

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Confidential - for AA Members Only - Contains Member's Last Names

Version as of September 2009 (Work in progress)

AA Members seem to have a warm place in their heart for AA history. AA also has a very strong verbal tradition. Much information is circulated in AA by word of mouth. This has both its good and difficult sides.

How do you know what is fact and what is myth? A great deal of myth anecdotally circulates in AA and, by virtue of repetition, is unfortunately accepted as fact.

To help address this, the timeline items in this paper are cross-referenced to one or more reliable written references. The references provide both corroboration and sources for further investigation and historical research.

Arthur S, Arlington, TX

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

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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 18th century that the word came to designate the intoxicating ingredient in liquor. (SD xiv, www Encarta)

Origin of the Words “Alcoholism” and “Alcoholic”

Swedish physician Magnus Huss coined the word “alcoholism” in 1849 in his writings titled “Alcoholismus Chronicus” (“Chronic Alcoholism”) and “Chronische Alkohols Krankheit” (“Chronic Alcohol-Sickness”). Huss used the new term to describe a state of chronic alcohol intoxication that included both the destructive action of alcohol on the human system and a diseased condition produced by alcohol. It took nearly a century (or to the mid-1900s) for the terms “alcoholism” and “alcoholic” to achieve widespread usage in America (GB 167-168, SD xiv)

1700s

1774 - The earliest American writing on alcoholism was a 1774 essay by Anthony Benezet titled “Mighty Destroyer Displayed.” Benezet was an abolitionist and a temperance advocate. (SD 4-5)

1784 - Dr Benjamin Rush was a member of the Continental Congress, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Surgeon General of the Army during the Revolution. He is called both the father of American psychiatry and father of the American temperance movement.

- Rush wrote a 36-page paper in 1784 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 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)
- Note: It is a bit ironic that Dr Bob, during some of the worst years of his drinking, received his medical degree from Rush University, which was named in honor of Dr Benjamin Rush, a pioneer in the treatment of alcoholism.

1700s - Late, This began the period of the worst American problem with alcohol in its history. Problem drinking spanned all ages from children to seniors. One reason for the enormous growth in alcohol consumption was that it was a common practice of the time for employers to provide their employees, which included children, with daily rations of distilled liquor as part of their pay. Drinking preferences also shifted from beer and wine to distilled liquor. In addition, distilled liquor was commonly used as a form of currency in trading for goods and services. (SD 4-5, www)

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1800s

1800s (early) - The newly formed republic of the US was truly on a destructive alcohol binge and the effects were devastating. Prominent historical figures, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, urgently called for a change in drinking practices. They appealed to the country for “temperance” which at that time meant “moderation” in drinking. (SD 4-5)

1820s - Average US consumption of pure alcohol was 27 liters (7 gallons) per person each year. Many religious and political leaders were beginning to see drunkenness as a national curse. Momentum was picked up by religious leaders to change the notion of “temperance as moderation” to mean “temperance as abstinence.” This began the growth of American temperance societies that would later lead to the alcohol prohibition movement. (www NARA)

1840 - April 5, a group of six drinking club friends (William Mitchell, John Hoss, David Anderson, George Steers, James McCurley and Archibald Campbell) from Chase’s Tavern in Baltimore, Maryland 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) and later became known as “Washingtonians.”

- They required a pledge of total abstinence and attendance at weekly meetings where members would tell their stories of drunkenness and recovery. As a body, they recognized no religion or creed and were politically neutral. Each member was supposed to help alcoholics who were still drinking and seek out new prospects (“hard cases”).
- Weekly meetings were held at Chase’s tavern until the owner’s wife objected to the increasing loss of their best customers. They had a 25-cent initiation fee (\$6 today) and monthly member’s dues of 12 ½ cents (\$3 today). (SD 8-9, www Milton Maxwell paper)

1840 - November 19, the Washingtonians held their first public meeting. Growth of the movement was extremely rapid. Widespread and enthusiastic support came from numerous temperance societies. The Washingtonians had great success in mobilizing public attention on temperance by relaying their “experience sharing” of alcoholic debauchery followed by glorious accounts of personal reformation.

- A leader of the movement 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)

1841 - May 12, the Washingtonians organized the first “Martha Washington Society” meeting for women and children in New York. 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. It also spawned juvenile auxiliary groups. Freed blacks organized separate Washingtonian societies. (SD 10)

1842 - February 22, Abraham Lincoln spoke to the Springfield, IL Washingtonians. He praised the movement and criticized earlier temperance movements that defined alcoholics as incorrigible:

- Lincoln commented, “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 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.” (1996 GSC-FR 15, www)

1843 (mid-to-end) - The Washingtonian movement peaked after having reached all major areas of the United States. 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, and a large segment of adolescents (under age 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 of thousands signed pledges but the number of rehabilitated alcoholics was likely under 150,000. (1996 GSC-FR 15, SD-10, www Milton Maxwell paper)

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1846-1901 - Cary Nation was an American temperance leader. At age 21, she married Dr Charles Gloyd who was an alcoholic. Her efforts to reform him failed and he died of his alcoholism shortly after their marriage. In 1877, she married David Nation, a minister and lawyer. They settled in Medicine Lodge, Kansas where she responded to what she considered a divine calling to destroy saloons. Nearly 6 ft. tall and dressed as a deaconess, she was a commanding figure who gained national renown for her radical opposition to alcohol.

