60)

### 1926

Bill W's drinking problem was openly discussed with his benefactor, Frank Shaw, at business conferences between him and Shaw. (PIO 75, BW-RT 141) For the next few years fortune threw money and applause Bill's way. (PIO 75) However, his success as a securities analyst was to be marred by a worsening drinking problem. (PIO 407)

Spring, Bill W and Lois returned to Brooklyn for the marriage of Lois' sister, Kitty, on Jun 17. Lois was matron of honor. Both Lois and Bill had previously been injured in a motorcycle accident. (BW-RT 141, LR 60-61)

Jun/Jul, Bill and Lois departed for another six months of investigating businesses. They could have traveled first class on Bill's expense account and \$20,000 line of credit (\$210,000 today). Instead, they drove a second-hand DeSoto Lois outfitted with curtains so that they could sleep along side of the road. (BW-FH 40, WPR 60 says the auto was a fairly new Dodge)

### 1927

Jan, Bill W wrote to Lois "There will be no booze during 1927." It was a short-lived promise. (LR 69)

Summer, Bill W and Lois went to Cuba to investigate the Cuban Sugar Co. in Havana. Bill's drinking created many problems and he accomplished little. Frank Shaw wrote to Bill expressing concern. In Sep, Bill wrote to Shaw that drinking had always been a problem for him and he was "through with alcohol forever." (PIO 79-80, BW-FH 43-44)

Sept/Oct (?), on the way home, Bill W and Lois stopped in Miami Beach, FL to see Bill's father and his second wife, Christine. Bill first met his half-sister, Helen, born in 1916. (PIO 80)

On returning to NY, Bill W and Lois rented a three-room apartment at 38 Livingston St in Brooklyn. Not big enough for Bill's desires, he enlarged it by renting the apartment next door and knocking out the walls between them. (BW-RT 144, LR 71, PIO 80-81)

By the end of 1927, Bill W was so depressed by his behavior and drinking that he signed over to Lois all rights, title and interests of his stockbroker accounts with Baylis and Co. and Tobey and Kirk. (LR 72, PIO 82)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1928

Bill W was a star margin trader among his Wall St associates and made great financial strides. However, there was no question about the severity of his drinking. He sank into a form of hostility that poisoned his relationships. Bill's brother-in-law, Dr Leonard V Strong (his sister Dorothy's husband) confronted him on the progressive nature of his drinking and referred Bill to a colleague for a physical examination. (BW-RT 144-145, PIO 81, GB 29)

Summer (?), a group of Rhodes Scholars returned home to S. Africa, from Oxford U, England to tell how their lives changed through meeting Frank Buchman. A railway employee labeled their train compartment *The Oxford Group*. The press took it up and the name stuck (the name *First Century Christian Fellowship* faded). (RAA 120, www)

Sep 28, St Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH opened. Shortly after, Dr Bob and Sister Ignatia met for the first time. Sister Ignatia (of the Sisters of Charity of St Augustine) was the registration clerk at the hospital. At this time, she was unaware of Dr Bob's drinking problem. Later, Dr Bob, who loved to give people nicknames, gave Sister Ignatia the nicknames of "Angel Alcoholics Anonymous," "Little Angel of AA's," "Little Sister of Alcoholics Anonymous" and "Ig." (LOH 202, 372, SI 6-9, DBGO 45-46)

Oct 20, Bill W signed a pledge in the family Bible: "To my beloved wife that has endured so much, let this stand as evidence to you that I have finished with drink forever." On Thanksgiving, Bill pledged again in the family Bible: "My strength is renewed a thousand fold in my love for you." (PIO 81)

### 1929

Dr Bob went back to school to study under the Mayo brothers in Rochester, MN. He also studied at the Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia, PA and became a surgeon proctologist. His condition was severely compounded by his daytime habit of taking barbiturate sedatives (until around 4PM) and drinking at night. (CH 101, DBGO 32-33)

Jan, Bill W pledged again in the family Bible: "To tell you once more that I am finished with it. I love you." (PIO 81)

Jan, on a trip to Manchester, VT Bill W called Ebby T in Albany, NY. After an all-night drinking spree, they chartered a flight with Flyers Inc. in Albany to be the first flight to Manchester. They landed drunk (the pilot, Ted Burke, as well) and disgraced themselves. (EBBY 39-41, PIO 83-84, BW-40 121, NW 20, LR 76-77, LOH 367, BW-RT 183-184)  
Note: beyond this incident, it does not appear that Bill and Ebby drank together very much.

Oct 29 (black Tuesday) the Stock Market collapsed. Bill W was broke and \$60,000 in debt (\$645,000 today). He and his benefactor, Frank Shaw, parted company. Later, Bill's friend, Dick Johnson, offered him a job in Montreal with Greenshields and Co. By Christmas the Wilsons were in Canada (BW-RT 152-154, LOH 367, LR 81, PIO 85-86, RAA 148-149, BW-FH 44-46)

### 1930

Bill W and Lois lived lavishly in Canada in a furnished Glen Eagles apartment on Cotes des Neiges in Mount Royal overlooking Montreal. They had a new Packard automobile and membership in the Lachute Country Club. (BW-RT 154, BW-FH 45, LR 81)

Neurologist, Dr William Duncan Silkworth (nicknamed "Silky") after losing his investments and savings in the stock market crash, started work at Towns Hospital earning \$40 a week (\$440 today). Charles Towns did not see eye to eye with Silkworth on alcoholism as an illness. (PIO 101, SW 30-31) (NG 22 says Silkworth arrived in 1924)

Sept 3, Bill W wrote his last promise to stop drinking in the family Bible: "Finally and for a lifetime, thank God for your love." After that, he gave up making promises in despair. (LR 79)

Fall, in less than ten months after arriving in Montreal, Bill W was fired from Greenshields and Co (due to his drinking and fighting in the country club). Lois went back to Brooklyn because her mother had fallen ill. Bill stayed behind in Montreal to clean up details. (RAA 149, PIO 86, BW-RT 155, BW-FH 45)

Dec, after a binge that started in Montreal and carried him into VT, Lois went to get Bill W. They finally returned to Clinton St and moved into a room there. Lois' mother was dying from bone cancer. (PIO 86-87, BW-FH 46)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Dec 25, Christmas, Lois' mother died. Bill W, drunk for days beforehand, could not attend the funeral and stayed drunk for many days after. (SW 30-31, PIO 87, BW-RT 156, LR 82, BW-FH 46)

### 1931

Bill W was able to work occasionally through 1931, but entered a phase of helpless drinking. Lois went to work at Macy's, earning \$19 a week (\$230 today) and that became their livelihood. (PIO 90, 128, BW-FH 47)

*The Common Sense of Drinking*, by Richard Peabody, was published. It strengthened the concept of alcoholism as an illness and contained the statement "Half measures are to no avail." The book later became a prominent reference source in the early AA Fellowship. (NW 16, SW 126 says 1930)

Rowland H (age 50) was treated by Dr Carl Gustav Jung in Zurich, Switzerland. It is believed that he was a patient for about a year, sobered up and then returned to drinking. Treated a second time by Jung, Rowland was told that there was no medical or psychological hope for an alcoholic of his type; that his only hope was a vital spiritual or religious experience - in short a genuine conversion experience. Bill W later wrote that this was "the first in the chain of events that led to the founding of AA." (NW 11-19, NG 8-9, EBBY 59, LOH 277)

Dec, Russell (Bud) Firestone (alcoholic son of Akron, OH business magnate Harvey Firestone Sr.) was introduced to Sam Shoemaker by James Newton on a train returning from an Episcopal conference in Denver, CO. Newton was a prominent Oxford Group member and an executive at Firestone. Bud, who was drinking a fifth or more of whiskey a day, spiritually surrendered with Shoemaker and was released from his alcohol obsession. Bud joined the OG and became an active member (but later returned to drinking). (NW 15, 65, AGAA 8-9, 32-36)

### 1932

Rowland H found sobriety through the spiritual practices of the Oxford Group (it is not clear whether this occurred in Europe or the US - and it could have occurred in 1931). Rowland was a dedicated OG member in NY, VT and upper MA and a prominent member of the Calvary Episcopal Church in NYC. He later moved to Shaftsbury, VT. (NW 10-19, NG 8-9, PIO 113-114, AGAA 28, 141-144, LOH 277-278, www)

Apr 8, Bill W's brother-in-law, Gardner Swentzel (Kitty's husband) helped him form a stock buying syndicate with Arthur Wheeler and Frank Winans. Bill was assigned a generous interest with the stipulation that if he started drinking again the deal would be off and he would lose his interest in the venture. (PIO 90-91, BW-RT 164-165)

May, Bill W went on a business trip to Bound Brook NJ with a group of Pathe Co. engineers to examine a new photographic process. It turned into a disaster. In a small hotel Bill drank Apple Jack (Jersey Lightning) and was drunk for 3 days. His contract with Wheeler and Winans was cancelled. (PIO 91-92, BW-RT 165-167, AACOA 55-56)

Financier, Joseph H Hirshhorn (also sometimes misspelled Hirshorn and Hirschorn) hired Bill W to analyze and evaluate companies. (DBGO 45, PIO 93-98, www)

### 1933

President Franklin D Roosevelt declared a mortgage moratorium preventing banks from foreclosing on unpaid mortgage payments. This kept both Bill W and Dr Bob from being evicted from their homes. (CH 114)

Jan, Harvey Firestone Sr. (grateful for help given his son Bud) sponsored an Oxford Group conference weekend (DBGO says 10-day house party) headquartered at the Mayflower Hotel in Akron, OH. Frank Buchman and 30 members (DBGO says 60) of his team were met at the train station by the Firestones and Rev Walter Tunks (Firestone's minister and rector of St Paul's Episcopal Church). The event included 300 overseas members of the OG and received widespread news coverage. The event attracted Henrietta Sieberling, T Henry and Clarace Williams and Anne Smith. (NW 65-67, CH 2, DBGO 55, AGAA 9, 37-51, 71)

Feb, Congress passed the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment to the US Constitution to repeal the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. (www)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Early, Anne Smith attended meetings of the Oxford Group with her friend Henrietta Sieberling (whose marriage to J Frederick Sieberling was crumbling). Anne later persuaded Dr Bob to attend. The meetings were held on Thursday nights at the West Hill group. (NW 67-68, SI 32, 34, DBGO 53-60, CH 2-3, 28-29) Beer had become legal and Dr Bob previously went through a beer-drinking phase ("the beer experiment"). It was not long before he was drinking a case and a half a day fortifying the beer with straight alcohol. In his Big Book story, Bob says that this was around the time when he was introduced to the OG. He participated in the OG for 2 ½ years before meeting Bill. (DBGO 42, AAB 177-178, NW 62)

Joe Hirshhorn sent Bill W on a trip to Toronto, Canada. Bill arrived at the border drunk and was refused entry. He protested so belligerently that he was arrested and jailed. After finally arriving in Toronto, Bill stayed drunk and had to be sent home as useless. This was his last chance on Wall St. (BW-FH 48, PIO 98)

May, Lois' father married "Joan Jones." Lois was the only family member who attended the civil wedding ceremony. (LR 83-84, PIO 98, BW-RT 170)

Jun-Sep, Lois took a 3-month leave of absence from Macy's. She and Bill W spent the summer in VT at the home of Bill's sister, Dorothy, who was vacationing in Europe with her family. (BW-FH 49, LR 84, BW-RT 171)

Autumn, Lois, now earning \$22.50 a week at Macy's (\$317 today) turned to her brother-in-law Dr Leonard V Strong, who arranged, and paid for, Bill W's first admission to Towns Hospital. Bill was subjected to the "belladonna cure." The regimen primarily involved "purging and puking" aided by, among other things, castor oil. Belladonna, a hallucinogen, was used to ease the symptoms of alcohol withdrawal. (PIO 98-101, LR 85, BW-40 104, NG 14-15, 310, BW-FH 50, BW-RT 174)

Dec 5, the 21<sup>st</sup> amendment to the US Constitution was ratified when Utah became the 36<sup>th</sup> state to vote to repeal the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment. The almost decade and a half prohibition of alcohol was widely flaunted and yielded fortunes for organized crime figures in bootlegging and smuggling. (www, GB 30)

### 1934

Dr Bob was appointed to the courtesy staff of St Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH. His position at City Hospital had become precarious because of his drinking. (SI 9, DBGO 45, 51, NG 317)

*The Sermon On The Mount* by Emmet Fox was published. Both Fox and the book would later become popular among early AA members. Dr Bob would propose the book as recommended reading for Akron, OH members. (NW 111, 114, DBGO 310-311)

Sister Ignatia befriended Dr Thomas P Scuderi, (an emergency room intern who later became Medical Director of Ignatia Hall at St Thomas Hospital). She convinced him that alcoholics were sick and accident-prone and persuaded Dr Scuderi to allow them to "rest" in the hospital prior to release. Dr Scuderi and Sister Ignatia secretly treated Bill D (later to become AA #3) prior to his meeting Dr Bob and Bill. (SI 10, DBGO 51).

Mar, Lois quit her job at Macy's to take Bill W to VT. They stayed there until the summer. (PIO 105-106)

Jul, Ebby T was approached in Manchester, VT by his friends Cebra G (an attorney) and F Sheppard (Shep) C (a NY stockbroker). Both were Oxford Group members who had done considerable drinking with Ebby and were abstaining from drinking. They informed Ebby of the OG in VT but he was not quite ready yet to stop drinking. (EBBY 51-55, PIO 113)

Jul (?), Bill W's second admission to Towns Hospital (again paid by Dr Leonard V Strong). Bill met Dr Silkworth for the first time. Silkworth explained the obsession and allergy of alcoholism but Bill started drinking again almost immediately upon discharge. Bill was unemployable, \$50,000 in debt (\$675,000 today) suicidal and drinking around the clock. (AACOA 52, PIO 106-108, BW-40 114-117, NG 15, 310, BW-FH 50-55)

Aug, Cebra G and Shep C vacationed at Rowland H's house in Bennington, VT. Cebra learned that Ebby T was about to be committed to Brattleboro Asylum. Cebra, Shep and Rowland decided to make Ebby "a project." (NG 309)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Aug, Rowland H and Cebra G persuaded a VT court judge (Cebra's father Collins) to parole Ebby T into their custody. Ebby had first met Rowland only shortly before. In the fall, Rowland took Ebby to NYC where he sobered up with the help of the Oxford Group at the Calvary Mission. (RAA 151, AACOA vii, NW 20-21, 26, EBBY 52-59, NG 9-10, PIO 115, AGAA 155-156)

Sep 17,<sup>1</sup> Bill W's third admission to Towns Hospital (again paid by Dr Leonard V Strong). Dr Silkworth pronounced Bill a hopeless drunk and informed Lois that Bill would likely have to be committed. Bill left the hospital a deeply frightened man and sheer terror kept him sober. He found a little work on Wall St, which began to restore his badly shattered confidence. (PIO 106-109, LR 87, AACOA vii, 56, BW-RT 176-177, NG 15, 310, BW-FH 4-5, 54-55)

Nov 11, Armistice Day. Bill W went to play golf and got drunk and injured. Lois began investigating sanitariums in which to place Bill. (AACOA 56-58, BW-FH 56)

Nov (late), Ebby T, while staying at the Calvary Mission and working with the Oxford Group, heard about Bill W's problems with drinking. He phoned Lois who invited him over for dinner. (EBBY 66)

Nov (late), Ebby visited Bill W at 182 Clinton St and shared his recovery experience "one alcoholic talking to another." (AACOA vii, 58-59) A few days later, Ebby returned with Shep C. They spoke to Bill about the Oxford Group. Bill did not think too highly of Shep. Lois recalled that Ebby visited several times, once even staying for dinner. (AACOA vii, NG 17-18, 31, BW-FH 57-58, NW 22-23, PIO 111-116, BW-RT 187-192)

Dec 7, Bill W decided to investigate the Calvary Mission on 23<sup>rd</sup> St. He showed up drunk with a drinking companion found along the way (Alec the Finn). Bill kept interrupting the service wanting to speak. On the verge of being ejected, Ebby came by and fed Bill a plate of beans. Bill later joined the penitents and drunkenly "testified" at the meeting. (AACOA 59-60, BW-40 136-137, NG 18-19, BW-FH 60, NW 23, PIO 116-119, BW-RT 193-196, AGAA 156-159, EBBY 66-69)

Dec 11, Bill W (age 39) decided to go back to Towns Hospital and had his last drink (four bottles of beer purchased on the way). He got financial help from his mother, Emily, for the hospital bill. (AACOA 61-62, LOH 197, RAA 152, NG 19, 311, NW 23, PIO 119-120, GB 31).

Dec 14, Ebby visited Bill W at Towns Hospital and told him about the Oxford Group principles. After Ebby left, Bill fell into a deep depression (his "deflation at depth") and had a profound spiritual experience after crying out "If there be a God, will he show himself." Dr Silkworth later assured Bill he was not crazy and told him to hang on to what he had found. In a lighter vein, Bill and others would later refer to this as his "white flash" or "hot flash" experience. (AABB 13-14, AACOA vii, 13, BW-40 141-148, NG 19-20, NW 23-24, PIO 120-124, GTBT 111, LOH 278-279)

Dec 15, Ebby brought Bill W a copy of William James' book *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.<sup>2</sup> Bill was deeply inspired by the book. It revealed three key points for recovery: 1) calamity or complete defeat in some vital area of life (hitting bottom), 2) admission of defeat (surrender) and 3) appeal to a higher power for help (acceptance). The book strongly influenced early AAs and is cited in the Big Book. (AACOA 62-64, LOH 279, EBBY 70, SI 26, BW-40 150-152, NG 20-24, 312-313, NW 24-25, PIO 124-125, GTBT 111-112, AABB 28)

Dec 18, Bill W left Towns Hospital and began working with drunks. He and Lois attended Oxford Group meetings with Ebby T and Shep C at Calvary House. The Rev Sam Shoemaker was the rector at the Calvary Church (the OG's US headquarters). The church was on 4<sup>th</sup> Ave (now Park Ave) and 21<sup>st</sup> St. Calvary House (where OG meetings were usually held) was at 61 Gramercy Park. Calvary Mission was located at 346 E 23<sup>rd</sup> St. (AABB 14-16, AACOA vii, LR 197, BW-40 155-160, NG 24-25, PIO 127, GB 32-33, AGAA 144)

Dec (late), after Oxford Group meetings, Bill W and other OG alcoholics met at Stewart's Cafeteria near the Calvary Mission. Attendees included Rowland H and Ebby T. (BW-RT 207, BW-40 160, AAGA 141-142, NG 314)

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<sup>1</sup> Date provided by Ron C. of NSW, Australia. Derived from an Archives copy of the Towns Hospital admission record.

<sup>2</sup> Some references indicate that it may have been Rowland H who gave Bill the book. (AGAA 142)



## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1935

Early, Bill W worked with alcoholics at the Calvary Mission and Towns Hospital, emphasizing his "hot flash" spiritual experience. Alcoholic Oxford Group members began meeting at his home on Clinton St. Bill had no success sobering up others. (AACOA vii, AABB, BW-FH 69, PIO 131-133)

Mar/Apr, Henrietta Sieberling (nicknamed "Henri") encouraged by her friend Delphine Weber, organized a Wednesday-night Oxford Group meeting at T Henry and Clarace Williams' house on 676 Palisades Dr. The meeting was started specifically to help Dr Bob who later confessed openly about his drinking problem. OG meetings continued at the William's house until 1954. (DBGO 56-59, AGAA 103 says May)

Apr, Bill W had a talk with Dr Silkworth who advised him to stop preaching about his "hot flash" and hit the alcoholics hard with the medical view. Silkworth advised Bill to break down the strong egos of alcoholics by telling them about the obsession that condemned them to drink and allergy that condemned them to go mad or die. It would then be easier to get them to accept the spiritual solution. (AACOA 13, 67-68, BW-RT 211, NG 25-26, PIO 133)

Apr, Bill W returned to Wall St and was introduced to Howard Tompkins of the firm Baer and Co. Tompkins was involved in a proxy fight to take over control of the National Rubber Machinery Co. based in Akron, OH. (BW-RT 211, NG 26, BW-FH 74, PIO 133-134, GB 33)

May, Bill W went to Akron but the proxy fight was quickly lost. He remained behind at the Mayflower Hotel very discouraged. (BW-RT 212, PIO 134-135)

May 11, (AGAA says May 10) Bill W, in poor spirits, and tempted to enter the Mayflower Hotel bar, realized he needed another alcoholic. He telephoned members of the clergy listed on the lobby directory. He reached the Rev Walter Tunks who referred him to Norman Sheppard who then referred him to Henrietta Sieberling (47 years old and an Oxford Group adherent). Bill introduced himself as "a member of the OG and a rum hound from NY." Henrietta met with Bill at her gatehouse (Stan Hywet Hall) on the Sieberling estate. She arranged a dinner meeting the next day with Dr Bob and Anne. (AACOA 65-67, SI 21, BW-RT 212-213, DBGO 60, 63-67, NG 26-28, PIO 134-138, GB 19) Note: some stories (AACOA 67) say that when Henrietta called Anne, Dr Bob was passed out under the kitchen table. He was upstairs in bed (re Dr. Bob's Nightmare 179 4<sup>th</sup> ed).

May 12, Mother's Day (AGAA says Mother's Day was May 11) Bill W (age 39) met Dr Bob (age 55) Anne and their young son Bob (age 17) at Henrietta Sieberling's gatehouse at 5PM. Dr Bob, too hung over to eat dinner, planned to stay only 15 minutes. Privately, in the library, Bill told Bob of his alcoholism experience in the manner suggested by Dr Silkworth. Bob opened up and he and Bill talked until after 11PM. (AACOA vii, 67-70, BW-RT 214-215, DBGO 66-69, NG 28-32, BW-FH 4, GB 21)

May, Bill W wrote a letter to Lois saying that he and Dr Bob tried in vain to sober up a Dr McK a "once prominent surgeon" who developed into a "terrific rake and drunk." Henrietta Sieberling arranged for Bill to stay at the Portage Country Club. (DBGO 70, 77)

Jun, Bill W moved to Dr Bob's house at the request of Anne Smith. Bill insisted on keeping two bottles of liquor in the kitchen to prove that he and Bob could live in the presence of liquor. Both worked with alcoholics and went to Oxford Group meetings on Wednesday nights at the home of T Henry and Clarace Williams. T Henry lost his job due to the proxy fight that brought Bill to Akron. (AACOA 141, NW 68-69, 73, DBGO 70-71, 99-102, PIO 145-147, AGAA 186, NG 317) Favored Scripture readings at meetings were *The Sermon on the Mount*, *First Corinthians Chapter 13* and *the Book of James*. (AAGA 193, 208-209, 253) (GTBT 95-96 says that meetings were held at Dr Bob's house and moved to the Williams' house in late 1936 or early 1937)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Jun 10 (more likely Jun 17)<sup>3</sup> after a multi-day binge on the way to, and at, an AMA convention in Atlantic City, NJ, a drunken Dr Bob was picked up at his office nurse's house in Cuyahoga Falls. Bob went through a 3-day sobering up period with Bill W's help. Scheduled for a surgery at City Hospital, Bob pronounced, "I am going through with this - I have placed both operation and myself in God's hands. I'm going to do what it takes to get sober and stay that way." Bill gave Bob his last drink (a beer) and a "goofball" (a barbiturate) to steady him prior to the surgery. (AACOA vii, 70-71, SI 22, DBG0 72-75, NG 32, PIO 147-149, AA video *Bill's Own Story*)

Jun 11 (more likely Jun 18), Dr Bob suggested that he and Bill W work with other alcoholics. A local Minister, J C Wright, provided them with a prospect. They tried in vain, throughout the summer, to sober up Edgar (Eddie) R (described as an "alcoholic atheist" and "able to produce a major crisis of some sort about every other day"). Eddie missed the chance to be AA #3 but he showed up at Dr Bob's funeral in 1950. He was sober a year and attending the Youngstown, OH group. (AACOA 72-73, DBG0 77-81, 85, NG 37, 319, PIO 151-152, AAGA 184, CH 5-6)

Jun 28, Bill W, Dr Bob and Eddie R visited Bill D (*Alcoholic Anonymous Number Three*) at City Hospital. A prominent attorney in Akron, Bill D had been hospitalized 8 times in 1935 because of his drinking. Bill W and Bob visited Bill D every day. It took about 5 days before Bill D would say that he could not control his drinking. He checked out of the hospital on Jul 4 and within a week, was back in court sober and arguing a case. (AACOA 71-73, AABB 184, BW-RT 219-220, DBG0 81-89, NG 37, 319, PIO 152-154, GB 42, AGAA 202-203)

Jul (?), Lois went to Akron to join Bill W at the Smith's house for two weeks (LR 197, NG 41, BW-FH 85).

Jul, encouraged by T Henry Williams, Ernie G (AA #4, *The Seven Month Slip*) contacted Dr Bob and sobered up. He later married Dr Bob's adopted daughter Sue in Sep 1941. Ernie could not stay sober and their marriage was a disaster. Tragically, on Jun 11, 1969, their daughter Bonna committed suicide after taking the life of her 6-year-old daughter Sandy. Ernie G died two years later to the day. (AACOA 7, 73, DBG0 92-95, AAGA 68, CH 72-74, PIO 154-155)

Aug 26, Bill W returned to NYC. Meetings were held at his house at 182 Clinton St on Tues. nights. His home also became a halfway house, of sorts, for drunks. (AACOA 74, BW-RT 225, PIO 160-162, GTBT 96, GB 51, AGAA 145)

Nov 19, Ebby T came to live with Bill W and Lois at Clinton St. (LR 197, EBBY 72, NG 42-44)

Winter, Henry (Hank) P (*The Unbeliever*) and John Henry Fitzhugh (Fitz) M (*Our Southern Friend*) sobered up at Towns Hospital. Hank and Fitz provided a big help to Bill W. Hank started AA in NJ at his house and Fitz started AA in Washington, DC (AACOA 16-17, 74, LR 101, BW-RT 225-226, NG 43-44) (PIO 191 says 1937)

### 1936

Bill W's efforts in working only with alcoholics were criticized by NY Oxford Group members. Similarly, in Akron, T Henry and Clarace Williams were criticized as well by OG members who were not supportive of their efforts being extended primarily to alcoholics. (NG 44-45, NW 73, AGAA 76)

Jun, the Oxford Group was at the height of its popularity. 10,000 people (GB 46 says 5,000) flocked to the Berkshires for a meeting at Stockbridge, MA. (PIO 170) An OG "house-party" (a cross between a convention and a retreat) in Birmingham, England drew 15,000. (GB 46, AAGA 173)

Aug 26, Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group experienced an international public relations disaster. A *NY World Telegram* article by William H Birnie, quoted Buchman as saying, "I thank heaven for a man like Adolph Hitler, who built a front-line of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism." Although the remark was taken out of context in its reporting, it would plague Buchman's reputation for many years. It marked the beginning of the decline of the OG. (NW 30, 96, DBG0 155, BW-FH 96, PIO 170-171, GB 53, AGAA 161)

Sep, Lois' father died. The house at 182 Clinton St was taken over by the mortgage company. Lois and Bill W were allowed to stay there for a small rental. (PIO 175)

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<sup>3</sup> Barefoot Bill L obtained confirmation from the AMA Archives in Chicago, IL that the 1935 Atlantic City, NJ AMA Convention was held from Monday to Friday, Jun 10 to 14, 1935.

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Dec, Charles Towns offered Bill W a very lucrative job at his hospital as a lay alcoholism therapist. Bill wanted it. The question was presented to the NY group meeting in Bill's home. They rejected it. This was the emergence of the principle "God speaking in the group conscience is to be our final authority." (AACOA 100-102, LR 197, BW-RT 232-234, NG 63-64, PIO 175-177)

### 1937

Early, Bill W and Lois attended a major Oxford Group house party at the Hotel Thayer in West Point, NY. For the previous 2 ½ years they had been attending two OG meetings a week. (NW 89)

On the AA calendar of "year two," the spirit of Tradition Three emerged. A member asked to be admitted who frankly described himself to the "oldest" member as "the victim of another addiction even worse stigmatized than alcoholism." The "addiction" was "sex deviate." <sup>4</sup> Guidance came from Dr Bob (the oldest member in Akron, OH) asking, "What would the Master do?" The member was admitted and plunged into 12<sup>th</sup> Step work. (DBGO 240-241 12&12 141-142) Note: this story is often erroneously intermingled with an incident that occurred eight years later in 1945 at the 41<sup>st</sup> St clubhouse in NYC. (PIO 318).

Late spring, leaders of the Oxford Group at the Calvary Mission ordered alcoholics staying there not to attend meetings at Clinton St. Bill W and Lois were criticized by OG members for having "drunks only" meetings at their home. The Wilson's were described as "not maximum" (an OG term for those believed to be lagging in their devotion to OG principles). (EBBY 75, LR 103, BW-RT 231, NG 45, NW 89-91)

Apr, Ebby T got drunk after two years and seven months sobriety. (LR 197, EBBY 77, BW-FH 63, PIO 177)

Aug, Bill and Lois stopped attending Oxford Group meetings. The NY AAs separated from the OG. (LR 197, AACOA vii, 74-76)

Alcoholic residents at 182 Clinton St were Ebby T, Oscar V, Russell R, Bill C and Florence R (*A Feminine Victory*). In Oct, Bill C, a young Canadian (and former attorney who sold Bill W's and Lois' clothes to get liquor) committed suicide in the house while Bill and Lois were away visiting Fitz M (PIO 165 says summer of 1936). Florence R, the first woman at Clinton St, later went to Washington, DC to help Fitz M. She started drinking again in 1939 and later died destitute in 1941. (AACOA 19, AABB 16, BW-RT 237-239, LR 107)

Nov, Bill W and Dr Bob met in Akron and compared notes. 40 cases were sober (more than 20 for over a year). All once diagnosed as hopeless. In a meeting at T Henry Williams' home, Bill's ideas, for a book, hospitals and how to expand the movement with paid missionaries, narrowly passed by 2 votes among 18 members. The NY group was more enthusiastic. (AACOA vii, 76-77, 144-146, BW-RT 239-243, DBGO 123-124, NG 56-57, PIO 180, LOH 142)

During the rest of Nov, Bill W and Hank P tried to raise money for the book without success. (LR 197, PIO 181)

Dec, Bill W's brother-in-law, Dr Leonard V Strong, set up a meeting with Willard S Richardson (manager of John D Rockefeller's philanthropies). A second meeting was held and included Bill, Dr Bob, Hank P, Fitz M and Ned P (a new man). Other attendees were Dr Silkworth, Richardson, Frank Amos, A LeRoy Chipman and Albert Scott. (AACOA 147-149, BW-RT 245-246, NG 65-66, PIO 181-185) Bill also wrote that Akron, OH member Paul S (*Truth Freed Me*) attended the second meeting as well. (LOH 59-60).

### 1938

Nations of the world armed for World War II and Frank Buchman called for a "moral and spiritual re-armament" to address the root causes of the conflict. He renamed the *Oxford Group* to *Moral Re-Armament*. (www, NW 44)

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<sup>4</sup> Information provided by David S from an audiotape of Bill W at an open meeting of the 1968 GSC. See also the pamphlet *The Co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous*. (P-53, pg 30)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Feb, Willard Richardson asked Frank Amos to visit Akron, OH and make a report on the fledgling Fellowship. Amos made a very favorable report to Richardson who presented it to John D Rockefeller Jr. urging a donation of \$50,000 (\$650,000 today). (BW-FH 105-106 says \$10,000, \$5,000 a year for 2 years, in LOH 61 Bill W says \$30,000). (SM S3, BW-RT 246, LR 197, DBGO 128-135, BW-FH 105-106, PIO 185-187, LOH 143, AGAA 217, 258) Rockefeller refused to make the donation but provided \$5,000 (\$65,000 today) to be held in a fund in the Riverside Church treasury. Much of the fund was used to pay off Dr Bob's mortgage and provide Bill and Bob with \$30 a week (\$390 today) as long as the fund lasted. (BW-RT 247, AACOA 149-151, DBGO 135, PIO 187-188)

May 20, (PIO 193 and AACOA 153 say Mar/Apr) beginning of the writing of the Big Book at Hank P's office (Honors Dealers, 17 William St in Newark, NJ). Bill W wrote, edited and rewrote manuscripts at home on legal pads then dictated chapters to Ruth Hock (nicknamed "Dutch" - short for "Duchess"). Most of the early hand-written Big Book manuscript documents were lost during a later move from Newark to NYC. (AACOA vii, 159, BW-RT 248-250, LR 197, BW-FH 115, PIO 193, 235, GB 55, LOH 106-107, WPR 79)

Jun, Bill W wrote to Dr Bob "By the way, you might all be thinking up a good title. Nearly everyone agrees that we should sign the volume *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Titles such as *Haven*, *One Hundred Men*, *Comes the Dawn*, etc. have been suggested." (NG 74-75, 333)

Jun 15, Lois' recollection of the first use of the term *Alcoholics Anonymous*. (LR 197)

Jul 15, in a letter to Messrs. Richardson, Chipman and Scott of the Rockefeller Foundation, Bill W invited them to his home on Clinton St for meetings of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. (PIO 202)

Jul 18, Dr Esther L Richards (of Johns Hopkins) stated in a letter that Bill W, at that time, was using the name *Alcoholics Anonymous* both as the working title of the book and as the name of the Fellowship. (PIO 202)

Jul 27, Dr William Duncan Silkworth wrote a letter of support for AA for use in fundraising for the book. The letter was incorporated into the chapter *The Doctor's Opinion*. (SW center-fold photo exhibits, AACOA 168) Dr Esther L Richards of Baltimore had suggested to Bill W to get a "Number one physician" in the alcoholism field to write an introduction. (NG 332)

Aug 11, the *Alcoholic Foundation* was established as a charitable trust with a board of 5 Trustees (in LOH 61 Bill W said it started with 7 Trustees). Non-alcoholic board members were Willard (Dick) Richardson (who proposed the Foundation) Frank Amos and John E F Wood. One of the early challenges facing Wood was legally defining the difference between an alcoholic and non-alcoholic. (LOH 61) Alcoholic board members were Dr Bob and NY member William (Bill) R (*A Business Man's Recovery*). Bill R was the first Board Chairman but returned to drinking and resigned in Feb 1939. The board composition began a long (and later troublesome) tradition of making non-alcoholics a majority. An advisory committee to the board was also established. It consisted of A LeRoy Chipman, Bill W, Albert L Scott and Hank P. (GSO, BW-RT 248, AACOA 151-152, LR 197, NG 66, 307, 330, PIO 188) (NG 330 end note states AACOA date and Amos' date of Aug 5 are in error and gives the date as Spring 1938, LOH 142 and AACOA 15 say Spring of 1938).

Sep, board Trustee Frank Amos arranged a meeting between Bill W and Eugene Exman (Religious Editor of Harper Brothers publishers). Exman offered Bill a \$1,500 advance (\$19,400 today) on the rights to the book. The Alcoholic Foundation Board urged acceptance of the offer. Instead, Hank P and Bill formed Works Publishing Co. and sold stock at \$25 par value (\$325 today). 600 shares were issued: Hank and Bill received 200 shares each, 200 shares were sold to others. Later, 30 shares of preferred stock, at \$100 par value (\$1,300 today) were sold as well. To mollify the board, it was decided that the author's royalty (which would ordinarily be Bill's) could go to the Alcoholic Foundation. (LR 197, BW-FH 116-119, SM S6, PIO 193-195, AACOA 157, 188) Encouraged by Dr Silkworth, Charles Towns loaned Hank and Bill \$2,500 for the book. It was later increased to \$4,000. (\$52,000 today). (PIO 196, SM S7, LOH 176, AACOA 13-14, 153-159)

Oct, Bill W's recollection of the first use of the term *Alcoholics Anonymous*. (AACOA 165, PIO 202)

Dec, the Twelve Steps were written at 182 Clinton St (in about 30 minutes). Much argument (sometimes heated) ensued over their wording. (LOH 200, AACOA vii, 160-163, BW-RT 253, PIO 197-199, GB 55-57, AGAA 260)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1939

Jan, the draft book text and personal stories were completed. (AACOA 164, BW-RT 255)

Jan, 400 multilith copies of the book were distributed for evaluation. Each copy was stamped "Loan Copy" to protect the coming copyright. (AACOA 165, LR 197, NG 74, 319, PIO 200) NY member Jim B (*Vicious Cycle*) suggested the phrases "*God as we understand Him*" and "*Power greater than ourselves*" be added to the Steps and basic text. Bill W later wrote "Those expressions, as we so well know today, have proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic." (LOH 201) Note: Jim B later moved to Philadelphia, PA in Feb 1940 and started AA there. He also helped start AA in Baltimore, MD. (AACOA 17, BW-FH 140, GTBT 137, WPR 81)

Jan 18, The Alcoholic Foundation Board increased from 5 to 7 members. Non-alcoholics still held the majority. New members were alcoholic Harry B (*A Different Slant*) as the newly appointed second Board Chairman and Dr Leonard V Strong (Bill W's brother-in-law). Harry B also later returned to drinking and was replaced in Dec (GSO, PIO 189) Foundation Trustees could appoint their own successors and were "chartered to do everything under the sun." (LOH 61)

Mar (?), the much changed book manuscript was turned over to Tom Uzzell. He was a friend of Hank P, an editor at *Collier's* and a member of the NYU faculty. The manuscript was variously estimated as 600 to 1,200 pages (including personal stories). Uzzell reduced it to approximately 400 pages. Most cuts came from the personal stories, which had also been edited by Jim S (*The News Hawk*) a journalist from Akron, OH. (AACOA 164, BW-FH 126, PIO 203)

Mar, (?), Bill W, Hank P, Ruth Hock and Dorothy S (wife of Cleveland pioneer Clarence S) drove to Cornwall, NY and presented a much altered manuscript to the printing plant of Cornwall Press. When the plant manager saw the condition of the manuscript, he almost sent them back to type a clean copy. Hank P persuaded the manager to accept the manuscript on condition that the group would examine and correct galley proofs as they came off the press. The group checked in to a local hotel and spent the next several days proofreading galleys. (WPR 81-82)