- In Wichita, Kansas, she began to use a hatchet to ruin saloons, describing her havoc-wreaking calls as “hatchetations.” Arrested 30 times for disturbing the peace, funds from her lectures and sales of souvenir hatchets paid for her bail and fines. She published newsletters called “Smasher’s Mail” the “Hatchet” and the “Home Defender” which helped pay for a home for wives of alcoholics in Kansas City, Kansas. In 1901, her husband divorced her for desertion. (www)

1847 - Estimate of when the Washingtonians “spent its force.”

- The society originally favored “moral suasion” to achieve reformation of the alcoholic through abstinence. However, the Washingtonian membership makeup changed rapidly and radically to consist mainly of non-alcoholic temperance advocates.
- Sentiments shifted from reformation of alcoholics to the pursuit of a legal means to prohibit alcohol. Washingtonian practices came to be viewed as outmoded and interest waned. There was no sudden collapse. When the novelty and emotional appeal of the Washingtonians became outmoded, they simply faded from the scene.
- AACOA 125 cites issues such as religion, politics and abolition of slavery as root causes of the Washingtonian decline. While there were cases of this, there is no compelling evidence to conclude that these issues had a major role in their failure. Prohibition was a very divisive issue among the Washingtonians. However, the major causes of their downfall appear to be a direct result of their departing from their original membership makeup (which started out as all alcoholics) and departing from their original primary and single purpose (which started out as one alcoholic helping another alcoholic). (SD 8-14, 12&12 178-179, AACOA 124-125, PIO 366-367. www Milton Maxwell paper)

1852 - The term “skid row” likely originated from a section of Seattle, Washington. A sawmill built in Pioneer Square near Puget Sound used skids (or tracks of peeled logs) to drag timber to the mill. The area became home to vagrants and destitute alcoholics. It was first known as “Skid Road” and later as “Skid Row.”

- The term was adopted by the national press to describe blighted city areas frequented by chronic alcoholics. It is used in cities today such as downtown Los Angeles, California whose Skid Row has an estimated homeless population of 8 to 9,000. (SD 72, www)

1862 - Charles B. Towns was born on a small farm in central Georgia. (RAA 84)

1864 - Bill Wilson’s great uncle Waldow Barrows was killed in the Civil War Battle of the Wilderness. (PIO 54)

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 - October, ex-convict Jerry McAuley opened the Water St Mission in the notorious fourth Ward of New York City. It marked the beginning of the urban mission movement. Rescue missions were later spread across America by the Salvation Army and were focused primarily on Skid Row alcoholics.

- When McAuley died (in 1884), he was succeeded by Samuel Hopkins Hadley. His example of recovery from alcoholism was later cited in William James’ 1902 book “The Varieties of Religious Experience.”
- Hadley’s son, Harry, joined with the Rev Sam Shoemaker to establish a rescue mission in 1926 at the Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City. It was the place from which Ebby Thacher carried a message of recovery to Bill W.
- Hadley was also in charge of the mission when Bill W, fresh out of Towns Hospital, visited there seeking alcoholics to work with. (SD 74-77, EBBY 65)

1873 - July 22, William Duncan Silkworth was born in Brooklyn, New York to Isabelle Duncan and William Silkworth Sr. (SW 3)

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1878 - June 4, Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman was born in Pennsburg, Pennsylvania. (RAA 114, NW 32)

1879 - August 8, Robert Holbrook Smith (Dr Bob) was born in St Johnsbury, Vermont to Judge and Mrs Walter Perrin Smith. Bob had a much older foster sister Amanda Northrup who became a history professor at Hunter College, New York. Dr Bob's biography is chronicled in the book "Dr Bob and the Good Oldtimers." A pamphlet titled "The Co-founders of AA" offers a concise biography of Dr Bob, as does the Grapevine memorial issue for Dr Bob. (DBGO 9, 12, 14, CH 2, NG 29-30)

1880s (late) - Businesses offering alcoholism "cures" grew at a prolific rate. Often the remedy prescribed was far more dangerous than what it was supposed to fix. Some of these unregulated businesses became so popular that they grew into what we would today call "franchises" or "chains."

- Two prominent chains were the Keeley Institute and the Gatlin Institute. Between 1880-1920, more than 500,000 alcoholics and addicts took the Keeley Cure. It was praised by some as a cure of miraculous potential and at the same time attacked by others as a fraud. (SD 51-71)

1881 - March 21, Anne Smith (nee Robinson Ripley) was born in the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, Illinois to Joseph and Joyce Pierce Ripley. (Gv June 1950)

1881 - October 29, Rowland Hazard was born; he was the oldest son of Rowland Gibson and Mary Pierrepont Bushnell Hazard. (www)

1885 - September, Dr Bob entered the Summer St Elementary School in St Johnsbury, Vermont. (DBGO 12)

1886 - August 29, T Henry Williams was born in South Woodstock, Connecticut. (AGAA 65)

1888 - Lois Wilson's parents, Dr Clark Burnham and Matilda Hoyt Spellman, were married. (LR 2)