Apr, 4,730 copies of the first Ed. of *Alcoholics Anonymous* were published at a selling price of \$3.50 (\$46 today). The printer, Edward Blackwell of Cornwall Press, was told to use the thickest paper in his shop. The large, bulky volume became known as the "Big Book." The idea was to convince the alcoholic he was getting his money's worth. (AACOA viii, 170, NG 76, PIO 204-205, GB 59) Ray C (*An Artist's Concept*) designed the "circus color" dust jacket. The book had 8 roman and 400 Arabic numbered pages. *The Doctor's Opinion* started as page 1 and the basic text ended at page 174. The manuscript story of an Akron member, *Ace Full - Seven - Eleven*, was dropped (reputedly, because he was not too pleased with changes made to the first drafts of the Steps and text). 29 stories were included (10 from the east coast, 18 from the mid-west and 1 from the west coast - which was ghost written by Ruth Hock and later removed from the book) (www)

Apr 11, Marty Mann (age 35, *Women Suffer Too*) attended her first meeting at 182 Clinton St. For the prior 15 months, she was a charity patient at Bellevue Hospital in NYC and the Blythwood Sanitarium in Greenwich, CT (under the care of Dr Harry Tiebout). Tiebout gave her a manuscript of the Big Book and arranged for Marty to go to the meeting. Upon her return to Blythwood, she told fellow patient, Grenville (Grennie) Francis C "we are not alone." Marty later established an AA Group at the Sanitarium. (BW-RT 271, BW-FH 8, 125-126, AACOA 3, 18-19, PIO 210-213, CB 119-121, MMM 111-123)

Apr 26, Bill W and Lois had to vacate their home at 182 Clinton St. It began an almost two-year period of moving from house to house and staying with friends. By Lois' count, it amounted to 54 moves. (AACOA 11, 173, LR 197, BW-RT 258, BW-FH 91, PIO 213-218, AACOA 173 says May 1)

Apr 29, Morgan R (former advertising man, asylum patient and friend of Gabriel Heatter) appeared on Heatter's 9PM radio program *We the People*. He told his story and made a pitch for the Big Book. Prior to the broadcast, Bill W and others raised \$500 (\$6,500 today) to mail out 20,000 post cards to physicians about the broadcast. It resulted in only 12 replies. (AACOA 174-176, PIO 210, GB 60-61)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

May 10, Led by pioneer member Clarence S (*Home Brewmeister*) the Cleveland, OH group met separately from Akron and the Oxford Group at the home of Albert (Abby) G (*He Thought He Could Drink Like a Gentleman*). This was the first group to call itself *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The Clevelanders still sent their most difficult cases to Dr Bob in Akron for treatment. (AACOA 19-21, NW 94, SI 35, DBGO 161-168, NG 78-79, PIO 224, AGAA 4, 201, 242).

Jun 25, Percy Hutchison of the *New York Times* wrote a very favorable review of the Big Book. It did not help sales though since the Big Book was not available through bookstores. (BW-FH 127, copy of article)

Summer, Bill W and Hank P attended the first AA meeting in NJ, at Hank's Upper Montclair house. (AACOA 11)

Aug Dr Bob and Sister Ignatia (in charge of admissions) started working together at St Thomas Hospital in Akron. On Aug 16, Sister Ignatia arranged for the first AA admission, Walter B, at the request of Dr Bob. Bob revealed to Sister Ignatia his own problems with alcohol. (AACOA viii, SI 15-19, NG 79-80 DBGO 187-188)

Aug (?), NY member Bert T put his 5<sup>th</sup> Ave tailor shop up as collateral to obtain a \$1,000 loan (\$13,000 today) to keep Works Publishing afloat until the fall. NY members met for a time in the tailor shop loft. (AACOA 177-178, MMM 121, WPR 86).

Sep 30, *Liberty Magazine*, headed by Fulton Oursler, carried a piece titled *Alcoholics and God* by Morris Markey (who was influenced to write the article by Charles Towns). It generated about 800 inquiries from around the nation. Oursler (author of *The Greatest Story Ever Told*) became good friends with Bill W and later served as a Trustee and member of the Grapevine editorial board. (AACOA 176-178, LOH 145, 180-183 BW-FH 127-129, PIO 223-224)

Oct 14, a disappointing review of the Big Book in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* was quite unfavorable and dismissive of the book. (GB 59) Nevertheless, membership grew suddenly in Cleveland due to the Sep *Liberty Magazine* article and editorials in the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* by Elrick B Davis. Cleveland membership jumped from a dozen to over 100 in a month. Clarence S called himself the "founder of Alcoholics Anonymous." (AACOA viii, 177-178, BW-RT 261, LR 197, LOH 145-146, SI 164, PIO 224, AGAA 4-5)

Hank P's business failed. Hank, Bill W and Ruth Hock moved to a smaller 1-room office at 17 William St, Newark, NJ. (BW-RT 261, AACOA 176)

Oct (late), (AACOA viii says summer) Akron members of the "alcoholic squad" withdrew from the Oxford Group and held meetings at Dr Bob's house. It was a painful separation due to the great affection the alcoholic members had toward T Henry and Clarace Williams. (NW 93-94, SI 35, DBGO 212-219, NG 81, GTBT 123, AGAA 8-10, 188, 243)

Dec, Rockland State Hospital near Monsey, NY became the first mental hospital to have an AA Group (started by Bob V). Dr Russell E Blaisdell, Superintendent of the hospital, allowed busloads of patients to attend meeting in NY and NJ (AACOA viii, 12, BW-FH 128)

Dec 27, Robert Shaw joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as the third Chairman and the first non-alcoholic to hold the position. (GSO) Note: at this time the board practice was to use the titles of President and Vice President as opposed to Chair and Vice Chair. The practice continued until 1955.

### 1940

Jan, Akron meetings moved from Dr Bob's house to King's School on Wed. night. (SI 35-36, DBGO 219, NW 94)

Early, the "Rule Number 62" story was sent to Bill W in a letter from a chastened and humbled "promoter member." (AACOA 103-104, 12&12 147-149, NG 107)

Feb 8, John D Rockefeller Jr. held a dinner for AA at the Union League Club. 75 out of 400 invited guests attended. Nelson Rockefeller hosted the dinner in the absence of his ill father. The dinner produced much favorable publicity for AA. It also raised \$2,200 (\$29,000 today) from the attendees (\$1,000 from Rockefeller). Rockefeller and the dinner guests continued to provide about \$3,000 a year (\$34,000 today) up to 1945 when they were asked to stop contributing. The Alcoholic Foundation received the donations and income from sales of the Big Book. (LR 197, BW-RT 264-267, AACOA viii, 182-187, NG 92-94, BW-FH 109-112, PIO 232-235).

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Feb, the *Houston Press* ran six articles about AA, written anonymously by Larry J (a former Cleveland, OH member on his way to Houston, TX). The articles became an early AA pamphlet. Soon after, Larry was contacted by Roy Y and AA started in Texas. (AACOA 24, DBGO 259, LR 197)

Feb, the first clubhouse was rented at 334 ½ West 24<sup>th</sup> St in NYC for \$100 a month (\$1,300 today). It was formerly the *Illustrators Club*. (LR 197) In Nov, Bill W and Lois moved into a small upstairs bedroom of the club for about a year. (PIO 239 says 5 months) (AACOA viii, 180-181, 187, BW-RT 272-273, PIO 238-239, GB 64. LOH 147)

Mar 16, (AACOA viii says Feb) the Alcoholic Foundation office moved from 17 William St Newark, NJ to 30 Vessey St, Room 703, in NYC. Its mailing address was Box 658 Church St Annex Post Office. Ruth Hock became AA's first national Secretary. (BW-RT 268, AACOA 179, 187, LR 129, 197, BW-FH 112, SM S6, PIO 235, LOH 147)

Apr, Hank P got drunk after 4 years sobriety. He had objected violently to the office move to Vessey St, was fighting with his wife, and wanted to divorce her. He wanted to marry Ruth Hock who refused him. (AACOA 179, BW-RT 268, PIO 228-229, WPR 84)

Apr 16, Cleveland Indians baseball star "Rollicking" Rollie H had his anonymity broken in the *Cleveland Plains Dealer* and nationally. Bill W did likewise in later personal appearances in 1942 and 1943. (AACOA 135, BW-RT 268-270, DBGO 249-253, NG 85-87, 96-96, AACOA 24-25, BW-FH 134-135, PIO 236-238, GTBT 156)

May 22, *Works Publishing Co.* was incorporated. Bill W and Hank P gave up their stock with the stipulation that Dr Bob and Anne would receive 10% royalties on the Big Book for life. Hank was persuaded to relinquish his shares in exchange for a \$200 payment (\$2,600 today) for office furniture he claimed belonged to him. (AACOA 189-190, LR 199, BW-FH 119, SM 11, PIO 235-236, GTBT 92)

May/June, Hank P, harboring many resentments against Bill W, went to Cleveland and claimed that Bill was getting rich from the Rockefellers and taking the Big Book profits for himself. Clarence S (founder of Cleveland AA and Hank's brother-in-law for a number of years in the 1940's) spent many years accusing Bill of financial irregularities and claiming himself as the true founder of AA. (PIO 255-257, BW-FH 131, PIO 231, 255-257)

Oct, Bill W went to Philadelphia to speak to Curtis Bok, one of the owners of the *Saturday Evening Post* (the largest general circulation magazine in the US with a readership of 3,000,000). Later, in Dec, Jack Alexander was assigned to do a story on AA. (LR 131, BW-RT 278-279, BW-FH 140-141, PIO 244-245, GB 82)

Nov 11, the first issue of the *AA Bulletin* (later to become *Box 459*) was mailed to groups. (Box 459 Oct/Nov 2002)

Dec, Bill W met Father Ed Dowling SJ, at the 24<sup>th</sup> St Clubhouse. Tom M (the caretaker of the club) told Bill he was being visited by "some bum from St Louis." Father Ed (nicknamed "Puggy") became Bill's spiritual sponsor and helped start AA in St Louis, MO. (AACOA 38, LOH 366, BW-RT 275-278, BW-FH 137-139, PIO 241-243, GTBT 120-121)

### 1941

Fitz M's sister, Agnes (administrator of the Corcoran Art School, Washington DC) loaned *Works Publishing Inc.* \$1,000 (\$12,500 today) to pay Cornwall Press to release Big Books being held for payment. (BW-FH 92, AACOA 18)

Mar 1, Jack Alexander's *Saturday Evening Post* article was published. The publicity caused 1941 membership to jump from around 2,000 to 8,000. Bill and two other members' pictures appeared full-face in the article. (AACOA viii, 35-36, 190-191, BW-RT 281, LOH 149-150, BW-FH 146, PIO 245-247) The article, led to over 6,000 appeals for help to be mailed to Box 658 for the NY Office to handle. (SM S7, PIO 249) The NY office asked groups to donate \$1 (\$12 today) per member for support of the office. This began the practice of financing the NY office operations from group donations. (AACOA 112, 192, LOH 149, SM S7)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Mar, the wording of Step Twelve changed in the second printing of the Big Book. The term "spiritual experience" was changed to "spiritual awakening" and "as the result of these steps" was changed to "as the result of those steps" (it was changed back to "these steps" in the second printing of the second Ed.).<sup>5</sup> Appendix II *Spiritual Experience* was added. The story *Lone Endeavor* (of Pat C from CA) was removed. (AACOA 256, www)

Apr 11, after 23 years of marriage, Bill W and Lois moved into their own home in Bedford Hills, NY. It was first named *Bill-Lo's Break* and later renamed to *Stepping Stones*. The 7-room house was on 1.7 acres of land and financed at \$6,500 (\$81,000 today). The mortgage payment was \$40 a month (\$500 today). (BW-RT 284, PIO 259-260, MMM 337, WPR 66)

Nov, Dr Sam Shoemaker left the Oxford Group (then called *Moral Re-Armament*) and formed a fellowship named *Faith at Work*. MRA was asked to completely vacate the premises at Calvary House. Shoemaker's dispute with Buchman was amplified in the press. (EBBY 75-76, AAGA 161, 244)

May 8, Ethel M (*From Farm To City*) was the first woman member in Akron, OH to sober up. (SI 131, AACOA 7)

Jun, Ruth Hock received a newspaper clipping of the *Serenity Prayer* from NY newspaperman, and member, Jack C. It was from the obituary section of a Jun edition of the *New York Herald Tribune*. An older member, Horace C suggested printing the prayer on a card and sending it in mail going out from the NY office. Horace personally paid to have the cards printed. (BW-RT 261-262, GTBT 167, PIO 252, AACOA 196, WPR 79-80)

Nov, Margaret Farrand became the first woman on the Alcoholic Foundation Board. Also joining the board was Leonard Harrison. (GSO)

Dec 8, the US entered World War II.

With the possibility that he might be recalled to active duty in the Army, Bill suggested, based on his authorship of the Big Book that he be granted a royalty on book sales, as means of providing income for Lois. Bill was granted a 10% royalty and this, with one exception, became his sole source of income. The exception occurred sometime in the mid-1940's where Bill's income averaged \$1,700 (\$17,300 today) over seven years. The board made a grant to Bill of \$1,500 for each of the seven years for a total of \$10,500 (\$107,100 today)<sup>6</sup> out of which Bill purchased his Bedford Hills house. (1951 GSC-FR 13)

### 1942

Board Trustee A LeRoy Chipman asked John D Rockefeller Jr. and his 1940 dinner guests for \$8,500 (\$95,000 today) to buy back the remaining outstanding shares of *Works Publishing Inc.* stock. Rockefeller lent \$4,000, his son Nelson \$500 and the other dinner guests \$4,000. Rockefeller's custom was to forgive \$1 of debt for each \$1 repaid. The Rockefeller and dinner guest loans were repaid by 1945 out of Big Book income. (AACOA 189, BW-FH 110-111, SM S7, LOH 148, AACOA says \$8,000)

Ruth Hock left the NY office to marry on Feb 28. Bobbie B took her place. (AACOA 16, 195-196, GTBT 168, PIO 304, LOH 152 says 1941)

Oct, Clarence S stirred up a controversy in Cleveland after discovering that Dr Bob and Bill W were receiving royalties from Big Book sales. (DBGO 267-269, BW-FH 153-154, AACOA 193-194) Bill and Dr Bob re-examined the problem of their financial status and concluded that royalties from the Big Book seemed to be the only answer to the problem. Bill sought counsel from Father Ed Dowling who suggested that Bill and Bob could not accept money for 12<sup>th</sup> Step work, but should accept royalties as compensation for special services. (AACOA 194-195, PIO 322-324)

With the help of San Francisco, CA members, and Warden Clinton T Duffy, the first AA prison group was established in a maximum-security prison at San Quentin Penitentiary. (AACOA viii, 89-90)

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<sup>5</sup> Although no radical changes have been made to the "basic text" of the Big Book, many wording changes have.

<sup>6</sup> The 1945 CPI index is used for the calculation of 2003 dollars.



## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Correspondence from groups gave early signals of a need to develop guidelines to help with group problems that occurred repeatedly. The basic ideas for the Twelve Traditions emerged from this correspondence and the principles defined in the Foreword to the first Ed. of the Big Book. (AACOA 187, 192-193, 198, 204, PIO 305-306, LOH 154)

Oct, Volume 1, No. 1 of the Cleveland, OH *Central Bulletin* was published. (Cleveland Central Office)

### 1943

Jul, the first summer session of the Yale U School of Alcohol Studies occurred. Prof. E M Jellinek (nicknamed "Bunky") was its founder along with Dr Howard W Haggard. Bill W and Marty M lectured at the school. (GB 171, LOH 100 MMM 154) Jellinek was the first editor of the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol (in 1940) and later an alcoholism consultant to the World Health Organization. (LOH 188-190)

Oct 4, Fitz M died from cancer. (AACOA 18)

Nov 17, first meeting of the board as The Alcoholic Foundation, Inc. It was changed from a trust corporation to a membership corporation. Board membership was enlarged to nine. (GTBT 78)

### 1944

The book *The Lost Weekend* by Charles R Jackson was published to rave reviews. The book described five days in the life of an alcoholic. It became a favorite in AA for its realistic portrayal of alcoholism. Jackson was a popular speaker at public AA meetings. A line in the book, admittedly borrowed from AA, was a bartender's comment to its central character, alcoholic Don Birnam, about his drinking: "one drink is too many and a hundred not enough." The book and Jackson were later discussed and lauded in the Grapevine. (Gv Jan 1945)

Dr Harry Tiebout published his first paper on AA. It was titled *Therapeutic Mechanisms of Alcoholics Anonymous* and appeared in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*. (HT 130)

Jan, the 6<sup>th</sup> printing of the first Ed. of the Big Book. The book's physical dimensions were reduced to a more conventional size. However, it continued to be called the "Big Book." (www)

Apr 1, Marty Mann moved to New Haven, CT to found the *National Committee for Education on Alcoholism* (NCEA). Its office initially resided at Yale U. Marty stayed with the Jellineks and attended the 1944 Yale Summer School. The office later moved to NYC in Oct Information on the NCEA was later published in the Grapevine along with an explanation on why Marty was breaking her anonymity. (MMM 164-165). The NCEA later became known as the *National Committee on Alcoholism* (NCA) and then later renamed the *National Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence* (NCADD). (SD 186)

Apr 14, the Alcoholic Ward opened at St Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH. (SI 108)

May 1, the Vessey St office moved to 415 Lexington Ave, NY, 17, NY near the Grand Central Terminal. The new mailing address was PO Box 459, Grand Central Annex. (AACOA 198-199, LOH 152)

May 9, at the invitation of Drs. Silkworth and Tiebout, Bill W presented a talk to the Medical Society of the State of NY. (SW 80, GSO, LOH 155, BW-FH 163, SM S9, AACOA 205)

Jun, Volume I, No. 1 of the Grapevine was published (1,200 copies). A one-year subscription was \$1.50 (\$15 today). Six volunteers ("six ink stained wretches") started it as an 8-page newsletter for members in the NYC area and GIs overseas. Early volunteers were Marty Mann, Priscilla P, Lois K, Abbott, Maeve and Kay (Bill W also credited Grace O. and her husband). (AACOA viii, 201-203, 212, LOH 153-154, SM S79, PIO 305).