1888 - March 18, Henrietta Sieberling (nee Buckler) was born in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky to Judge Julius A and Mary Maddox Buckler. (AGAA 83)

1888 - Summer, Dr Bob (turning 9) had his first drink from a jug of hard cider. (DBGO 13)

1889 - January 1, Bridget Gavin (Sister Ignatia) was born in Shanvally, County Mayo, Ireland. (SI 44, 306)

1890 - August 15, Elvin Morton Jellinek was born in New York. (GB 171)

1891 - March 4, Lois Wilson (nee 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 - December 27, Samuel Moor Shoemaker was born in Baltimore, Maryland. (www)

1894 - September, Dr Bob (age 15) entered St Johnsbury Academy. (DBGO 15, GB 34)

1894 - September, Bill W's parents, Emily Griffith and Gilman Wilson, were married (PIO 13, BW-RT 15, RAA 137)

1894 - December, Bill W's uncle, Clarence Griffith, died of tuberculosis in Colorado. (BW-RT 31, BW-40 25, PIO 28)

1895 - November 26, Bill Wilson was born in East Dorset, Vermont in a room behind a bar in the Wilson House (formerly called the Barrows House) a village hotel run by his grandmother.

- Bill was named after his paternal grandfather William C Wilson who was quite prominent in the community. Bill's biography is chronicled in the book "Pass It On" and a pamphlet titled "The Co-founders of AA" that offers a concise biography of Bill, as does his memorial Grapevine issue. (BW-RT 15, CH 4, NG 10, PIO 13, 407, RAA 138).

1896 - January 2, Harry Morgan Tiebout was born in Brooklyn, NY. (HT vii)

1896 - April 29, Edwin (Ebby) Throckmorton Thatcher was born in Albany, NY. (EBBY 20).

1898 - Dr Bob met Anne Robinson Ripley during his senior year at St Johnsbury Academy. (DBGO 16, GB 34, WPR 3) After graduating from St Johnsbury, he entered Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire. (CH 2, DBGO 348)

1898 - Dorothy Brewster Wilson, Bill's sister, was born. (PIO 15)

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1900 to 1909

1901 - The “Charles B Towns Hospital for Drug and Alcohol Addictions” opened in NY City as a private “drying out” hospital for the affluent. Opening first on 81st and 82nd Streets, it later moved to 293 Central Park West.

- Towns later opened an annex (behind the Central Park facility) at 119 W 81st 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 (\$1,875 to \$3,750 today) and \$50 (\$1,250 today) in the annex. Towns had no medical background but was a recognized international leader and reformer in the treatment of alcoholism and drug addiction. He played a significant role in providing financial support to Bill W during development of the Big Book and helped arrange much favorable publicity for AA in its early years. (SD 84-85, SW 125)

1901 - Harvard professor William James presented the “Gifford Lecture Series on Natural Religion” at the University of Aberdeen in Edinburgh, Scotland. His lectures were published in 1902 in a critically acclaimed book titled “The Varieties of Religious Experience-A Study In Human Nature.”

- James cited numerous examples of 2 styles of spiritual transformation, one was gradual and the other was sudden and dramatic.
- 32 years after its publication, a copy of the book was given to Bill W during his last stay in Towns Hospital. Its influence on Bill and early AA members is cited in the Big Book. James is mentioned twice in the Big Book by name. James is also recognized as the Father of American Psychology. (GB 47, www)

1901 - 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.” After graduation, Bob went through three years of drifting and selling heavy hardware in Boston, Chicago and Montreal. (CH 2, DBGO 22, 348, NG 30, RAA 172, GB 34-35)

1901 - Bill W’s mother, Emily, spent much of the year in Florida 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 where Bill attended the Church St School. (PIO 20)

1904 - Emily and Gilman Wilson’s marriage was stormy. (BW-FH 12, BW-RT 17)

1904 - October 15, Margaret (Marty) Mann was born in Chicago, Illinois to Lillian Christy and William Henry Mann. (GB 119, MMM 13-16)

1905 - September, 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 W’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)

1905 - Fall, Dr Bob entered the University of Michigan 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)

1906 - The Rev Drs Elwood Worcester and Samuel McComb, along with physician Dr Isador Coriat, opened a clinic in the Emmanuel Church in Boston, Massachusetts. 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)

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1906 - October, 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 to attend an osteopathic medical school.

- After his parents divorced Bill and his sister Dorothy were lovingly raised by his maternal grandparents (the Griffiths). Bill's grandfather Gardner Fayette Griffith was a genuine second father to him and had a way of bringing out the best of Bill's skills. (PIO 24-27, BW-RT 19-20, BW-40 13, BW-FH 19)
- Bill considered his parent's divorce 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)

1907 - Spring, Dr Bob left the University of Michigan due to his drinking to take a one-month "geographic cure" on a large farm owned by a friend. (AABB 173, DBGO 26)

1907 - 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)

1907 - Fall, after being allowed to take his exams, Dr Bob was forced to leave the University of Michigan 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 - February, 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)

1908 - Spring/summer, Bill W met his closest life-time friend Mark Whalon (10 years his senior). (BW-RT 40, RAA 141, BW-FH 12, PIO 22)