Jun, Bernard B Smith joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board replacing Margaret Farrand. (GSO)

Summer, Bill W began twice-a-week treatment with Dr Tiebout for debilitating episodes of depression. Some AA members were outraged and castigated Bill for "not working the program," "secretly drinking" and "pill taking." Bill endured the attacks in silence. (BW-RT 299, BW-40 166, BW-FH 6, 160-161, 166, PIO 292-303, GTBT 121)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1945

Bill W started seeing psychotherapist, Dr Frances Weeks (a Jungian) once a week on Fridays. He continued to see her until 1949 for his episodes of depression. (BW-FH 166-167, GB 66, PIO 334-335)

Apr, Earl T, founder of AA in Chicago (*He Sold Himself Short*) suggested to Bill W that he codify the Traditions and write essays on them in the Grapevine. Initially, the Twelve Traditions were later presented as *An Alcoholics Anonymous Tradition of Relations - Twelve Points to Assure Our Future..* (AACOA 22, 203, GTBT 54-55, 77, SM S8, PIO 306, LOH 20-24)

Apr, the Grapevine included a questionnaire by E M Jellinek. It solicited information from the AA membership that was later used to produce a chart titled *The Progressive Disease of Alcoholism* (also popularly called the *Jellinek Chart*). (1989 GSC-FR 24)

Bill W was called by Barry L (who would later author *Living Sober*) from the 41<sup>st</sup> St clubhouse. Bill persuaded the group to take in a black man who was an ex-convict with bleach-blond hair, wearing women's clothing and makeup. The man also admitted to being a "dope fiend." When asked what to do about it, Bill posed the question, "did you say he was a drunk?" When answered, "yes" Bill replied, "well I think that's all we can ask." The man was reported to have disappeared shortly after. (BW-FH 8, PIO 317-318) Anecdotal accounts erroneously say that this individual went on to become one of the best 12<sup>th</sup> Steppers in NY. This story is often erroneously intermingled with that of a 1937 incident ("year two" on the AA calendar) involving an Akron member that is discussed in the Tradition Three essay in the 12&12 (pgs 141-142).

Jun, the Grapevine announced that Bill W would be a senior editorial advisor and contribute future articles.

Jun 9-10, Cleveland, OH hosted a 2-day "Big Meeting" at the Cleveland Music Hall and Carter Hotel to celebrate AA's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Est. attendance 2,500 from 36 states, 2 Canadian provinces and 1 from Mexico. Bill W commented on Dr Bob "although we have had many differences, we have never had an angry word." Dr Bob commented that over the last 10 years he averaged at least an hour's reading per day and "always returned to the simple teachings in *The Sermon on the Mount*, the *Book of James* and the *13<sup>th</sup> chapter of First Corinthians* in the Bible for his fundamentals." (GSO, GTBT 27-28, Gv Jun and Jul 1945)

Aug, the Grapevine carried Bill W's first article (titled *Modesty One Plank for Good Public Relations*) setting the groundwork for his campaign for the Traditions. The Jul Grapevine edition had an article by member CHK of Lansing, MI about the Washingtonians. Bill used this article to begin his essay commentaries.

Oct 20, Dr William Duncan Silkworth was hired as director of alcoholic treatment at the Knickerbocker Hospital in NYC. He worked at both the Towns and Knickerbocker Hospitals until his death in 1951. Alcoholics were referred to the "AA Ward" at Knickerbocker Hospital by the NY Intergroup Association. (SW 83, AACOA 206)

Dec 20, Rowland H (age 64) died. It is unclear whether he stayed sober or relapsed. Tragically, he lost his two eldest sons in World War II. He remained a member of the Oxford Group (Moral Re-Armament). There is no evidence that he ever joined AA. (www, EBBY 59)

Dec, the Grapevine announced it would add four more pages and raised the subscription rate to \$2.50 (\$25 today) per year (or 25 cents per copy - \$2.50 today) starting in Jan 1946. Bill W sent a letter to 600 groups that the Grapevine would be the national AA periodical.

Late, Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett made Charles R Jackson's novel *The Lost Weekend* into a hard-hitting movie about alcoholism for Universal Pictures. It starred Ray Milland and Jane Wyman and won four Oscars (best picture, director, screenplay and actor). Its realistic portrayal of alcoholism generated favorable publicity for AA. (GTBT 25, 156, NG 120, GB 77, WPR 94, www)

The Alcoholic Foundation wrote to John D Rockefeller, Jr. and the 1940 dinner guests that AA no longer needed their financial help. Big Book royalties could look after Dr Bob and Bill W and Group contributions could pay the general office expenses. This ended all "outside contributions" to AA. (AACOA 203-204)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1946

Apr, the Grapevine carried Bill W's article *Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition*. They would later be called the long form of the Twelve Traditions. (AACOA viii, 96, 203, LOH 20, 154)

The General Service Conference was first projected. (LOH 338, SM 12 says 1945)

A dispute rose over a funding solicitation letter from the National Council for Education on Alcoholism (NCEA) by Marty M. Dr Bob and Bill W's names appeared on the letterhead. An Alcoholic Foundation Board statement on fund raising was printed in the Oct Grapevine to disavow AA affiliation. (GTBT 29, NG 119, MMM 185)

AA Grapevine Inc. was legally incorporated as one of the two publishing arms of the Alcoholic Foundation. It had a board of directors of five members. (1989 GSC-FR 24)

### 1947

Feb 20, Charles B Towns died. (SD 86)

Mar 3, Nell Wing started work at the Alcoholic Foundation, 415 Lexington Ave, NYC. Starting as a typist earning \$32 a week (\$260 today) she stayed for 36 years. (GTBT 15, GB 67)

Apr 8, following a year of deliberations on policy and structure, Bill W wrote a paper to the Alcoholic Foundation titled *Our AA General Service Center - The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. It outlined a history of the Foundation and recommended implementation of a General Service Conference. It also recommended that the Foundation name be changed to the *General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous*. (www, copy of paper)

Jun, in the 11<sup>th</sup> printing of the first Ed. Big Book, the term "ex-alcoholic" was replaced by the terms "ex-problem drinker" or "non-drinker." (www)

Jun, the *AA Preamble* first appeared in the Grapevine. It was written by Tom Y, Grapevine's first editor. The Grapevine also announced the availability of a set of two 12-inch phonograph records of a general talk on AA by Bill W at \$3.30 per set (\$27 today). (1991 GSC-FR 23)

Summer, Bill W took instructions in the Catholic faith from Monsignor (later Bishop) Fulton J Sheen. Bill was introduced to Bishop Sheen by Fulton and Grace Oursler. Bill's instructions lasted for about a year after which he lost interest. (NG 52, BW-FH 174-175, PIO 280-282, GTBT 81 GB 66)

Aug, in his Grapevine Traditions essay titled *Last Seven Years Have Made AA Self-Supporting*, Bill W wrote "Two years ago the trustees set aside, out of AA book funds, a sum which enabled my wife and me to pay off the mortgage on our home and make some needed improvements. The Foundation also granted Dr Bob and me each a royalty of 10% on the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, our only income from AA sources. We are both very comfortable and deeply grateful." (LOH 62-66)

Dec, the Grapevine carried a notice that an important new 48-page pamphlet titled *AA Traditions* was sent to each group and that enough copies were available for each member to have one free of charge.

Dr Bob was stricken with cancer. (AACOA 209, BW-RT 303-304)

### 1948

Summer, Dr Bob's cancer was diagnosed as terminal. He closed his medical office and retired from practice so that he and Anne could live their last days together quietly. In his last year, Dr Bob fulfilled a life-long dream of obtaining a convertible automobile (a black Buick Roadmaster). (DBGO 320, 348)

Aug, the Grapevine announced that, based on a subscriber survey, the Sep issue would be in a new pocket-size 5 ½ x 7 ½ inches format of 32 pages.

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1949

As plans for the first Int'l Convention were under way, Earl T suggested to Bill W that the *Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition* would benefit from revision and shortening. (AACOA 213 says it occurred in 1947) Bill, with Earl's help, set out to develop the short form of the Twelve Traditions. (AACOA 213, GTBT 55, 77, PIO 334, www)

Apr, Bill W became a member of the Alcoholic Foundation Board which had been increased to 15 Trustees. (GSO)

May, Bill W presented a talk to the American Psychiatric Association's 105<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada. (GSO, LOH 156, SM S9, PIO 334, AACOA 205)

Jun 1, Anne Ripley Smith (age 69) died at St Thomas Hospital. Sister Ignatia had secretly baptized Anne (as an act of love) prior to her death. In a Jul memorial Grapevine article, Bill W wrote that Anne was "quite literally, the mother of our first group, Akron Number One" and "In the full sense of the word she was one of the founders of AA." (LOH 353, DBGO 327, SI 136, PIO 334, WPR 2).

Jul 14, in a letter to the Rev Sam Shoemaker Bill W wrote "So far as I am concerned, and Dr Smith too, the Oxford Group seeded AA. It was our spiritual wellspring at the beginning." (AGAA 137)

Oct, Dr William D Silkworth and Fulton Oursler joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board. (GSO)

Nov, the short form of the Twelve Traditions was first printed in the AA Grapevine. The entire issue was dedicated to the Traditions in preparation for the forthcoming Cleveland Convention. Two wording changes were subsequently made to the initial version: "primary spiritual aim" was changed to "primary purpose" in Tradition Six, and "principles above personalities" was changed to "principles before personalities" in Tradition Twelve. (LOH 96)

### 1950

The NY office moved to 141 East 44<sup>th</sup> St. (LOH 157, GTBT 106, AACOA 207).

Early (?), Leonard Harrison and Bernard B Smith resolved a 5-year conflict between Bill W and the Alcoholic Foundation Board on having a General Service Conference. Harrison appointed Smith to chair a Trustee's committee on the proposed Conference. The committee unanimously recommended giving the Conference a try. (AACOA 209-212, PIO 344)

Mar 29, a second *Saturday Evening Post* article was written by Jack Alexander titled *The Drunkard's Best Friend* (GTBT 34)

Jul, AA's 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary and first International Convention at Cleveland, OH. Est. 3,000 attendees. Registration was \$1.50 per person (\$11 today). The published program (likely through the influence of Clarence S) called it "The First International Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous" and described Cleveland, OH as "the birthplace of our movement." (AACOA 213, BW-RT 308, PIO 338, www)

- On Jul 30, Dr Bob made a brief appearance for his last talk. Part of his now famous short statement was "There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual AA work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words love and service." (GSO, GB 25, PIO 339-342)
- The attendees adopted the Twelve Traditions unanimously by standing vote. (AACOA 43, LOH 121, PIO 338)

Aug (?) (PIO 344 says Nov12), Bill W's last visit to Dr Bob in Akron. Bill advised Bob that the board would likely give its consent to the Conference. Dr Bob gave Bill his endorsement for the Conference. (AACOA 213-215, DBGO 325, 342, PIO 342)

Oct, in behalf of himself and Dr Bob, Bill W issued a preliminary document titled *Your Third Legacy - Will You Accept It*. Bill proposed the General Service Conference (www).

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Nov 16, Dr Robert Holbrook Smith (age 70) co-founder of AA, died of cancer at City Hospital in Akron, OH. He was buried in Mount Peace Cemetery beside Anne. The Rev Walter Tunks conducted the funeral service. Over his 15 years of sobriety, Dr Bob helped more than 5,000 alcoholics. (AACOA 7, 9, GSO, DBGO 344) In his eulogy, Bill W described Dr Bob as "the prince of the Twelfth Steppers." (GTBT 90, GB 69)

50,000 copies of a preliminary pamphlet titled *The Third Legacy* were distributed by the NY office. It explained the preliminary organization and implementation of the General Service Conference. For the next several months, Bill W stumped the country and attended more than 2 dozen Assemblies electing Area Committees and Conference Delegates. (AACOA 216-217, PIO 347)

AA members were asked to donate \$2 per year (\$15 today) to support the NY office. (LOH 159)

### 1951

Jan, Dr John Norris and Earl T joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as Trustees. (GSO)

Mar 22, William Duncan Silkworth MD (age 78) "the little doctor who loved drunks" and "medical saint" died of a heart attack at his home at 45 W 81<sup>st</sup> St, NYC. In his service as Medical Director at Towns and Knickerbocker Hospitals, he was credited with treating over 40,000 alcoholics. His funeral was held at the Calvary Episcopal Church in NYC and he was laid to rest in Glenwood Cemetery in West Long Branch, NJ. (AACOA 14, SW 110-111, 127, BB xvi, Gv Apr 1951)

Apr 20-22, the 1<sup>st</sup> experimental GSC in NYC at the Hotel Commodore (beginning a 5-year experimental period). It was composed of 37 (PIO 349 says 35) US and Canadian Delegates (Panel 1) plus AA's General Service Hq. staff and Trustees. (LOH 129, SM S99). The delegates took office for a 2-year term. The theme was *Not to Govern but to Serve*. (NG 129-130). It recommended that:

- Non-alcoholics should continue to serve on the Board of the Alcoholic Foundation. (Agenda)
- In future years, AA textbook literature should have Conference approval. (Agenda)
- The alcoholic members of the board of trustees ought to have a fixed term of office. (Agenda)
- The Conference initially suggested renaming the *Alcoholic Foundation* to the *General Service Board*. (AACOA 218, PIO 349)
- The Trustees of the Alcoholic Foundation, following Dr Bob's death, voted to increase Bill's royalty on the Big Book from 10% to 15% and have the author's royalty apply to other books that Bill would write in the future. Bill insisted that this increase be submitted to the General Service Conference and the Conference approved the Trustee's motion unanimously. The Conference also approved unanimously a motion recommending that steps be taken to insure that Bill and Lois receive book royalties so long as either one shall live. (1951 GSC-FR 12)

Apr at the close of the Conference, Lois W, with her close friend and neighbor, Anne B, invited the delegates' wives and local family group members to Stepping Stones to discuss an organization for what was then called *AA Family Groups*. (LR 174-176, WPR 69-70)

Apr Jack Alexander joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as a Trustee. (GSO)

The first draft of the *Third Legacy Manual* by Bill W was published. (SM S1, LOH 164)

Oct 30, the American Public Health Association at the San Francisco, CA Opera House presented the Lasker Award to AA. Originally, the award was to be for Bill W but he asked that it be given to the Fellowship. The Lasker Foundation replied favorably. The Alcoholic Foundation Board polled Conference delegates by mail and they approved. The award was accepted (but not the \$1,000 cash grant - \$7,000 today). (AACOA viii, 4, LOH 136, PIO 350)

### 1952

Jan 9, the first AFG Hq (the *Clearing-house Committee*) was set up at the 24<sup>th</sup> St clubhouse in NYC. (LR 174-176)

Henry (Harry) Z (*A Close Shave*) joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board. (GSO)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Mar, non-alcoholic groups, previously using names such as *AA Helpmates*, *AA Auxiliary*, *Triple A*, *Non-AA*, *AA Associates*, etc. established the name of *Al-Anon Family Groups* for their Fellowship. (LR 176, CB 142)

AFG sent a memorandum to AA asking permission to use its Twelve Steps. AA agreed unofficially but its members felt strongly that AFG should be a separate society and not a subsidiary of AA. (LR 176)

Apr, the 2<sup>nd</sup> experimental GSC in NYC. Panel 2 (38 additional delegates) took office for a 2 year term. Its theme was *Progress*. (NG 130) It recommended that:

- At the request of the Delegates all sessions of the Conference opened with the Serenity Prayer and concluded with the Lord's Prayer. (1952 GSC-FR 4)
- Facsimile reproductions of the Lasker Award be made available to AA Groups in suitable form for framing where desired. (Lit.)
- Delegates and state committeemen make a special effort to enlighten their groups in respect to the position of the GSO as the functional center of the AA movement. (Fin)
- The non-alcoholic trustees continue to serve us without restrictions. (FI Act)
- The principle of rotation at all levels of AA affairs should be preserved and strengthened. (FI Act)

Sep, Al-Anon Family Groups adopted an adaptation of the Twelve Traditions of AA. (LR 177-178)

Dec 15, Don L, was admitted as the first alcoholic patient to Cleveland's St Vincent's Charity Hospital's *Rosary Hall Solarium* alcoholic ward. The ward was built by volunteer AA members and friends to assist (and as a tribute to) Sister Ignatia. The insignia on the door *RHS* coincided with the initials of Robert Holbrook Smith. It was Sister Ignatia's dedication as a memorial to Dr Bob. (SI 185-187, 309, LOH 377, AACOA 8)

### 1953

Apr, the 3<sup>rd</sup> experimental GSC in NYC. Theme: *The Milestones Ahead*. It recommended that:

- Approval be given to plans of the trustees for changing the name of the Alcoholic Foundation to a new designation using "Alcoholics Anonymous" coupled with a suitable word, that word not be "international." (FI Act)
- Alcoholics Anonymous not be incorporated by Congressional action. (Floor Action, AACOA 126-127)
- No policy should be declared or action taken on matters liable to gravely affect AA as a whole unless by consent of at least 3/4 of the members present. A mere majority should not authorize action. (FI Act) (Reaffirmed in 1954)
- Delegates weigh this question for submission to the 1954 Conference: Does the Conference feel it should depart from its purely textbook program by printing non-textbook literature such as the *24 Hour Book of Meditation?* (Lit.)