1908 - July 27, Frank N D Buchman, a Lutheran Minister, 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, Buchman started his "laboratory years" working out the principles he later applied on a global scale. His movement was initially called the "First Century Christian Fellowship."
- In the 1920s it was renamed to the "Oxford Group" and in 1938 renamed to "Moral Re-Armament" or "MRA."
- In 2001, MRA was renamed to "Initiatives of Change." The organization today bears virtually no similarity at all to its early roots. (NG 9, NW 32-45, PIO 130)

1909 - The Akron Rubber Mold and Machine Co was founded in Akron, Ohio. It reorganized in 1928 as the National Rubber Machinery Co. In May 1935, it was the center of a proxy fight that brought Bill W to Akron. (BW-RT 211-212, CH 4, NG 26, PIO 134, RAA 142)

1909 - Late spring, Bill W's grandparents decided to send him (at age 14) to the prestigious Burr and Burton Seminary in Manchester, Vermont 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)

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1910 to 1919

1910 - Dr Bob (age 31) received his medical degree with high marks from Rush University.

- 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, Dr Bob received a highly coveted 2-year internship at City Hospital in Akron, Ohio. (CH 2, DBGO 27, NG 30,) He started his internship and for two years 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)

1911 - November 12, Ruth Eva Hock (nee Miller) was born in Newark, New Jersey. (WPR 77)

1912 - Dr Bob (age 33) started medical practice at the Second National Bank Building in Akron, Ohio. He remained there until he retired from practice in 1948. It did not take him long to return to old drinking habits. (DBGO 28)

1912 - 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)

1912 - September, 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)

1912 - November 18, Bill W's schoolmate and "first love" Bertha Bamford, died from hemorrhaging after surgery at the Flower Hospital in NY City.

- She was the daughter of the rector of the Manchester, Vermont Zion Episcopal Church.
- Bill learned about her death at school on the 19th. 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 - January, Bill W failed nearly every mid-year exam and was forced to drop out of school. (BW-RT 58, BW-FH 19-20)

- By April 1913, 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)

1913 - Summer, Bill W's grandfather took him to Pennsylvania for the 50th anniversary of the Civil War Battle of Gettysburg. (PIO 38-39)

1913 - Summer, Bill W and Lois Burnham spent some time together while both their families vacationed at Emerald Lake near East Dorset, Vermont.

- 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)

1913 - 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, Massachusetts (a suburb of Boston) where he made up his German course. (BW-FH 20, BW-RT 65)

1913 - Fall, Bill W's mother, Emily, decided 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 (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 Vermont where he stayed for about 4 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)

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1914 - Summer, the relationship between Bill W (age 18) and Lois' (age 22) changed into a romance. (PIO 39, GB 27)

1914 - July/August, World War I (the Great War) started in Europe and Russia. (www)

1914 - August, 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)

1914 - Fall, unable to pass the MIT entrance exams, Bill W enrolled at Norwich University military college in Northfield, Vermont. (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, Ohio as Chief Engineer for the National Rubber Machinery Co. (PIO 145)

1915 - January 25, after a 17-year courtship, Dr Bob and Anne Robinson Ripley married in Chicago, Illinois. They took up residence at 855 Ardmore Ave, Akron, Ohio. (CH 2, DBGO 29)

1915 (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, Vermont. (BW-FH 21-22)

1915 - Spring, Bill W's condition worsened in East Dorset. 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)
- By 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)

1915 - Sept 11, Bill W and Lois became secretly engaged. (PIO 49, LR 1, BW-RT 79, BW-40 35, GB 27)

1915 - 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 - February, Bill W (an onlooker and still a freshman) and his sophomore classmates were suspended for a full term from Norwich University for a serious hazing incident that started a fight between the freshman and sophomore classes. (PIO 49, BW-RT 87)

1916 - June, the Norwich Cadets, as part of the Vermont 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)

1916 - Bill W's half sister, Helen, was born to Bill's father, Gilman, and his second wife Christine. (PIO 80)

1917 - January, Lois moved to Short Hills, New Jersey to teach at a small private school her Aunt Marian owned. (LR 12)

1917 - April 6, the US declared war on Germany and entered World War I. (RAA 145, www)

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1917 - May, Bill W departed for officers training at Plattsburg, NY.

- After 8 weeks of artillery training at Ft Monroe, Virginia, he was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the 66th Artillery Corps and sent to Ft Rodman outside of New Bedford, Massachusetts. (BW-RT 92-95, BW-40 38, 41, WPR 57)

1917 - Summer, Bill W (age 22) took his first drink of liquor at Emmy and Catherine (Katy) Grinnell's house in New Bedford, Massachusetts. 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. He later wrote to Lois that he loved the experience. (AACOA 54, PIO 54-56, BW-RT 95-97, BW-40 42-43, NG 13-14, BW-FH 26)

1917 - October 12, Henrietta Buckler and J Frederick Sieberling were married in Akron, Ohio. (AGAA 83)

1917 - December, Congress approved the 18th amendment to the US Constitution for the prohibition of alcohol.

1918 - Dr Bob's father, Judge Walter Smith, died. (DBGO 10)

1918 - January, Frank Buchman and Sam Shoemaker met in Peking (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)

1918 - January, Lois left her Aunt Marian's School in New Jersey. (LR 22, RAA 118)

1918 - January 24, spurred by rumor that Bill W might soon go overseas, he and Lois were married at the Swedenborgian Church of the New Jerusalem in Brooklyn, NY.

- The wedding date was originally February 1.
- Lois' brother Rogers Burnham was best man.
- Bill's last stateside posting was at Ft Adams near Newport, Rhode Island. (BW-RT 100, PIO 58, 407, RAA 146, BW-FH 27, WPR 57)

1918 - February 15, Dr Bob and Anne's adopted daughter, Suzanne (Sue) was born. (CH 11, PIO 140)

1918 - June 5, Dr Bob and Anne's son, Robert (Smitty) was born. (CH 2, PIO 140)

1918 - July 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)

1918 - November 11, Armistice Day, World War I ended at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. (www)

1919 - January 16, the 18th amendment to the US Constitution, for the prohibition of alcohol, was ratified. (www)

1919 - March, Bill W sailed from Bordeaux, France on the SS Powhatan to NY Harbor. (BW-RT 109)

1919 - May, Bill W was discharged from the Army at Camp Devens. (BW-RT 109)

1919 - Summer, Bill and Lois moved into her father's home at 182 Clinton St in Brooklyn. (BW-RT 113, LR 27, PIO 62, 407, RAA 147)

1919 - Lois' father, Dr Clark Burnham, got Bill W a job as a clerk in the insurance dept. of the New York 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 New York Central piers near 72nd 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)

1919 - August, Bill W and Lois set off for a month-long walking trip thru Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.

- Lois encouraged it partly to give them time to think and partly to get Bill away from drinking. (LR 27-30, PIO 64-65)

1919 - October 28, Congress passed the Volstead (National Prohibition) Act over President Wilson's veto. (GB 170)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1920 to 1929

1920 - February, Lois got a job with the Red Cross at the Brooklyn Naval Hospital. (LR 31)

1920 - Bill W and Lois moved into a one-room furnished apartment on State St (around the corner from Lois' parents 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" (later named the "Oxford Group") received wide publicity during the 1920's - 1930's.
- Core OG 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).
- The OG gave AA the term "sharing." They were also strong advocates of one member working with another. (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 University).

1921 - February, 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)

1921 - May, Bill W answered a blind advertisement in the New York Times and received a reply from Thomas Edison to come to his laboratory to take an employment test of 286 questions. (PIO 64-66)

1921 - July, Bill W and Lois went on another camping trip over the (300-mile) Long Trail in the Green Mountains of Vermont. 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 University). (LR 31, BW-FH 30, PIO 64)

1921 - 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)

1921 - December, Bill W's grandmother, Ella Brock Griffith, died. (PIO 70, BW-RT 125)

1922 - Ebby T's family business failed. (PIO 83)

1922 - Bill W's bouts with alcohol increased. More and more he drank alone. (BW-RT 124-125, CH 3, LR 34, PIO 67)

1922 - Frank Buchman resigned from 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)

1922 - Summer, Lois experienced two ectopic pregnancies (the first in June and the second in July). 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)

1923 - Bill W's mother, Emily, married Dr Charles Strobel. (PIO 75)

1923 - Dr Bob and Anne adopted a daughter, Suzanne (age 5) the same age as their son Smitty. (CH 2-11, DBGO 35-36)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1923 - 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)

1923 - December 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)

1924 - 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 (\$188 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)

1924 - February, Bill W again vowed not to drink. As time passed, there would be still other vows. (BW-RT 127)

1925 - April, 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, Pennsylvania. By winter, they were in Florida 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)

1926 - Spring, Bill W and Lois returned to Brooklyn for the marriage of Lois' sister, Kitty, on June 17. Lois was matron of honor. Both Lois and Bill had previously been injured in a motorcycle accident. (BW-RT 141, LR 60-61)

1926 - June/July, 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 (\$241,000 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 - January, Bill W wrote to Lois "There will be no booze during 1927." It was a short-lived promise. (LR 69)

1927 - 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 September, 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)

1927 - September/October (?), on the way home, Bill W and Lois stopped in Miami Beach, Florida to see Bill's father and his second wife, Christine. Bill first met his half-sister, Helen, born in 1916. (PIO 80)

1927 - On returning to New York, 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)

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)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1928 - Summer (?), a group of Rhodes Scholars returned home to S. Africa, from Oxford University, England to tell how their lives changed by meeting Frank Buchman. A railway employee labeled their train compartment "The Oxford Group." The press took it up and the name stuck. (RAA 120, www)

1928 - September 28, St Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio 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 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)

1928 - October 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, Minnesota.

- He also studied at the Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 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)

1929 - January, Bill W pledged again in the family Bible: "To tell you once more that I am finished with it. I love you." (PIO 81)

1929 - January, on a trip to Manchester, Vermont 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).