Jun, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* was published. (GTBT 37) Bill W described the work as "This small volume is strictly a textbook which explains AA's 24 basic principles and their application, in detail and with great care." Betty L and Tom P helped Bill in its writing. Jack Alexander also helped with editing. It was published in two editions: one for \$2.25 (\$15.50 today) for distribution through AA groups, and a \$2.75 (\$19 today) edition distributed through Harper and Brothers for sale in commercial bookstores. (AACOA ix, 219, PIO 354-356)

*Works Publishing Inc.* was renamed to *AA Publishing Inc.* (NG 68)

### 1954

Lillian R (actress and nightclub singer) became the first of many celebrities to break their anonymity and announce their alcoholism and membership in AA. Her book (later movie) *I'll Cry Tomorrow* was a sensation. In 1955, Susan Hayward's performance as Lillian won her an Academy Award nomination. Sadly, Lillian went on to drink again. (GB 77, PIO 308-309)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Jan 18, Hank P died in Pennington, NJ. It is attributed to Nell Wing that "if it weren't for Bill W the Big Book would never have been written. If it weren't for Hank P the Big Book would never have been published." Hank was also credited with writing all but the first paragraph of the Big Book's Chapter 10 *To Employers*. (www)

Jan 24, Lois W suffered a heart attack on her and Bill's 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She had to severely restrict her activities for a year (PIO 360-362)

Feb 2, Bill W declined an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Yale U. (LOH 205, GB 69, BW-FH 201)

Feb 14, Bill W's father Gilman Barrows Wilson, age 84, died penniless in Vancouver. His ashes were returned to East Dorset, VT for burial at the Wilson family plot. (BW-40 10, BW-FH 198, PIO 362)

Apr 21-25, last experimental GSC in NYC. Theme: *The Great Debate and the Future of AA*. The 4<sup>th</sup> recommended that:

- All Conference-approved literature have on its face an identifying symbol. (Lit.)
- The *AA Exchange Bulletin* (now *Box 459*) be approved.
- The publication rights of *Twenty-Four Hours a Day* not be accepted. (FI Act)
- The Alcoholic Foundation be authorized, in its discretion to transfer all of its assets, subject to all of its liabilities, to a corporation to be formed by the existing trustees to be known as the *General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous Inc.* (FI Act) (SM S12)

May, Bill W engaged in a series of correspondence with notorious murderer Caryl Chessman who was on San Quentin prison's death row. (PIO states 1956) (PIO 364-366, BW= FH 198-199)

Sep 17, Bill D, (AA #3) died. (LOH 360)

Oct, the *Alcoholic Foundation Inc.* was renamed to the *General Service Board of AA Inc.* (AACOA ix, NG 131)

Oct, the *AFG Clearing House* incorporated under the name of *Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.* (LR 179)

### 1955

Jan 6, Bill W's stepmother Christine Wilson died. (PIO 362)

Apr, the General Service Board adopted the practice of using the titles Chairman and Vice Chairman instead of President and Vice President. (GSO)

Jun 26-29 and Jul 3, held in St Louis, MO. The 5<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- A plan for selecting Class B trustees be approved. (Note: this was the first move to establish Regions - the initial geographical groupings were called "Area A" thru "Area E")
- The retail price of the new edition of *Alcoholics Anonymous* be set at \$4.50 (\$30 today) the price to AA groups at \$4.00 (\$27.50 today) and to earmark 50 cents for the reserve fund. (FI Act)
- The proposed permanent *Charter of the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous - North American Section* be adopted subject to approval of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention of AA. (FI Act). (SM S17-S18)

Jul 1-3, 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and second Int'l Convention at St Lois, MO. Theme: *Coming of Age*. (BW-RT 311, AACOA viii, GTBT 42-51, NG 131, SM S2) Bill W claimed attendance of 5,000. Nell Wing (GTBT 105) was told by Dennis, who handled registrations that attendance was 3,100 plus a few hundred walk-ins:

- On Jul 3, by resolution, Bill W and its old-timers turned over the stewardship of the AA society to the movement. The Conference became the Guardian of the Traditions and voice of the group conscience of the entire Fellowship. The resolution was unanimously adopted by the Convention by acclamation and by the GSC by formal resolution and vote. (AACOA ix, 47-48, 223-228)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The second Ed. of *Alcoholics Anonymous* was published. Ed B and Nell Wing assisted Bill in its writing. 30 new personal stories were introduced. In his talk to the Convention, Bill thanked the attendees for purchasing the Big Book because the royalties from it had provided him and Lois with a home where they had seen more than 3,000 AA members over the years. (AACOA 220, PIO 354, 357)

Jul, the first AFG book *The Al-Anon Family Groups* was released at the Convention. (AACOA ix, 32-34, LR 180)

Dec, the Grapevine center-spread exhibited an oil painting by volunteer illustrator Robert M. It portrayed a man on a bed being 12<sup>th</sup> Stepped by two members. The painting's original title was *Came To Believe*. In 1973, when the book *Came To Believe* was published, the Grapevine editors changed the name of the reproduction to avoid confusion. *The Man On The Bed* would later become one of the most popular images in the AA Fellowship. (www)

Distribution of the Big Book reached 300,000. (BW-FH 120, 2002 GSC-FR 15)

### 1956

The wording of Step Twelve changed in the second printing of the second Ed. Big Book. The term "as the result of those steps" was changed back to the original term "as the result of these steps." (www)

After 1955 the depression that had plagued Bill W for so long, lifted and he regained his bright outlook. However, during 1956, his best friend, Mark Whalon, died. (PIO 359, 364)

Apr 18-22, the 6<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Approving continuation of the present structure of the Board of Trustees of AA (8 non-alcoholic and 7 alcoholic members). It began a 10-year campaign by Bill to change the Board ratio to a majority of alcoholics. (PIO 393-397)
- General Service Hq. designate Thanksgiving Week each year as *AA Gratitude Week* and that this action be noted in the annual pre-Thanksgiving appeals to groups for funds to help support AA's worldwide services. (FI Act)
- Since the delegates at their meeting unanimously approved Bill's new book (*AA Comes of Age*) it be produced in a first class manner, decisions as to pictures and price being left to the Board of Trustees, every effort be made to have it available for the 1956 Christmas season. (Lit.)
- The new *AA Exchange Bulletin* (now *Box 459*) be made available in quantity to groups wishing to purchase additional copies and agreed that the Bulletin distribution should be exclusively through local groups or service offices. (FI Act)

Apr, Dr Harry Tiebout joined the GSB as a Trustee. (GSO)

May, the *AA Bulletin* was renamed the *AA Exchange Bulletin* (later to become *Box 459*). (Box 459 Oct/Nov 2002)

Aug 29, Bill W joined with Aldous Huxley and took LSD in CA under the guidance of Gerald Heard and Sidney Cohen. Others invited to experiment (and who accepted) were Nell Wing, Father Ed Dowling, Sam Shoemaker and Lois Wilson. Marty M and Helen W (Bill's mistress) participated in NY. Bill had several experiments with LSD up to 1959 (perhaps into the 1960's). (PIO 370-376, NG 136-137, BW-FH 9, 177-179, GTBT 81-82)

The *American Medical Association* stopped short of designating alcoholism as a disease but passed a resolution that recognized alcoholics as legitimate patients who were sick persons. (CB 166, LOH 190, SD 188)

### 1957

Creation of the first overseas GSB of AA in Great Britain and Ireland. (AACOA ix)

Apr 17-21. Theme: *Stability and Responsibility Without Complacency*. The 7<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The General Service Headquarters designate Thanksgiving Week as *AA Gratitude Week*. (Fin)



## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Since the delegates at their meeting unanimously approved Bill's new book (*AA Comes of Age*) its price, \$4.50 (\$29 today) not being too high. (Lit.)
- No change in Article 12 of the [Conference] Charter or in AA tradition or in the Twelve Steps of AA may be made with less than the written consent of three-quarters of the AA groups. (SM S87)
- The Conference approved a unique new set of by-laws for the GSB, which had earlier been adopted by the board itself on a contingency basis. (FI Act)
- Wholeheartedly endorsed the decision to increase the price of the [*Grapevine*] magazine from \$.25 to \$.35 for single copies, and from \$2.50 to \$3.50 (\$22 today) for yearly domestic subscriptions, with proportional increases in foreign sales prices, as a necessity for the financial survival of the Grapevine. (Gv)
- Bill's negotiations designed to make it possible to retail his forthcoming book *AA Comes of Age*, at \$4.00 (\$26 today), if practical, be endorsed. (Delegates Only Meeting)

Apr 22, new bylaws written by Bernard B Smith, were adopted by the GSB. (SM S102-S109)

Oct, *AA Comes of Age* was published. Although guised as a 3-day diary of the 1955 Convention, it amounted to an entire history of AA up to 1955. (AACOA ix, PIO 354, 359)

### 1958

Apr 28, Bill W presented a talk to the NYC Medical Society on Alcoholism. (HT)

Apr Theme: *Promise and Progress*. The 8<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- In regard to the attitude of the movement as a whole toward the use of so-called AA "chips", "tokens", "lapel emblems" and similar devices, the consensus was this was a matter for local autonomy and not one on which the GSC should record a definite position in behalf of the movement. (FI Act)
- Since the use of tokens of sobriety is a matter of local taste and custom, there seems to be no expressed need at the present time for a standard token of sobriety and no need for AA Publishing, Inc. to carry such an item. (Lit.)
- The GSC voted unanimously to ask Bill W to provide continuing leadership on all projects of movement-wide concern in which he was currently interested. (FI Act)
- The GSC approved the action of the GSB in reassigning to Bill W royalty rights in his three books (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* and *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*) and in books he may write in the future, for the duration of the copyrights involved. (FI Act)
- The GSC recognize the original use of the word "honest" before "desire to stop drinking" and its deletion from the Traditions as part of the evolution of the AA movement. Any change to be left to the discretion of AA Publishing, Inc. (Lit.) Note: this advisory action involved removing the word "honest" from "honest desire to stop drinking" in the AA Preamble in the Grapevine. It also led to changing the wording of the Preamble from "AA has no dues or fees" to "There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions." The changes were approved by the General Service Board in the summer of 1958 ([www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org) also *Best of the Grapevine*, vol.1, 274-275)
- The suggestion of the name change from *General Service Hq.* to *General Service Office* be adopted. (Policy)
- AA Publishing, Inc. provide for a basic AA book in foreign languages as needed. (Lit.)
- A paperback edition of the Big Book not be published. (FI Act)

Oct, *The Days of Wine and Roses*, by J P Miller, premiered on CBS-TV's *Playhouse 90*. It starred Cliff Robertson (as Joe Clay) and Piper Laurie (as Joe's wife Kirsten). (CB 77) AA cooperated in it and the later movie version. (AACOA ix) The story was centered on Joe's testimony at an AA meeting. The ending found him in recovery but his wife continued to drink and abandoned Joe and their daughter. ([www](http://www))

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1959

Apr 22-26, Hotel Commodore in NYC. Main theme *Confidence, Absence of Fear of Future*. The 9<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Delegates speaking from the floor limit themselves to 3 minutes.
- \$3 per member (\$19 today) replace the \$2 suggested as annual contribution to GSO. (Policy)

*AA Publishing, Inc.* was renamed to *AA World Services, Inc.* (AACOA ix).

### 1960

Between 1959 to 1964 (likely near 1960) Marty M relapsed briefly on alcohol. It was a closely held secret among NY AA members (and the NCA) who knew about it. The information was revealed in the publication of Marty's biography in 2001 (MMM 262-266)

E M Jellinek published *The Disease Concept of Alcoholism*. (NG 312, GB 166)

Apr, Bill W declined the opportunity to be on the cover of Time magazine. (BW-FH 201)

Apr 3, Father Edward Dowling SJ, died in Memphis, TN. (LOH 364)

Apr 20-24, Roosevelt Hotel in NYC. Theme: *Need for Internal and External Communication*. The 10<sup>th</sup> GSC:

- In a talk to the Conference, Bill W announced for the past three years, he had been working on codifying principles and developing essays for the structure of the Third Legacy of Service. The principles were announced as the *Twelve Concepts for World Service*. (www)

Jul 1-3, 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and third Int'l Convention at Long Beach, CA. Theme: *Recovery, Unity and Service*. Est. attendance 10,000. AFG members present at the Convention voted to approve a plan, similar to AA, for an annual conference of delegates. AFG groups later affirmed the action. (LR 181)

### 1961

Frank N D Buchman died. *Moral Re-Armament* had declined significantly in numbers and influence and became headquartered in Caux, Switzerland. (NW 45, 97-98) In 2001, MRA changed its name to *Initiatives of Change*. A month after Buchman's death Bill W wrote to a friend regretting that he did not write to Buchman acknowledging his contributions to the AA movement. (www, PIO 386-387)

Jan 23, Bill W wrote to Dr Carl Gustav Jung acknowledging Jung's contribution to the movement. (NW 9, PIO 381-386) On Jan 30, Dr Jung replied to Bill's letter. (NW 11)

Apr 19-23, Roosevelt Hotel in NYC. Theme: *A True and High and a Constant Purpose*. The 11<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The Birthday Plan to provide "supplementary" support to AAWS be adopted and continued. (Fin)
- It was the sense of the meeting that no action be taken by the 1961 GSC on the proposal for a paperback edition of the Big Book. (FI Act)
- The following motion was adopted unanimously: The GSC recognizes that publication of cheap editions of AA books would probably reduce the income to World Services and Bill W's personal income. This GSC unanimously suggests the following to the Trustees: To add a rider to Bill's royalty contract to the effect that, if cheaper books are ever published, Bill's royalties be increased by an amount sufficient to keep the royalty income at the same average level it had been for the 5 years before the cheaper books were published; (further that) as time goes on, if inflation erodes the purchasing power of this income, the Trustees will adjust the royalties to produce the same approximate purchasing power; this to be effective during the lifetime of Bill and Lois and Bill's legatees. (Fir Act, PIO 393).

Mar 20, Bill W replied to Jung's letter (PIO 384)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Apr, first Al-Anon World Service Conference was held on a trial basis in NYC with 12 Delegates. (LR 181)

May 15, Bill W's mother Emily (age 91) died in Dobbs Ferry, NY. (PIO 387)

Jun 6, Dr Carl Gustav Jung died. (PIO 386)

### 1962

Yale U discontinued the School of Alcohol Studies. The school relocated to Rutgers, State U of NJ, in New Brunswick. (GB 172)

Jan Mary B joined the GSB as the first alcoholic woman Trustee. (GSO)

Apr 25-29, Roosevelt Hotel in NYC. Theme: *One Primary Purpose*. The 12<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Voted unanimously to accept Bill's manuscript on *Twelve Concepts for World Service* and recommended that it be distributed initially as a supplement to, and eventually as an integral part of, the *Third Legacy Manual*. (FI Act)
- The Grapevine board, at the request of the delegate from Puerto Rico, will investigate the possibility of printing the Grapevine in Spanish. (Gv)
- Bill's proposal to change the ratio of the GSB was voted down. (GTBT 79)

Jul, the cartoon strip *Victor E*, drawn by Editor Jack M, first appeared in the Grapevine. (1989 GSC-FR 24)

The Warner Brothers film *Days of Wine and Roses* premiered. (BW-FH 229) AA cooperated in its production. (AACOA ix) It starred Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick. The TV version portrayed the story as occurring in NY. The film version was set in San Francisco. Nominated for several Academy Awards, it won Best Song. (www)

Publication of *Twelve Concepts for World Service*. (AACOA x)

### 1963

The US and Canada General Service structure was organized into six Regions. Regional Trustees were elected to the GSB. The procedure replaced Area Trustees elected from single states. (AACOA x)

Apr 24-28, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Function Rather Than Structure*. The 13<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- There is no such thing as an AA retreat. (PI)
- The GSC approved the GSB Trustees' action in making a special monthly grant (\$200 per PIO 393 - \$1,200 today) to Ebby T, the man who helped co-founder Bill W achieve sobriety and who was indirectly responsible for creation of the AA Fellowship. (Floor Action, PIO 393 says 1961)
- A proposed edition of the 12&12, smaller in size and generally more compact than the existing edition be approved. The proposed edition would presumably be used for gifts and would be particularly useful to members who travel. (FI Act)
- The preparation of a small edition of the 12&12 be introduced at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention in 1965, to be sold at \$3 (\$18 today) or more be approved. (Policy)

Bill modified his royalty agreement with AAWS so that 10% of his royalties went to his mistress, Grapevine Editor, Helen W. The agreement provided Bill and Lois with a comfortable living on annual incomes between \$30,000 to \$40,000 during the 1960's (\$175,000 to \$230,000 today).<sup>7</sup> At the time of Bill's death (1971) it was around \$56,000 (\$250,000 today). In the 1970's, royalties surged significantly and it made Lois W quite rich. (PIO 393, BW-FH 192-193, GB 69-70, WPR 72)

Oct 22 (?), E. M. Jellinek died.

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<sup>7</sup> 1965 CPI conversion factor used to estimate 2003 dollars.

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Oct 31, Dr Sam Shoemaker died. In a Feb 1967 memorial Grapevine article, Bill W wrote, "Dr Sam Shoemaker was one of AA's indispensable. Had it not been for his ministry to us in our early times, our Fellowship would not be in existence today." (NW 56, GTBT 97)

### 1964

GSB membership was increased to 19 Trustees. (GSO)

Apr 21-26, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Practicing These Principles*. The 14<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- An agreement between Bill W, co-founder and AAWS, Inc. covering royalties derived from Bill's writings be approved. Under the terms of the contract, a royalty of 15% is paid to Bill, except that no royalties are paid on "overseas editions." Royalties are to be paid to Bill and Lois, his wife, during their lifetimes; following the deaths of Bill and Lois, royalties revert in shares of royalties to living heirs. These shares revert to AAWS upon the death of beneficiaries. Not more than 20% may be bequeathed to any heir under the age of 40 years as of the date of the agreement between Bill and AAWS (Apr 29, 1963). The contract provides protection of royalties against "cheap books" and protection of AAWS and Bill against fluctuations in general economic conditions. AAWS retains the right of "first refusal" on any future literary works of Bill's. (Fin)

### 1965

Apr 19-24, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Responsibility To Those We Serve*. The 15<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that

- A small edition of the 12&12 be introduced at the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Convention be approved.

Jul 2-4, AA's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary and fourth Int'l Convention at Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Theme: *Responsibility*. Est. attendance 10,500. Keynote *The Declaration*. AA's responsibility pledge: *I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. and for that I am responsible*. The film *Bill's Own Story* was shown for the first time. (AACOA x, NG 142)

Dec, Bill W enthusiastically embraced a campaign to promote vitamin B3 (niacin - nicotinic acid) therapy and created Traditions issues within the Fellowship. (PIO 388-390)

### 1966

Mar 21, Ebby T died (of emphysema). He had 2 ½ years sobriety. (LOH 367, EBBY 143, PIO 336)

Apr 1, Sister Mary Ignatia Gavin (age 77) died. (LOH 371 says Apr 2)

Apr 2, Dr Harry Morgan Tiebout (age 70) died. (LOH 369, HT viii)

Apr 18-23, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Principles Before Personalities*. The 16<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The restructure plan of the GSB be approved changing the board into a body of 14 AA (Class B) and 7 non-alcoholic (Class A) trustees. (FI Act) (AACOA x, PIO 396-397)
- The GSB consist of 8 regional AA trustees, 6 from the US, 2 from Canada. Also, 6 "General Service" Class B trustees (chosen for business skill) - 4 from the NY City area, 1 from Canada, 1 from anywhere in the US. (FI Act)
- It be reaffirmed that the color-sound film *Bill's Own Story* is for use by AA groups only, not for outside agencies. (CPC/PI)
- AAWS publish a new hardcover book containing excerpts from Bill's letters, books, Grapevine articles and other writings with a title something like "The AA Reader" or "Selected Writings by Bill." (Lit.)
- A Conference Institutions Committee be established. (Policy)

Dec, the *Exchange Bulletin* was renamed to *Box 459*. (Box 459 Oct/Nov 2002)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1967

GSB membership was increased to 21 Trustees. (GSO)

*The AA Way of Life* (retitled in 1975 to *As Bill Sees It*) was published. Janet G assisted with editing. (AACOA x, PIO 360)

Apr, the copyright to the first Ed. Big Book expired and was not renewed. The oversight was not discovered by AAWS until 1985. (NG 299)

Apr 17-22, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Sponsorship - the Hand of AA*. The 17<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- GSC approve Guidelines for group separation of AA and Al-Anon. (Excerpt: The use of the word "family" should be deleted from an AA group's name; that so-called "joint groups" can dilute the help available in each Fellowship; either AA or Al-Anon can hold open discussion meetings but a group cannot be both; that officers should be either AA or Al-Anon depending upon affiliation and that new members be encouraged to stick to either an AA or Al-Anon group since they will get the most help by staying close to the group relating to their problem). (FI Act)
- The *Serenity Prayer* be incorporated into the Grapevine's regular monthly format. (Gv)
- In the board report accepted by the GSC it recommended that "to insure separation of AA from non-AA matters by establishing a procedure whereby all inquiries pertaining to B-3 and niacin are referred directly to an office in Pleasantville, NY in order that Bill's personal interest in these items not involve the Fellowship." (PIO 391)

Jun 17, T. Henry Williams died. (AGAA 69)

The American Medical Association (AMA) passed a resolution identifying alcoholism as "complex" disease and a "disease that merits the serious concern of all members of the health profession." (www)

### 1968

Jan 24, Bill W and Lois celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. (LR 159)