1929 - October 29 (Black Tuesday) the Stock Market collapsed. Bill W was broke and \$60,000 in debt (\$750,000 today). He and 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)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1930 to 1935

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)

1930 - Neurologist, Dr William Duncan Silkworth (nicknamed "Silky") after losing his investments and savings in the great stock market crash, started work at Towns Hospital earning \$40 a week (\$515 today). Charles Towns did not see eye to eye with Silkworth on viewing alcoholism as an illness. (PIO 101, SW 30-31) (NG 22 says Silkworth arrived in 1924)

1930 - September 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)

1930 - 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. Lois' mother was dying from bone cancer.
- Bill stayed behind in Montreal to clean up details. (RAA 149, PIO 86, BW-RT 155, BW-FH 45)

1930 - December, after a binge that started in Montreal and carried him into Vermont, Lois went to get Bill W. They finally returned to Clinton St and moved into a room there. (PIO 86-87, BW-FH 46)

1930 - December 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 Macys, earning \$19 a week (\$270 today) and that became their livelihood. (PIO 90, 128, BW-FH 47)

1931 - "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)

1931 - (likely 1926) Rowland Hazard (age 50), from a prominent colonial Rhode Island family, was treated by Dr Carl Gustav Jung in Zurich, Switzerland. It is believed that he was a patient for about a year, (probably less) sobered up and then returned to drinking. (update re Dubiel and Finch)

- 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.
- In a January 1963 Grapevine article describing his exchange of letters with Dr Jung, Bill W 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)

1931 - December, Russell (Bud) Firestone (alcoholic son of Akron, Ohio business magnate Harvey Firestone Sr.) was introduced to Sam Shoemaker by James Newton on a train returning from an Episcopal conference in Denver, Colorado. 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 it occurred in Europe or the US and it could have occurred in 1931). Rowland was a dedicated OG member in NY, Vermont and upper Massachusetts and a prominent member of the Calvary Episcopal Church in NY City. He later moved to Shaftsbury, Vermont. (NW 10-19, NG 8-9, PIO 113-114, AGAA 28, 141-144, LOH 277-278, www)

1932 - April 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)

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1932 - May, Bill W went on a business trip to Bound Brook New Jersey 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)

1932 - Financier, Joseph H Hirshhorn (also sometimes misspelled Hirshorn and Hirschorn) hired Bill W to analyze and evaluate companies. (DBGO 45, PIO 93-98, www)

1932 - Rowland Hazard had to be hospitalized for his alcoholism in February and March of 1932, and then from January 1933 to October 1934. He was unable to carry on his business activities. (www Hindsfoot.com)

1933 - Courtenay Baylor became Rowland Hazard's therapist in 1933, and continued to work with him through 1934.

- It was under the influence of Baylor's Emmanuel Movement therapy (with its combination of spirituality and simple lay therapy) that Hazard actually began to recover.
- Hazard was also attending Oxford Group meetings, but his family was paying Baylor to be his regular therapist. (www Hindsfoot.com)

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)

1933 - January, 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, Ohio.

- 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)

1933 - February, Congress passed the 21st amendment to the US Constitution to repeal the 18th amendment. (www)

1933 - 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)

1933 - Beer had become legal and Dr Bob previously went through a "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 Oxford Group. He participated in the OG for 2 ½ years before meeting Bill. (DBGO 42, AAB 177-178, NW 62)

1933 - 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)

1933 - 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)

1933 - June-September, Lois took a 3-month leave of absence from Macys to spend the summer with Bill in the Vermont home of his sister Dorothy who was vacationing in Europe with her family. (BW-FH 49, LR 84, BW-RT 171)

1933 - Autumn, Bill W was quite literally drinking himself to death.

- In desperation, Lois, now earning \$22.50 a week at Macys (\$370 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)

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1933 - December 5, the 21st amendment to the US Constitution was ratified when Utah became the 36th state to vote to repeal the 18th 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, Ohio. His position at City Hospital had become precarious because of his drinking. (SI 9, DBGO 45, 51, NG 317)

1934 - "The Sermon On The Mount" by Emmet Fox was published. Both Fox and the book were popular among early AA members. It was part of Dr Bob's recommended reading for Akron members. (NW 111-112, 114, DBGO 310-311)

1934 - 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 him 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 W. (SI 10, DBGO 51).

1934 - March, Lois quit her job at Macys to take Bill W to Vermont. They stayed until the summer. (PIO 105-106)

1934 - July, Ebby T was approached in Manchester, Vermont by his friends Cebra Graves (an attorney) and F Sheppard (Shep) Cornell (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 Vermont but he was not quite ready yet to stop drinking. (EBBY 51-55, PIO 113)

1934 - July (?), Bill W's second admission to Towns Hospital (again paid by Dr Leonard V Strong).

- Dr Silkworth explained the obsession and allergy of alcoholism but Bill started drinking again almost immediately upon discharge.
- Bill was unemployable, \$50,000 in debt (\$794,000 today) suicidal and drinking around the clock. (AACOA 52, PIO 106-108, BW-40 114-117, NG 15, 310, BW-FH 50-55)

1934 - August, Cebra G and Shep C vacationed at Rowland H's house in Bennington, Vermont.