Apr 22-27, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Personal Recovery Depends Upon AA Unity*. The 18<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Delegates voted unanimously that the first World Services Meeting be held in NYC, in the fall of 1969, and accepted a 7-point proposal of the Trustees' World Service Planning Committee. (FI Act).
- The showing of the full face of an AA member at the level of press, TV, and films be considered a violation of the Anonymity Tradition, even though the name is withheld. (PI)

First AA membership survey taken. (NG 273)

### 1969

Apr 21-26, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Our Group Conscience: Voice of AA*. The 19<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The GSC approve the recommendations to incorporate into existing AA Guidelines the questions on how AA and Al-Anon can cooperate with regard to central offices and area and regional get-togethers and conventions. (FI Act)
- The GSC approved a resolution of gratitude to AFG. (FI Act)
- Approved a final draft of the AA Service Manual, a revision of the *Third Legacy Manual* (Rept/Ch)

Oct 9-11, the first World Service Meeting was held in NYC with delegates from 14 countries. (AACOA x)

### 1970

Apr 20-25, Hotel New Yorker in NYC. Theme: *Service - the Heart of AA*. The 20<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The 20<sup>th</sup> GSC go on record as opposing the use of the title "AA Counselor." (FI Act)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Apr, GSO moved to 468 Park Ave South in NYC. (PIO 399)

Jul, AA's 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 5<sup>th</sup> Int'l Convention at Miami Beach, FL. Est. attendance 10,700 (13,000?) Keynote was *Declaration of Unity. This we owe to AA's future: to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on AA Unity depend our lives and the lives of those to come.* It was Bill's last public appearance. (AACOA xi, NG 145-146)

Summer, long-time GSB Trustee Bernard B Smith died. (NG 392)

Dec, Lois W's brother Rogers Burnham died (he introduced Lois to Bill). (GTBT 85)

### 1971

Jan 24, William Griffith Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, 36 years sober, died (of emphysema, sometimes described as heart failure) at Miami Beach, FL. It was his and Lois' 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary. (AACOA xi, BW-FH 5) In 1990, Life magazine named Bill among the 100 most important figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (BW-FH 4)

Apr 19-24, Hotel New Yorker in NYC. Theme: *Communication: Key to AA Growth.* The 21<sup>st</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The short form of the *Twelve Concepts* be approved. (FI Act)
- The subject of clubs be a major item on the 1972 GSC Agenda. (FI Act)
- The Grapevine Corp. Board be given GSC approval to raise the price of the Grapevine from \$.35 to \$.50 for a single copy, and from \$3.50 to \$5 (\$22 today) for a yearly subscription, if the trend of rising costs indicates that there is a need. (Gv)
- The delegates give wholehearted support to the efforts of the GSO to establish an Institutions Correspondence Service on an individual basis, similar to the Loner Sponsor Service. (Institutions)

Apr Milton Maxwell, PhD joined the GSB as a Trustee. (GSO)

### 1972

Nell Wing was appointed the first AA Archivist. (GTBT 132, WPR 102)

Apr 17-22, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Our Primary Purpose.* The 22<sup>nd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The *Twenty-Four Hour Book* not be confirmed as GSC-approved literature. (Lit.)
- GSO should not accept contributions from clubs. (FI Act)
- In accordance with AA's Tradition of self-support, the GSC voted unanimously that AA not accept *Stepping Stones* property (the home of Bill and Lois W) for any purpose. (FI Act) (NG 263)
- The GSC agreed that tape making at all types of AA meetings, with the possible exception of closed meetings, is helpful to some AA's and that the decision of making tapes be left to group autonomy. (FI Act)
- GSO prepare a clear-cut statement of what AA is and what it is not and unanimously agreed that "alcohol and pill" groups not be listed in AA directories and meeting lists. (FI Act)

Oct 5, the second World Service Meeting was held in NY.

### 1973

Apr, distribution of the Big Book reached the one-million mark. The millionth copy was presented to President Richard Nixon in the Whitehouse. (NG 267, BW-FH 113)

Apr 24-29, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Responsibility - Our Expression of Gratitude.* The 23<sup>rd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- AAWS, Inc. be asked to study the possibility of having a reproduction made of the original Big Book. (Lit.)

*Came to Believe* was published. (AACOA xi)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

AA Archives opened at the GSO. (SM S73) (GTBT and NG say 1975) The Trustees of the GSB formed an Archives Committee. (NG 294, SM S73, WPR 102 says 1975)) The first meeting was on Oct 24. Its members were Chairperson George C, Rev Lee Belford and Dr Milton Maxwell. (GTBT 134-135)

### 1974

Apr 22-27, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Understanding and Cooperation - Inside and Outside AA*. The 24<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The World Directory be divided into three sections, each section subdivided by region (Eastern US, Western US, and Canada). (FI Act)
- A short form of the *Twelve Concepts for World Service* for inclusion in the *AA Service Manual*. (SM Twelve Concepts).
- Private picture taking should not occur at AA events. (FI Act)
- The concept presented by Dr Norris on conferences in which staff and trustees would visit in the regions and work with local service people should be further explored and developed. (FI Act)
- Ex-officio committee members be discontinued. Past delegates can keep themselves informed through their delegates and the Conference Report. (Conference Policy)
- The committee accept the recommendations of the Agenda/Admissions Committee that the "admissions" function of that committee be transferred to the Committee on Conference Policy. (In the future, the committee will be called the Committee on Conference Policy and Admissions. The Scope and History will be amended). (Conference Policy) [Similarly the Agenda/Admissions Committee was renamed the Committee on the Conference Agenda].
- In accordance with the GSB's recommendation, the film *Bill's Own Story* be released to AI-Anon groups under the same conditions as to AA Groups. (PI)

In order to maintain subscriber's anonymity, the legal name of *The AA Grapevine* was changed to *Box 1980* to comply with postal regulation that required the corporate name of an organization be placed on official envelopes and on the magazine itself. (1989 GSC-FR 24)

### 1975

Apr 21-26, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Unity: Through Love and Service*. The 25<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- GSO discontinue distribution of the *Bill W* book (the biography published by Harper and Row). (FI Act)
- The film *Bill's Own Story* may be shown at AA orientation sessions in rehabilitation facilities provided it is under the control of an AA member. (CPC)
- A feasibility study regarding a paperback Ed. of the Big Book & alternatives be made and reported at the 1976 GSC. (FI Act)

Jul, AA's 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 6<sup>th</sup> Int'l Convention held at Denver, CO. Est. attendance 19,300. Keynote *Let it Begin With Me*. The first flag ceremony was held at this convention. (AACOA xi)

*Living Sober* was published. (AACOA xi) It was written by member Barry L (www) Note: the book today is the second highest selling publication in AA.

Sep 19 (?), Jack Alexander died.

Nov 3, AA Archives formally opened in NYC. (NG 294, GTBT 140) (SM S73 says 1973)

### 1976

Apr 19-24, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Sponsorship - Our Privilege and Responsibility*. The 26<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- It is resolved by the 1976 General Service Conference that those instruments requiring consent of three-quarters of the responding groups for change or amendment would include the Twelve Steps of AA should any such change or amendment ever be proposed. (Rept/Ch)
- In case a change is needed in the *Twelve Traditions*, the *Twelve Steps*, or the *Six Warranties* of Article 12, wherever the words "registered AA groups of the world", "registered groups" or "directory-listed groups" appear in the *AA Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service*, a bracketed sentence be inserted to state, "This would include all AA groups known to the GSOs around the world." (Rept/Ch)
- The trustees' and GSC Institutions Committees be divided into two subcommittees each: (a) Correctional Institutions, (b) Hospitals and Rehabilitation Centers. (Institutions)
- We go forward with mini-conferences and provide them as often as possible, and that these be held at the request of the region. The sense of the meeting was for the time being the regional meetings be known as *AA Regional Forums*. (FI Act)
- We keep the Big Book as it is at this time and not publish a paperback edition. (FI Act)
- A study be made of publishing a limited edition of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. Big Book and report back at next year's GSC. (FI Act)

Apr, Michael Alexander joined the GSB as a Trustee. (GSO)

Publication of the third Ed. of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. (AACOA xi)

### 1977

Apr 18-23, Statler Hilton Hotel in NYC. Theme: *The AA Group - Where It Begins*. The 27<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The Institutions Committee be dissolved and two new committees - one dealing with Correctional Facilities and one with Treatment Facilities - be formed. (Institutions)
- AAWS proceed with the project of a joint biography of Dr Bob and Bill. (Lit., DBGO 5)
- The publication of a facsimile of the first Ed. Big Book should not be undertaken as it would destroy the sentimental value of the actual first Ed. (FI Act)
- It was suggested that AA groups be discouraged from selling literature not distributed by the GSO & the Grapevine. (FI Act)

### 1978

Apr 16-22, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *The Member and the Group - Recovery Through Service*. The 28<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The next printing of *Alcoholics Anonymous* the foreword to the second Ed. be included as originally published in the second Ed. (Lit.)
- Delegates should be made aware of any changes under consideration in the Big Book prior to publication. (Lit.)
- AA members be encouraged to invite their doctors, lawyers, etc. to their group anniversary meetings. (PI)

Distribution of the Big Book passed the 2 million mark. (AACOA xi, NG 267)

### 1979

Apr 22-28, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *The Legacies: Our Heritage and My Responsibility*. The 29<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The biographies of Dr Bob and Bill W be published as separate books rather than a joint biography. (Lit.)

Summer, *Not-God, A History of Alcoholics Anonymous* by Ernest Kurtz was published. The book was Kurtz's doctoral dissertation. He was given unprecedented cooperation by, and access to, AA Archives for research. (NG)



## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Dec 5, Henrietta Sieberling died in NYC. She was buried in Lawrenceburg, KY. An inscription on her tombstone reads, "Let go and let God." (AGAA 85)

### 1980

Apr 20-26, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Participation: The Key to Recovery*. The 30<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- That the Archives film Strip *Markings on the Journey* be GSC-approved. (FI Act)
- The unedited manuscript of *Dr Bob and the Good Old-timers* be accepted. (Lit.)

Jul, AA's 45<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and 7<sup>th</sup> Int'l Convention at New Orleans, LA. Est. attendance 22,500. Keynote *The Joy of Living*. (AACOA xi) First showing of the film *Markings on the Journey* (NG 290) First Archives Workshop. (GTBT 141)

Jul 22, Marty M died at St Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, CT. (SD 187, MMM 318)

### 1981

Feb (?), the first issue of *Markings*, the AA Archives newsletter was published.

Apr 26 - May 2, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *AA Takes Its Inventory*. The 31<sup>st</sup> GSC recommended that:

- *The AA Service Manual* and *Twelve Concepts for World Service* be combined into one volume. (Reports/Charter)
- The filmstrip *Markings on the Journey* be shown within the Fellowship only. (FI Act)
- Clubs not receive the literature discount available to AA groups. (FI Act)

Aug, distribution of the Big Book passed the 3 million mark. (AACOA xi, NG 267)

### 1982

Apr 18-24, Hotel Roosevelt. Theme: *The Traditions - Our Way of Unity*. The 32<sup>nd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The word "*suggested*" in the title of the Twelve Steps not be reinstated. (Lit.)

Dec, Nell Wing retired as AA Archivist and was replaced by Frank M. (GTBT 141)

### 1983

The copyright to the new material in the second Ed. of the Big Book expired without being renewed. AAWS did not discover the oversight until 1985. (NG 299)

Apr 17-23, Hotel Roosevelt. Theme: *Anonymity - Our Spiritual Foundation*. The 33<sup>rd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Membership surveys be continued on a random basis.
- It is not appropriate for AAWS, Inc. or the AA Grapevine, Inc. to produce or license the production of sobriety chips/medallions. (FI Act)

Distribution of the Big Book reached the 4 million mark. (NG 268)

### 1984

Apr 15-21, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Gratitude - The Language of the Heart*. The 34<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The Bill Wilson biography be approved with the title *Pass It On*. (Lit.)
- The CF Workbook, which has now been prepared, be approved for production and distribution. (CF)

Anne B (age 84) co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, died in CA. (CB 142, WPR 70)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1985

AAWS discovered that the copyrights to the first and second Ed. of the Big Book had expired. The copyright on the first Ed. lapsed in 1967. The copyright on new material in the second Ed. lapsed in 1983. Both AAWS and the Wilson estate shared responsibility for copyright renewal. (NG 299, www)

Apr 14-20, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Golden Moments of Reflection*. The 35<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the GSC-approved process, the GSC recognizes *The AA Grapevine* as the international journal of AA (includes wording amendments made in 1986). (Gv)
- The draft Treatment Facilities Workbook be approved, with minor changes, for production and distribution. (TF)

Jul, AA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 8<sup>th</sup> Int'l Convention at Montreal, Canada. Theme: *50 Years With Gratitude*. Est. attendance 44,000. Ruth Hock Crecelius (GTBT 141) was given the 5-millionth copy of the Big Book. As part of the festivities surrounding AA's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Stepping Stones, the Wilson's home since 1941, was declared a NY State Historic Site. (BW-FH 3)

Distribution of the Big Book reached the 5 million mark. (NG 268)

### 1986

Apr 20-26, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *AA's Future - Our Responsibility*. The 36<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- A definitive book on AA history from 1955-1985 be prepared and brought to the 1987 GSC for consideration. (Lit.)
- The 1987 GSC Policy/Admissions Committee consider the formation of a GSC Archives Committee. (FI Act)
- The GSC reaffirm the spirit of the 1977 GSC action regarding group literature displays, and recommended the suggestion that AA groups be encouraged to display or sell only literature published and distributed by the GSO, the AA Grapevine and other AA entities. (Lit.)

May 4, Ruth Hock Crecelius died. (WPR 88)

Sep 12-16, the first permanent Int'l AI-Anon General Services Meeting. (AFG pamphlet AR-2)

Nov, the first paperback edition of the Big Book was published. (NG 301)

### 1987

Apr 26 - May 2, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *The Seventh Tradition - A Turning Point*. The 37<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- While the committee recognizes the need for and encourages the development of area Archives and Archives Committees, with the resulting benefit to General Service and the Fellowship as a whole, a GSC Archives Committee should not be formed at this time because the needs of local Archives committees are being well served by the trustees' Archives Committee and the GSO Archivist. (Pol/Adm)
- Statements regarding AA's primary purpose be available. (Lit.) (Note: these are the "blue card" definitions of open/closed meetings)
- Undertaking the development of a daily reflections book. (Lit.)
- No changes or additions be made to the preamble. (Gv)
- A report on the progress of *The History of AA: 1955-1985* book be made to the 1988 GSC. (FI Act)

Distribution of the Big Book reached the 6 million mark. (NG 268)

### 1988

Apr 17-23, Hotel Roosevelt in NYC. Theme: *Our Singleness of Purpose - Key to Unity*. The 38<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Work continue on the AA history book, and that this be subject to further editing through the coordinating efforts of each regional trustee with each delegate for further updating, corrections, and additional information. (Lit.)
- The letter "S" be used as a prefix to the first set of page numbers in the AA Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service, so as to differentiate between the two sets of page numbers. (Lit.)
- The 1971 GSC Action be reaffirmed: "AA members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his death, but in each situation the final decision must rest with the family." Further, the AA Archives continue to protect the anonymity of deceased AA members as well as other members. (PI)

Oct 5, Lois Burnham Wilson (age 97) co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, died. (AACOA xi) Her contributions to the AA and AFG Fellowships entitle her to be considered co-founder of both. Michael Alexander, past Chairman of the GSB is cited "many AAs today feel their lives are owed to Lois as well as Bill, Dr Bob and Anne S." (WPR 53)

Oct 28, Milton Maxwell died. (1989 GSC-FR 40)

Oct, *Language of the Heart* published by AA Grapevine Inc. (GTBT 57, LOH)

### 1989

Jan 13, Dr Jack Norris died. (1989 GSC-FR 40)

AAWS took action against Nan R's trademark violation, to have her change the title of her book from *AA - Inside Alcoholics Anonymous* to *Getting Better Inside Alcoholics Anonymous*. AAWS withheld permission to use portions of AA's copyrighted material. There was strong objection among AA members regarding her anonymity break. (1989 GSC-FR 38)

Apr 23-29, Omni Park Central Hotel in NYC. Theme: *Anonymity - Living Our Traditions*. The 39<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Work continue on a definitive book on AA history from 1955, as recommended by the 1986 GSC, along the lines of a proposal recently submitted to the trustee's Literature Committee, which focuses on major events and developments since the co-founder turned AA over to the Fellowship, rather than focusing on the beginning of AA and the history of the 91 areas of the US and Canada. (Lit.)
- The Grapevine develop an ongoing AA history section drawing on archival material, including area & region histories. (Gv)
- The listing of clubs be deleted from the AA Directories. (Rpt/Ch)
- The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* be available in large print because of an indicated need over the years. (Lit.)

Apr 26, Dr Leonard V. Strong died. (GSO)

Apr 30, the film *My Name is Bill W* premiered on ABC TV's *Hallmark Hall of Fame*. Portrayals were James Garner as Dr Bob, James Woods as Bill, JoBeth Williams as Lois and Gary Sinese as Ebby. Woods was awarded an Emmy for Best Actor. (www)

### 1990

Life magazine named Bill W among the 100 most important figures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. (BW-FH 4)

Apr 22-28, Omni Park Central Hotel in NYC. Theme: *The Home Group - Our Responsibility and Link to AA's Future*. The 40<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The AA History book project continue until completion and that the time frame covered be expanded to include 1955 to the present. (Lit.)

Jul, AA's 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 9<sup>th</sup> Int'l Convention held at Seattle, WA. Theme: *55 Years - One Day At A Time*. Est. attendance 48,000. Nell Wing was presented the 10 millionth copy of the Big Book. (PIO 206 says 10 millionth copy printed Mar 1991)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### 1991

Mar, distribution of the Big Book reached the 10 million mark. (PIO 206)

Apr 14-20, Rye Town Hilton in Rye Brook, NY. Theme: *Sponsorship - Gratitude in Action*. The 41<sup>st</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The AA History book project continue to completion, and that a manuscript be forwarded to the 1992 GSC Literature Committee for consideration and approval. (Lit.)
- The Grapevine discontinue publishing the "About Alcoholism" section. (Gv)
- The 1992 GSC annual meeting be held in the city of NY. (FI Act)

### 1992

Mar, The GSO moved to the 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> floors of 475 Riverside Dr. and 120<sup>th</sup> St in NYC. (SM S10, 1992 GSC-FR 26)

Apr 26 - May 2, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in NYC. Theme: *The AA Message In a Changing World*. The 42<sup>nd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- That the new AA History Book manuscript be returned to the 1992 GSC Literature Committee for further review and then forwarded to the 1993 GSC Literature Committee. (Lit.)
- The proposal of the GSB to directly manage AAWS/GSO on an experimental basis for nine months not be implemented. (Agenda)
- The new computer monitored Happy Birthday Contribution Plan instituted in 1991 be discontinued immediately and that any data base of AA member's names and addresses, together with sobriety birthday dates, that may have been created be destroyed. (Fin.)
- The six point definition of an AA group be removed from all literature and replaced by the long form of Tradition Three and a section of Warranty Six, Concept XII ... (Lit.)