- Cebra learned that Ebby T's drinking had gotten him into so much trouble that he was facing criminal charges and might be committed to the Brattleboro Retreat Asylum for the Insane. Cebra, Shep and Rowland decided to make Ebby "a project." (NG 309)
- Rowland and Cebra attended Ebby's trial and persuaded the judge (who was Cebra's father Collins) to parole Ebby to their custody. In the fall, Rowland took Ebby to NY City 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)

1934 - September 17, 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)

1934 - November 11, Armistice Day, Bill W went to play golf and got drunk and badly injured. Lois began investigating sanitariums in which to place Bill. (AACOA 56-58, BW-FH 56)

1934 - November (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)
- Ebby visited Bill W at 182 Clinton St and shared his recovery experience "one alcoholic talking to another." (AACOA vii, 58-59)

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- Days later, Ebby returned with Shep C to speak 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, 311, BW-FH 57-58, NW 22-23, PIO 111-116, BW-RT 187-192)

1934 - December 7, Bill W decided to investigate the Calvary Mission on 23rd St. arriving 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)

1934 - December 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).

1934 - December 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.” Fearing that he had gone crazy,
- Bill called for Dr Silkworth who told him to hang on to what he had experienced because it seemed so much better than what he came into the hospital with.
- 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)

1934 - December 15, Ebby (possibly Rowland H) brought Bill W a copy of William James' book “The Varieties of Religious Experience.”

- Bill found the book deeply inspiring by revealing three key points for recovery: (1): the need for a complete defeat in a vital area of life (or what we today call “hitting bottom”) (2): the admission of defeat (or what we today call “acceptance”) and (3): an appeal to a higher power for help (or what we today call “surrender”). These spiritual principles later became the basis for Steps 1, 2 and 3.
- 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)

1934 - December 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 Hall in Calvary House.

- The Rev Sam Shoemaker was the rector at the Calvary Church (the OG's US headquarters). The church was on 237 Fourth Ave (now Park Ave South) and 21st St.
- Calvary House (where OG meetings were held in Calvary Hall) was at 61 Gramercy Park (21st St).
- Calvary Mission was located at 346 E 23rd St. (AABB 14-16, AACOA vii, LR 197, BW-40 155-160, NG 24-25, PIO 127, GB 32-33, AGAA 144)

1934 - December (late), after Oxford Group meetings, Bill W and other OG alcoholics met at Stewart's Cafeteria. Attendees included Rowland H and Ebby T. (BW-RT 207, BW-40 160, AGAA 141-142, NG 314)

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)

1935 - March/April, 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 in Akron, Ohio.

- The meeting was started specifically to help Dr Bob who later confessed openly about his drinking problem.

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- OG meetings continued at the William's house until 1954. (DBGO 56-59, AGAA 103 says May)

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1935 - April, Bill W was very discouraged at having no success in sobering up other alcoholics and came very close to giving up on his efforts.

- However, his wife Lois reminded him that HE was staying sober because of his working with others.
- Bill had a talk with Dr Silkworth who advised him to stop preaching about his hot flash experience in the hospital and hit the alcoholics hard with the medical view on alcoholism. Dr Silkworth advised Bill to break down the strong egos of alcoholics by telling them about the obsession that condemned them to drink and the allergy that condemned them to go mad or die. It would then be so much easier to get them to accept the spiritual solution. (AACOA 13, 67-68, BW-RT 211, NG 25-26, PIO 133)

1935 - April, 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, Ohio. (BW-RT 211, NG 26, BW-FH 74, PIO 133-134, GB 33)

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

1935 - 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 clergy members listed on the lobby directory. The Rev Walter Tunks referred Bill to Oxford Group member Norman Sheppard who then referred Bill to Henrietta Sieberling.
- Bill introduced himself as “a member of the OG and a rum hound from New York.” Henrietta met with Bill at her gatehouse (Stan Hywet Hall) on the Sieberling estate. She viewed Bill’s arrival as the answer to her prayers for Dr Bob and called Dr Bob’s wife Anne to arrange a dinner the next day. (AACOA 65-67, SI 21, BW-RT 212-213, DBGO 60, 63-67, NG 26-28, PIO 134-138, GB 19) Note: sometimes Bill W would say that when Henrietta called Anne, Dr Bob was passed out under the kitchen table.(AACOA 67) Dr Bob was upstairs in bed (re “Dr Bob’s Nightmare” 179 fourth edition).

1935 - 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 Dr Bob of his alcoholism experience in the manner suggested by Dr Silkworth. Bob opened up and he and Bill talked until after 11PM. Dr Bob’s planned 15 minutes turned into 6 hours. (AACOA vii, 67-70, BW-RT 214-215, DBGO 66-69, NG 28-32, BW-FH 4, GB 21)

1935 - May, Bill W wrote a letter to Lois saying that he and Dr Bob tried in vain to sober up a Dr McKay, a “once prominent surgeon” who developed into a “terrific rake and drunk”

- Henrietta Sieberling arranged for Bill to stay at the Portage Country Club. (PIO 144, BW-40 Appendix C, DBGO 70, 77)

1935 - June, 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)

1935 - Favored Scripture readings at Oxford Group meetings were “The Sermon on the Mount,” “First Corinthians Chapter 13” and the “Book of James.” (AGAA 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

1935 - June 10 (more likely June 17) - Dr Bob went on a binge at an annual AMA meeting in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

- He began drinking on the train and continued through 2-3 days of binging and blacking out at the convention.
- Bill W and Dr Bob's wife Anne received a surprise phone call to come pick up a very drunken Dr Bob at his office nurse's home. Bill helped Dr Bob through 3 days of sobering up to get ready for a scheduled surgery at City Hospital.
- At 4AM on the morning of the surgery Dr Bob said to Bill "I am going through with this ... I have placed both the 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, DBGO 72-75, NG 32, PIO 147-149, AA video "Bill's Own Story")

Notes on Dr Bob's Sober Date

The date of June 17, 1935 appears compelling as Dr Bob's sober date. Confirmation has been received from the AMA Archives in Chicago, Illinois that the 1935 Atlantic City, New Jersey Convention was held from Monday to Friday June 10-14. In addition, there are graphics of the AMA convention program circulating showing June 10-14, 1935 as the dates of the convention.