### 1993

Apr 18-24, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in NYC. Theme: *AA Takes Its Inventory - The General Service Conference Structure*. The 43<sup>rd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- In agreement with the consensus of the 1958 GSC, the use of sobriety chips/medallions is a matter for local autonomy and not one on which the GSC should record a definite position in behalf of the movement. (Ad Hoc Cmte Chips/Medallions)
- It is not appropriate for AAWS, Inc, or the AA Grapevine, Inc. to produce or license the production of sobriety chips/medallions. (Ad Hoc Cmte Chips/Medallions)
- The AA History Book project be deferred for two years so that a new team of AA servants can look at the History Book with fresh ideas. (Lit.)
- Contributions from conferences, conventions and round-ups not be limited to the maximum amount an individual may contribute in a given year, and in accordance with our Seventh Tradition, only funds from AA members attending the event should be contributed to support AA services. (Fin.)
- Because of strong sentiment against any changes in the first 164 pages of the Big Book, the request to rewrite the first three chapters of the Big Book not be implemented. (Lit.)
- The 1977 Advisory Action pertaining to the production of a facsimile of the first Ed. of the Big Book be reaffirmed: "The publication of a facsimile of the first Ed. of the Big Book should not be undertaken as it would destroy the sentimental value of the actual first Ed." The committee further felt no need exists for such a book. (Lit.)
- AAWS produce a pocketsize version of the Big Book with all front matter (Preface, various forewords, Doctor's Opinion) basic text, Dr Bob's Story and Appendices. (Lit.)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- In response to the proposal to create a GSC Committee on Archives, the 1987 GSC Action #45 be reaffirmed as follows: "While the committee recognizes the need for and encourages the development of area Archives and Archives Committees, with the resulting benefit to General Service and the Fellowship as a whole, a GSC Archives Committee should not be formed at this time because the needs of local Archives committees are being well served by the trustees' Archives Committee and the GSO Archivist." (Pol/Adm)
- Did not result in recommendation: The Conference finds that the initiation of litigation involving trademarks and service marks is a violation of Warranty Five. (Ad Hoc Cmte Chips/Medallions)

### 1994

Apr 17-23, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in NYC. Theme: *Spirit of Sacrifice*. The 44<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The circle and triangle logo be discontinued on all GSC-approved literature. (Lit.)
- The words "This is AA General Service Conference-approved literature" be displayed on the front cover of all AA Conference-approved literature wherever possible. (Lit.)
- No moratorium be placed on topics to be considered by the GSC. (Pol/Adm)
- Based on an expressed need, a Spanish edition of the Grapevine be produced. (Gv)
- We not form an ad hoc committee to relocate GSO out of NY, because it is not financially prudent, and such project is not needed at the present time. (Fin)

### 1995

Apr 30 - May 6, Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza in NYC. Theme: *Pass it On - Our Three Legacies*. The 45<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The first 164 pages of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Preface, the Forewords, *The Doctor's Opinion*, *Doctor Bob's Nightmare* and the Appendices remain as is. (Lit.)
- A pocket edition of the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* be published. (Lit.)
- After a thorough examination of the issues and information available and acknowledging that there may have been problems with communication at many service levels in the past, it was the sense of the committee that there has been improvement and therefore, in the interest of maintaining AA unity and finding there was not sufficient cause, the committee unanimously *recommended* that the proposal to censure the GSB be dismissed. (Trustees)
- Since no GSC is binding on the next, each GSC will determine by a sense of the meeting as part of its "house-keeping" chores whether or not that the annual meeting of the GSC will be smoking or non-smoking. (Pol/Adm)
- Did not result in a recommendation: That the manuscript originally commissioned as a history book be relabeled "collected observations of Alcoholics Anonymous" and that it be placed in the Archives and made available for purchase at cost upon request after editing for anonymity and various specific concerns relating to accuracy of content and style. (Lit.)
- Failed advisory action: That the General Service Board and its subsidiary boards, AA World Services Inc. and The AA Grapevine Inc, initiate no litigation in defense of copyrights and trademarks, in accordance with Tradition 10 and Warranty 5. (Fl. Act.)

Jul, AA's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 10<sup>th</sup> Int'l Convention held at San Diego, CA. Est. attendance (?)

### 1996

Apr 21-27, Crowne Plaza in NYC. Theme: *Preserving Our Fellowship - Our Challenge*. The 46<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- Suggested guidelines developed by the trustee's Nominating Committee for changing region boundaries be accepted. (SM S39)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Failed advisory action: That the General Service Board and its subsidiary boards, AA World Services Inc. and The AA Grapevine Inc, initiate no litigation regarding the protection of copyrights or trademarks. (FI. Act.)

Jun, the first issue of *La Viña* was published on a bi-monthly basis. (SM S81-S82)

### 1997

Apr 13-19, Crowne Plaza in NYC. Theme: *Spirituality - Our Foundation*. The 47<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- A draft fourth edition Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be developed and a progress report be brought to the 1998 GSC Literature Committee, keeping in mind the 1995 Advisory Action. (Lit.)

### 1998

Apr 19-25, Crowne Plaza Manhattan in NYC. Theme: *Our Twelfth Step Work*. The 48<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- A GSC Archives Committee composed of nine delegates (5 from Panel 48 and 4 from Panel 49) meet at the 49<sup>th</sup> GSC as a secondary committee assignment and that the committee meet jointly with the Trustee's Archives Committee. (Pol/Adm)
- A draft fourth Ed. of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, continue to be developed and a progress report brought to the 1999 GSC Literature Committee. (Lit.)

Jun 1, GSO received 1,222 personal stories for consideration for the fourth Ed. Big Book. (2001 GSC-FR 11)

### 1999

Apr 18-24, Crowne Plaza Manhattan in NYC. Theme: *Moving Forward: Unity Through Humility*. The 49<sup>th</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The Trustee's Archives Committee review the Archives Handbook and consider the need for any changes and/or an Archives Kit. (Archives)
- The 1966 and 1974 Advisory actions which stated that the film *Bill's Own Story* be for use by AA groups only, and that this film be released to Al-Anon groups under the same conditions be reaffirmed. (PI)
- The annual limit contributed to the GSO from individual AA members be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 ... (on a one-time only basis and not in perpetuity). (Fin.)
- Apr the first GSC Archives Committee met as a secondary committee assignment. (GSC)

### 2000

Apr 30 - May 6, Crowne Plaza Manhattan in NYC. Theme: *Trusting Our Future to AA Principles*. The 50<sup>th</sup> GSC.

Jun 29-Jul 2, 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary and 11<sup>th</sup> Int'l Convention held at Minneapolis, MN. Est. attendance 47,000.

### 2001

Apr 22-28, Crowne Plaza Manhattan in NYC. Theme: *Love and Service*. The 51<sup>st</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The fourth Ed. of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, be approved. (Lit.)
- The Twelve Concepts (short form) with a brief introduction, be added to the Appendices Section in future printings of the Big Book. (Lit.)

Sep 12, AA trusted servants in NYC organized AA meetings 24 hours around the clock near Ground Zero for the AA members engaged in rescue and emergency work at the World Trade Center tragedy. (2002 GSC-FR 26)

*Archives WORKBOOK* published as a service piece.

Nov 1, fourth Ed. of *Alcoholics Anonymous* published. It contained 24 new personal stories. (GSO)

Nov 9, GSO sent a complimentary copy of the 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. Big Book to groups in the US and Canada. (2002 GSC-FR 28)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Dec 8-9, the first Special Hispanic Forum was held in Austin, TX. (2002 GSC-FR 28)

Estimated AFG membership: 600,000 in 26,500 groups. (AFG pamphlet AR-2)

Distribution of the Big Book reached the 22 million mark. (NG 268)

### 2002

Feb 9, Sue Smith W (Dr Bob and Anne's adopted daughter) died.

Apr 21-27, Crowne Plaza Manhattan in NYC. Theme: *Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts*. The 52<sup>nd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- The [revised] video *Markings on the Journey* be approved by the GSC. (Archives)
- An anthology of the last published version of the 56 stories dropped from the first, second and third Editions of the Big Book be approved with the title *Experience, Strength and Hope*. (Lit.)
- The text in the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* written by Bill Wilson, remain as is, recognizing the Fellowship's feeling that Bill's writings be retained as originally published. (Lit.)
- Although the committee acknowledged the importance of electronic meetings to some AA members, the sentence "Fundamentally, though, the difference between an electronic meeting and the home group around the corner is only one of format" in the last paragraph of the Foreword to the 4<sup>th</sup> Ed, be deleted in future printings of the Big Book. (Lit.)
- After careful consideration of the request to restore *The Doctor's Opinion* to page 1 as published in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ed. of the Big Book from 1939 to 1955 in future printings of the Big Book, the committee agreed to take no action. (Lit.) The matter was also later turned down when brought as a floor action.

Distribution of the Big Book (2002 GSC-FR 15)

Ed.	Count
1 <sup>st</sup>	300,000
2 <sup>nd</sup>	1,150,000
3 <sup>rd</sup>	19,550,000
4 <sup>th</sup>	1,225,000

### 2003

*Experience, Strength and Hope: Stories From the First Three Editions of Alcoholics Anonymous*, was published.

Apr 27 - May 3, Crowne Plaza Manhattan in NYC. Theme: *Living AA's Principles Through Sponsorship*. The 53<sup>rd</sup> GSC recommended that:

- A comprehensive review of the AA Group pamphlet be undertaken and a draft returned to the 2004 GSC. (Lit.)
- The Trustees Archives Committee consider additional items in the "Mission Statement" and in the "Calendar of Holdings" of the Archives Workbook. (Archives)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Appendix 1: Authors of Big Book Stories

Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Deceased	Notes
A Business Man's Recovery	William J	Bill	R	OM, 1	Slipped	1962	NY: 1 <sup>st</sup> Board Chairman 11/38 - 2/39
A Close Shave	Harry J		Z	OM, 1	3/37	1967	OH: Trustee 1/52 - 4/56
A Different Slant	Harry		B	OM, 1	Slipped		NY: 2 <sup>nd</sup> Board Chairman 2/39 - 12/39
A Drunk Like You	Unknown			4			
A Feminine Victory	Florence D		R	OM, 1	Slipped	1943	NY: committed suicide in Washington DC
A Five-Time Loser Wins	Morris		B	3			NC
A Flower of the South	Esther		E	2,3	5/16/41	6/3/1960	TX
A Late Start	Unknown			4			
A Teen-Ager's Decision	Lisa			3			WA
A Vision of Recovery	Unknown			4			
A Ward of the Probate Court	William	Bill	Van H	OM, 1	9/37		OH
AA Taught Him To Handle Sobriety	Bob		P	3, 4	1961		CT: Trustee 7/68 - 10/71 Gen. Mgr. GSO 9/74 - 1988
Acceptance Was The Answer nee Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict original title was Bronze Moccasins	Paul	Dr Paul	O, MD	3, 4	7/67	5/19/2000	CA: story was retitled to Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict by a Grapevine Editor
Ace Full-Seven-Eleven	Unknown			OM			OH: reputed to have withdrawn story Didn't like changes made to Big Book
Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three	William I	Bill	D	2-4	6/26/35	9/17/1954	OH: Delegate to 1951 GSC, Panel 1
An Alcoholic's Wife	Marie		B	1			OH: non-alcoholic
An Artist's Concept	Ray		C	1	2/38		NY: designed Big Book dust jacket First cited the Herbert Spencer quote
Annie The Cop Fighter	Annie		C	2	4/47	1974	NY
Another Chance	Bertha		V	3, 4	3/72		KY
Another Prodigal Story	Ralph		F	1	6/6/38		MA
Any Day Was Washday	Unknown			3	1973		
Because I'm And Alcoholic	Unknown			4			
Belle Of The Bar	Unknown			3			
Bill's Story	William Griffith	Bill	Wilson	OM, 1-3	12/11/34	1/24/1971	NY co-founder. Trustee 4/49-1/51
Building A New Life	Unknown			4			
Calculating The Costs	Unknown			3			



## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Deceased	Notes
Crossing The River Of Denial	Unknown			4			
Desperation Drinking	Pat		M	2, 3			NY
Dr Bob's Nightmare nee The Doctor's Nightmare	Robert Holbrook	Dr Bob	Smith, MD	OM, 1-4	6/10/35	11/16/1950	OH: co-founder. Trustee 11/38- 10/49
Educated Agnostic	Norman		H	OM, 1	2/38		CT
Empty On The Inside	Unknown			4			
Fear Of Fear	Ceil		M	2-4	7/49		NY
Fired Again	Wallace	Wally	G	OM, 1	Slipped		OH
Flooded With Feeling	Unknown			4			
Freedom From Bondage	Wynn Corum		L	2-4	1947		CA
From Farm To City	Ethel		M	2,3	5/8/41	4/9/1963	OH: first woman to get sober in Akron
Gratitude In Action	Dave		B	4	1944		Quebec
Grounded	Unknown			4			
Growing Up All Over Again	Harris		K	3	1960		
Gutter Bravado	Unknown			4			
He Had To Be Shown (rewritten) nee The Car Smasher	Dick		S	1-3	2/37	11/1957	OH: brother of Paul S Trustee 4/46 - 1/53
He Lived Only To Drink	Unknown			4			
He Sold Himself Short	Earl		Treat	2-4	7/37	10/1962	Chicago: Board Trustee 1/51 - 1/55
He Thought He Could Drink Like A Gentleman	Albert R	Abby	G	2, 3	4/39		Cleveland: started principle of rotation
He Who Loses His Life	E B	Bob	R	2, 3	1/47		NY
Hindsight	Myron		W	1	4/36		NY
His Conscience	Unknown			2	1938		Canada
Home Brewmeister	Clarence H		S	OM, 1-3	2/11/38	3/22/1984	Cleveland: claimed himself "founder of AA"
It Might Have Been Worse	Chet		R	2-4			
Jim's Story	Jim	Dr Jim	S, MD	2-4	1943		DC
Joe's Woes	Joe		M	2	2/40		NY
Join The Tribe!	Maynard		B	3			Canada
Lifesaving Words	Unknown			3	1/73		Lucknow, India
Listening To The wind	Unknown			4			
Lone Endeavor	Pat		C	1	Slipped		CA: ghost written by Ruth Hock

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Deceased	Notes
Me An Alcoholic?	Unknown			2-4	11/47		
My Bottle, My Resentments, and Me	Unknown			4			
My Chance To Live	Unknown			4			
My Wife And I	Jim & Maybell		L	OM, 1	1937		NY
New Vision For A Sculptor	Fred			2	5/47		NY
On His Way	Horace R	Popsy	M	1	1937		NY:
On the Move	Unknown			4			NY
Our Southern Friend	John Henry Fitzhugh	Fitz	M	1-4	10/35	10/4/1943	NY, Washington DC, Baltimore
Physician Heal Thyself	Earl	Dr Earl	M, MD	2-4	6/15/53	1/13/2003	CA
Promoted To Chronic	Helen		B	2, 3	1945		NY: GSO senior staff member
Riding The Rods	Charles	Charley	S	OM, 1	1937		OH
Rum, Radio And Rebellion	Pete		W	2, 3	1945		PA
Safe Haven	Unknown			4			
Smile With Me, At Me	Harold		S	OM, 1	6/38		NY
Stars Don't Fall	Countess Felicia		G	2, 3			NY
Student Of Life	Unknown			4			
The Back-Slider	Walter		B	OM, 1	1938		OH
The Career Officer	Sackville		M	2, 3	3/28/47	1979	Dublin, Ireland
The European Drinker	Joe		D	OM, 1-3	3/36		OH
The Housewife Who Drank At Home	Unknown			2-4			
The Independent Blonde	Nancy		F	2	6/45		NY
The Keys Of The Kingdom	Sylvia		K	2-4	9/13/39		Chicago
The Man Who Mastered Fear nee The Fearful One	Archie		T	OM, 1-4	11/38		Detroit
The Missing Link	Unknown			4			
The News Hawk nee Traveler, Editor, Scholar	Jim		S	OM, 1-3	7/37		OH: helped edit 1 <sup>st</sup> Ed. Big Book stories
The Perpetual Quest	Unknown			4			
The Prisoner Freed	Unknown			2, 3			NY
The Professor And The Paradox	John		P	2	2/49		AL
The Rolling Stone	Lloyd		T	1	1937		OH

### A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Deceased	Notes
The Salesman	Bob		O	OM, 1	5/37		OH
The Seven Month Slip	Ernie W		G	OM, 1	Slipped	6/11/1971	OH: Dr Bob's son-in-law
The Unbeliever	Henry G	Hank	P	OM, 1	Slipped	1/18/1954	NY: also wrote chapter To Employers
The Vicious Cycle	Jim		B	1-4	6/16/38	9/8/1974	NY, Philadelphia, Baltimore
There's Nothing The Matter With Me!	William	Bill	G	2	1945		NJ
Those Golden Years	Cecil	Teet	C	3	12/70	6/26/1992	
Tightrope	Unknown			4			
Too Young?	Unknown			3			
Truth Freed Me!	Paul J		S	OM, 1	7/2/36	9/19/1953	OH: brother of Dick S
Twice Gifted	Unknown			4			
Unto The Second Generation	Unknown			2, 3	2/50		Chicago
Window Of Opportunity	Unknown			4			
Winner Takes All	Unknown			4			
Women Suffer Too	Margaret	Marty	Mann	2-4	Slipped	7/22/1980	NY: started NCEA (NCA & NCADD)

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Appendix 2: Estimated Counts of Groups and Members

When		Group Counts							Member Counts							Notes
Yr	Base	Trend	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	Trend	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	
1935			2							5						1935-1941 membership from
1936			2							15						AACOA 310
1937			2							40						
1938			2							100						
1939										400						AACOA 180
1940										2,000						
1941			200							8,000						AACOA 192, PIO 266
1942																
1943										10,000						LOH 181
1944			360							10,000						BW-FH 166-167, PIO 304
1945			560							15,000						NG 113, BW-FH 163, 180
1946			1,000							30,000						BW-FH 163
1947			1,650							48,613						GTBT 22
1948			2,000							60,000						BW-FH 163, DBGO 287
1949																
1950	Year		3,500	3,500												Conference report data used
1951	Year	27%	4,436	3,606	399	216	82	133		0						from 1950 on
1952	Year	11%	4,925	3,938		713	98	176		118,632	91,644		15,360	2,324	9,304	
1953	Year	20%	5,905	4,663	504	354	151	233	-1%	117,978	84,329	8,114	8,793	4,425	12,149	Estimated members were
1954	Year	0%	5,927	4,484	559	441	184	259	7%	126,057	89,780	8,671	10,766	4,511	12,128	around triple of that reported
1955	Year	5%	6,249	4,610	574	564	211	290	8%	135,905	93,951	9,545	14,397	4,956	13,056	
1956	Year	8%	6,779	4,893	624	710	256	296	3%	139,798	95,661	10,235	15,129	5,936	12,837	
1957	Year	0%	6,793	4,755	680	743	290	325	1%	141,795	93,746	10,548	17,501	6,500	13,500	Overseas = GSO guess
1958	Year	14%	7,765	5,443	775	915	285	347	3%	145,830	98,858	11,181	14,471	7,077	14,243	
1959	Year	6%	8,211	5,719	801	1,033	302	356	4%	151,606	101,724	11,175	16,651	6,509	15,547	
1960	4/61	5%	8,615	5,875	833	1,112	360	435	7%	162,037	108,004	11,524	17,973	6,675	17,373	Estimated members > 300,000
1961	4/62	8%	9,305	6,208	876	1,274	445	502	9%	176,474	109,923	12,554	22,768	10,778	20,451	
1962	4/63	8%	10,070	6,600	946	1,484	476	564	7%	189,702	117,953	13,093	25,642	10,602	22,412	

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

When		Group Counts							Member Counts							Notes
Yr	Base	Trend	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	Trend	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	
1963	4/64	9%	10,956	7,033	1,075	1,690	514	644	10%	209,434	122,483	15,410	32,371	11,417	27,753	Estimated members > 350,000
1964	4/65	7%	11,761	7,543	1,146	1,854	570	648	4%	217,967	128,498	15,928	37,178	10,764	25,000	
1965	4/66	6%	12,444	7,821	1,241	2,136	569	677	6%	232,105	133,786	17,180	43,580	10,774	26,157	
1966	4/67	7%	13,279	8,177	1,282	2,522	561	737	8%	251,615	140,379	18,630	48,417	14,384	29,805	
1967	4/68	7%	14,154	8,484	1,411	2,784	645	830	5%	263,026	142,566	18,757	55,062	16,307	29,870	Estimated members > 400,000
1968	4/69	4%	14,747	8,595	1,556	3,057	648	891	8%	283,329	148,574	21,676	60,756	18,548	33,775	Estimated members > 425,000
1969	4/70	6%	15,624	9,047	1,590	3,350	742	895	5%	297,077	156,974	22,706	63,366	20,160	33,871	Estimated members > 450,000
1970	4/71	5%	16,459	9,541	1,667	3,559	767	925	5%	311,450	167,313	26,008	67,044	18,604	32,481	Estimated members > 500,000
1971	4/72	8%	17,776	10,342	1,815	3,921	783	915	6%	329,907	181,419	29,073	71,737	16,900	30,300	Estimated members > 575,000
1972	4/73	17%	20,829	12,137	2,031	4,761	914	986	20%	395,244	211,686	32,740	86,344	28,995	34,977	
1973	4/74	8%	22,467	12,869	2,122	5,428	1,030	1,018	7%	421,151	225,911	35,091	102,073	22,915	34,764	Estimated members > 725,000
1974	4/75	11%	25,030	14,448	2,427	6,088	1,046	1,021	19%	502,733	287,699	42,922	107,643	28,057	35,962	Estimated members > 800,000
1975	4/76	6%	26,456	15,308	2,511	6,153	1,351	1,133	6%	533,590	292,646	43,903	126,991	32,711	36,958	Estimated members > 1,000,000
1976	4/77	11%	29,352	16,557	2,683	7,597	1,285	1,230	8%	574,318	320,913	47,843	135,147	30,792	39,323	
1977	4/78	8%	31,587	18,382	2,950	7,597	1,400	1,258	7%	612,876	352,807	50,783	135,144	33,544	40,205	Overseas 1977 data used
1978	4/79	5%	33,241	18,926	3,157	8,737	1,285	1,136	2%	627,456	356,383	53,601	149,943	30,788	36,306	
1979	4/80	20%	39,964	20,359	3,349	14,016	1,156	1,084	38%	868,171	387,875	56,672	163,572	23,956	35,336	Overseas figures being revised
1980	4/81	5%	42,105	22,169	3,624	14,016	1,182	1,114	5%	907,575	414,434	61,531	163,360	24,822	42,920	
1981	4/82	14%	47,797	24,293	3,781	17,650	935	1,138	3%	937,705	455,505	64,244	163,000	24,310	38,153	Much overseas data estimated
1982	4/83	12%	53,576	26,608	3,948	20,669	1,030	1,321	14%	1,065,299	518,790	66,344	172,949	25,750	40,951	GSO stopped quoting estimates
1983	1/84	9%	58,576	29,827	4,197	22,156	1,052	1,344	12%	1,191,916	585,823	69,931	182,419	25,899	42,336	Base changed to January 1
1984	1/85	7%	62,860	31,754	4,286	24,221	1,047	1,552	13%	1,351,793	630,679	71,632	192,236	26,175	46,560	
1985	1/86	7%	67,019	33,840	4,445	27,054		1,680	7%	1,445,999	676,234	74,277	202,591		50,400	Hospital (TF) category dropped
1986	1/87	9%	73,192	36,002	4,540	30,868		1,782	8%	1,556,316	727,145	76,377	212,814		53,460	
1987	1/88	4%	76,184	38,276	4,654	31,387		1,867	4%	1,617,296	775,040	78,057	222,663		56,010	
1988	1/89	12%	85,270	40,693	4,749	38,060		1,768	7%	1,734,734	835,489	81,293	232,605		54,808	
1989	1/90	3%	87,696	43,107	4,866	38,060		1,663	3%	1,793,834	896,033	82,949	242,701		51,553	
1990	1/91	7%	93,914	46,450	5,046	40,755		1,663	14%	2,047,469	1,012,623	87,532	252,563		52,534	
1991	1/92	3%	96,458	48,747	5,173	40,755		1,783	4%	2,120,130	1,079,719	90,735	262,508		54,782	

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

When		Group Counts							Member Counts							Notes
Yr	Base	Trend	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	Trend	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	
1992	1/93	-8%	89,215	50,325	5,275	31,700		1,915	-3%	2,048,954	1,135,395	94,986	770,437		47,701	Overseas figures revised
1993	1/94	1%	90,155	50,541	5,287	32,190		2,137	1%	2,062,380	1,134,500	96,500	778,829		52,182	GSO records system revision
1994	1/95	-1%	89,239	49,443	5,133	32,578		2,085	-13%	1,790,528	1,127,471	95,546	516,169		50,983	GSO records revision continues
1995	1/96	7%	95,166	50,671	5,259	37,082		2,154	7%	1,922,269	1,153,795	97,397	614,611		56,133	Only 18 out of 40 foreign GSOs
1996	1/97	2%	96,997	50,681	5,275	38,765		2,276	2%	1,959,829	1,158,850	98,720	642,769		59,174	sent in updated figures
1997	1/98	1%	97,568	50,997	5,277	38,895		2,399	0%	1,967,229	1,166,079	102,499	636,414		62,129	
1998	1/99	1%	98,710	51,183	5,257	39,804		2,466	1%	1,988,901	1,166,927	101,786	657,062		63,002	
1999	1/00	0%	99,024	51,151	5,132	40,222		2,519	0%	1,990,054	1,161,436	97,054	666,527		64,723	
2000	1/01	2%	100,766	51,735	5,104	41,423		2,504	9%	2,160,013	1,162,112	98,816	833,100		65,672	
2001	1/02	-1%	100,131	51,245	4,965	41,390		2,531	3%	2,215,293	1,160,651	97,124	891,167		66,036	
2002	1/03	4%	103,768	51,537	4,903	44,762		2,566	-6%	2,092,460	1,168,990	96,100	760,214		66,942	
	Avg	6%							7%							

1. The table consists of group and membership data reported by the US/Canada GSO. From 1951 on, the figures were taken from final Conference reports.
2. The data must be interpreted very carefully, very skeptically and in proper context. Group counts include only those groups asking GSO to be listed (thousands do not). Groups may or may not report membership estimates or update estimates over time. Members can be counted in multiple group estimates and the composition of the numbers has changed at various times from "reported" to "estimated."
3. In 1994, a major revision occurred in the US/Canada GSO's counting methods and record system. The number of groups reported no longer included those described as "meetings" which chose not to be considered "groups." Such "meetings" (typically special interest) are included in prior year's data. The 1994 revision can erroneously be interpreted as a steep drop from 1993 to 1994 when, in fact, it simply reflects a procedural change in counting methods.
4. AA is in about 150 countries (with 51 GSOs overseas). Each year, the US/Canada GSO attempts to contact overseas GSOs and groups requesting to be listed in their records. Where current data are lacking, earlier year's figures are used. An estimate of membership of non-reporting groups is arrived at by taking an average of reporting groups.
5. From the beginning, the numbers are at best, "fuzzy" and do need to be interpreted prudently to avoid drawing erroneous conclusions. The table data are not an accurate measure of a specific year's increase or decrease. However, trends over the decades are indicative (but not exact) of AA groups reaching more places and more AA members achieving recovery.
6. Average (mean) annual growth in groups and members is 6% and 7% respectively.

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

### Appendix 3: Royalties On Literature Sales

Year	Big Book		12&12		AA Comes of Age		As Bill Sees It		Total		Royalty \$		CPI Factor	Royalties In 2003 \$	
	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual \$	Cum \$		Annual \$	Cum \$
1935													0.074		
1936													0.076		
1937													0.078		
1938													0.077		
1939													0.076		
1940													0.076		
1941													0.080		
1942													0.089		
1943													0.094	229,700 Big Books were sold from 1939 - 1951. Royalty amounts prior to 1950 cannot be found	
1944													0.096		
1945													0.098		
1946													0.106		
1947													0.121		
1948													0.131		
1949													0.129		
1950											16,367		0.131	124,937	
1951	229,700								229,700		13,139	29,505	0.141	93,183	218,119
1952	28,000	257,700							28,000	257,700	14,300	43,806	0.144	99,309	317,428
1953	23,296	280,996	29,567						52,863	310,563	23,490	67,296	0.145	162,002	479,430
1954	22,004	303,000	10,389	39,956					32,393	342,956	15,447	82,743	0.146	105,800	585,230
1955	28,853	331,853	6,805	46,761					35,658	378,614	19,963	102,706	0.146	136,733	721,963
1956	23,468	355,321	7,079	53,840					30,547	409,161	18,444	121,150	0.148	124,622	846,584
1957	21,318	376,639	7,735	61,575	11,902				40,955	450,116	24,213	145,363	0.153	158,255	1,004,839
1958	20,585	397,224	7,282	68,857	6,862	18,764			34,729	484,845	20,703	166,066	0.157	131,866	1,136,705
1959	22,481	419,705	7,812	76,669	3,985	22,749			34,278	519,123	20,931	186,997	0.158	132,475	1,269,180
1960	24,533	444,238	8,545	85,214	3,713	26,462			36,791	555,914	22,229	209,226	0.161	138,068	1,407,248
1961	27,085	471,323	9,601	94,815	3,456	29,918			40,142	596,056	24,181	233,407	0.163	148,350	1,555,598
1962	30,000	501,323	10,674	105,489	3,461	33,379			44,135	640,191	26,506	259,913	0.164	161,622	1,717,220
1963	32,105	533,428	11,155	116,644	3,684	37,063			46,944	687,135	27,658	287,571	0.166	166,614	1,883,834
1964	32,509	565,937	12,107	128,751	3,763	40,826			48,379	735,514	28,790	316,361	0.169	170,355	2,054,190

## A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Year	Big Book		12&12		AA Comes of Age		As Bill Sees It		Total		Royalty \$		CPI Factor	Royalties In 2003 \$	
	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual \$	Cum \$		Annual \$	Cum \$
1965	29,900	595,837	14,766	143,517	3,299	44,125			47,965	783,479	28,372	344,733	0.171	165,918	2,220,108
1966	34,938	630,775	15,506	159,023	3,825	47,950			54,269	837,748	32,427	377,160	0.176	184,244	2,404,352
1967	38,446	669,221	16,973	175,996	4,205	52,155	21,677		81,301	919,049	46,990	424,150	0.182	258,187	2,662,539
1968	41,915	711,136	20,087	196,083	4,783	56,938	15,160	36,837	81,945	1,000,994	47,606	471,756	0.189	251,884	2,914,422
1969	48,197	759,333	22,049	218,132	6,091	63,029	12,250	49,087	88,587	1,089,581	51,934	523,690	0.200	259,670	3,174,092
1970	54,725	814,058	26,868	245,000	6,678	69,707	11,649	60,736	99,920	1,189,501	58,307	581,997	0.211	276,336	3,450,429
1971	69,104	883,162	36,054	281,054	8,395	78,102	13,737	74,473	127,290	1,316,791	74,098	656,095	0.220	336,809	3,787,238
1972	84,908	968,070	43,349	324,403	9,707	87,809	15,183	89,656	153,147	1,469,938	89,396	745,491	0.227	393,815	4,181,053
1973	110,297	1,078,367	60,702	385,105	12,045	99,854	18,425	108,081	201,469	1,671,407	116,997	862,488	0.241	485,465	4,666,518
1974	137,548	1,215,915	86,168	471,273	14,683	114,537	19,693	127,774	258,092	1,929,499	148,348	1,010,836	0.268	553,537	5,220,055
1975	176,274	1,392,189	115,648	586,921	18,303	132,840	26,668	154,442	336,893	2,266,392	224,651	1,235,487	0.293	766,727	5,986,782
1976	181,744	1,573,933	115,405	702,326	13,500	146,340	23,128	177,570	333,777	2,600,169	263,670	1,499,157	0.309	853,301	6,840,083
1977	211,787	1,785,720	136,658	838,984	16,301	162,641	30,129	207,699	394,875	2,995,044	296,957	1,796,114	0.330	899,870	7,739,953
1978	246,490	2,032,210	156,960	995,944	18,929	181,570	30,648	238,347	453,027	3,448,071	315,852	2,111,966	0.355	889,724	8,629,677
1979	310,160	2,342,370	192,180	1,188,124	21,295	202,865	40,271	278,618	563,906	4,011,977	383,850	2,495,816	0.395	971,772	9,601,449
1980	369,980	2,712,350	230,440	1,418,564	21,560	224,425	45,190	323,808	667,170	4,679,147	451,200	2,947,016	0.448	1,007,143	10,608,592
1981	431,800	3,144,150	264,200	1,682,764	22,400	246,825	51,900	375,708	770,300	5,449,447	521,878	3,468,894	0.494	1,056,433	11,665,025
1982	462,100	3,606,250	287,800	1,970,564	22,300	269,125	56,900	432,608	829,100	6,278,547	561,832	4,030,726	0.525	1,070,156	12,735,181
1983	543,300	4,149,550	319,500	2,290,064	23,800	292,925	60,400	493,008	947,000	7,225,547	645,342	4,676,068	0.542	1,190,668	13,925,849
1984	622,500	4,772,050	378,500	2,668,564	25,100	318,025	69,200	562,208	1,095,300	8,320,847	746,816	5,422,884	0.565	1,321,798	15,247,647
1985	696,300	5,468,350	439,300	3,107,864	24,500	342,525	70,300	632,508	1,230,400	9,551,247	836,733	6,259,617	0.585	1,430,313	16,677,960
1986	816,200	6,284,550	479,600	3,587,464	19,700	362,225	79,900	712,408	1,395,400	10,946,647	912,548	7,172,165	0.596	1,531,121	18,209,081
1987	1,001,900	7,286,450	578,600	4,166,064	22,300	384,525	86,600	799,008	1,689,400	12,636,047	1,018,966	8,191,131	0.618	1,648,812	19,857,893
1988	1,109,901	8,396,351	676,349	4,842,413	29,616	414,141	113,719	912,727	1,929,585	14,565,632	872,854	9,063,985	0.643	1,357,471	21,215,364
1989	1,234,980	9,631,331	760,830	5,603,243	30,300	444,441	121,090	1,033,817	2,147,200	16,712,832	901,084	9,965,069	0.674	1,336,920	22,552,284
1990	1,132,878	10,764,209	666,155	6,269,398	25,058	469,499	112,592	1,146,409	1,936,683	18,649,515	1,014,202	10,979,271	0.711	1,426,444	23,978,729
1991	1,054,890	11,819,099	582,690	6,852,088	21,480	490,979	85,150	1,231,559	1,744,210	20,393,725	1,009,225	11,988,496	0.741	1,361,977	25,340,706
1992	1,013,527	12,832,626	552,847	7,404,935	15,330	506,309	75,576	1,307,135	1,657,280	22,051,005	1,007,032	12,995,528	0.763	1,319,832	26,660,538
1993	1,027,657	13,860,283	476,160	7,881,095	16,265	522,574	64,798	1,371,933	1,584,880	23,635,885	956,499	13,952,027	0.786	1,216,920	27,877,458
1994	1,049,343	14,909,626	473,428	8,354,523	14,633	537,207	67,033	1,438,966	1,604,437	25,240,322	885,108	14,837,135	0.806	1,098,149	28,975,607
1995	1,016,994	15,926,620	457,376	8,811,899	15,916	553,123	66,025	1,504,991	1,556,311	26,796,633	814,226	15,651,361	0.829	982,179	29,957,785



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Year	Big Book		12&12		AA Comes of Age		As Bill Sees It		Total		Royalty \$		CPI Factor	Royalties In 2003 \$	
	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual	Cum	Annual \$	Cum \$		Annual \$	Cum \$
1996	963,546	16,890,166	442,601	9,254,500	14,429	567,552	64,615	1,569,606	1,485,191	28,281,824	762,446	16,413,807	0.853	893,841	30,851,626
1997	933,926	17,824,092	414,217	9,668,717	14,412	581,964	75,842	1,645,448	1,438,397	29,720,221	751,780	17,165,587	0.873	861,145	31,712,771
1998	867,828	18,691,920	370,101	10,038,818	10,336	592,300	61,294	1,706,742	1,309,559	31,029,780	589,035	17,754,622	0.886	664,825	32,377,596
1999	872,781	19,564,701	373,357	10,412,175	12,240	604,540	63,581	1,770,323	1,321,959	32,351,739	164,542	17,919,164	0.906	181,614	32,559,210
2000	899,180	20,463,881	380,602	10,792,777	11,182	615,722	63,737	1,834,060	1,354,701	33,706,440	167,917	18,087,081	0.936	179,399	32,738,608
2001	1,356,016	21,819,897	399,513	11,192,290	13,050	628,772	73,080	1,907,140	1,841,659	35,548,099	197,294	18,284,375	0.963	204,874	32,943,483
2002	1,175,053	22,994,950	423,231	11,615,521	14,039	642,811	76,291	1,983,431	1,688,614	37,236,713	156,770	18,441,145	0.978	160,297	33,103,779
2003													1.000		
Total	22,994,950		11,615,521		642,811		1,983,431		37,236,713		18,441,145			33,103,779	

1. Bill W, and later the General Service Conferences, have been quite open about the royalty payments to Bill W and Dr Bob. Much information can be found in Conference-approved literature and in the final Conference reports.
2. Due to the amount of time both co-founders dedicated to the Fellowship, it was near impossible for them to earn a living through their normal professions. Father Ed Dowling is credited with advancing the concept of paying workers for special services. Lois Wilson was the primary beneficiary of the royalty payments after Bill W's death. She was prevented from returning the funds to AA as result of Tradition Seven. Bill's royalties applied to the English language versions of the books he authored.
3. The Timeline document contains information on the evolution of the royalty arrangements and payments. To find these items, perform a string search using the string "royalt"