There are also good clues in AA literature for a deduction.

In AACOA 70-71, Bill wrote, "So he [Dr Bob] went to the Atlantic City Medical Convention and nothing was heard of him for several days."

DBGO 72-75 cites (with editing for brevity): Dr Bob ... began drinking ... as he boarded the train to Atlantic City. On his arrival, he bought several quarts on his way to the hotel. That was Sunday night. He stayed sober on Monday until after dinner ... On Tuesday, Bob started drinking in the morning and ... [checked out of the hotel] ... The next thing he knew ... he was ... in the ... home of his office nurse ... [The blackout was certainly more than 24 hours long] ...

Bill and Anne had waited for five days from the time Bob left before they heard from the nurse ... She had picked him up that morning at the Akron railroad station ... As Bill and Sue [Smith] remembered, there was a 3-day sobering up period ... Upon Dr Bob's return, they had discovered that he was due to perform surgery 3 days later ... At 4 o'clock on the morning of the operation [Bob] ... said "I am going through with this ..." On the way to City Hospital ... Bill ... gave him a beer ... In the video "Bill's Own Story" Bill says he gave Dr Bob a beer and "goofball" [a barbiturate] the morning of the surgery.

The same information is repeated in PIO 147-149. See also NG 32-33.

Estimate of the timeline of Dr Bob's binge based on the above:

<u>June</u>	<u>Dr Bob</u>
09 Sunday	Started drinking on the train on the way in to Atlantic City, NJ Bought several quarts and checked into Atlantic City hotel
10 Monday	Stayed sober until after dinner
11 Tuesday	Started drinking in the morning - later checked out of the hotel.
12 Wednesday	Was in a blackout (likely greater than 24 hours)
13 Thursday	Blackout continues (may have arrived at Akron train station)
14 Friday	Picked up by nurse in the morning at the train station Then picked up by Bill at nurse's house (5 days after leaving) Day 1 of 3-day dry out period with Bill
15 Saturday	Day 2 of 3-day dry out period with Bill
16 Sunday	Day 3 of 3-day dry out period with Bill
17 Monday	Day of surgery - Bill gives Bob a beer and a goofball (3 days after Dr Bob's return)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1935 - June 11 (more likely June 18) - Dr Bob suggested that he and Bill W work with other alcoholics.

- A local Minister, J C Wright, provided them with a prospect that lived down the street from Dr Bob. Bill and Dr Bob tried in vain, throughout the summer, to sober up Edgar (Eddie) Reilly who was described as an “alcoholic atheist” and “able to produce a major crisis of some sort about every other day.”
- Eddie R 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, Ohio group. (AACOA 72-73, DBGO 77-81, 85, NG 37, 319, PIO 151-152, AGAA 184, CH 5-6)

1935 - June 28, Bill W, Dr Bob and Eddie R visited Bill Dotson (BBS “Alcoholic Anonymous Number Three”) at City Hospital. A prominent attorney, Bill D had been hospitalized 8 times in 1935 because of his drinking.

- Bill W and Dr Bob visited Bill D every day. It took 5 days before Bill D would say that he could not control his drinking. He checked out of the hospital on July 4 and within a week, was back in court sober and arguing a case.
- Akron’s Group #1, AA’s first group, marks its beginning as the date that Bill D left the hospital. (AACOA 71-73, AAB 184, BW-RT 219-220, DBGO 81-89, NG 37, 319, PIO 152-154, GB 42, AGAA 202-203) (Note: Bill D was Ohio’s Delegate for Panel 1 of the first General Service Conference in 1951).

1935 - July (?), Lois went to Akron to join Bill W at the Smith’s house for two weeks (LR 197, NG 41, BW-FH 85).

1935 - July, encouraged by T Henry Williams, Ernie Galbraith, sometimes called AA #4 (BBS “The Seven Month Slip”) contacted Dr Bob and sobered up.

- Ernie later married Dr Bob’s adopted daughter Sue in September 1941. Ernie could not stay sober and their marriage was a disaster.
- Tragically, on June 11, 1969, their daughter Bonna committed suicide after taking the life of her 6-year-old daughter Sandy. Ernie died two years later to the day. (AACOA 7, 73, DBGO 92-95, AGAA 68, CH 72-74, PIO 154-155)

1935 - August 26, Bill W returned to NY City. Meetings were held at 182 Clinton St on Tuesday nights. His home also became a halfway house of sorts. (AACOA 74, BW-RT 225, PIO 160-162, GTBT 96, GB 51, AGAA 145)

1935 - November 19, Ebby T came to live with Bill W and Lois at Clinton St. (LR 197, EBBY 72, NG 42-44)

1935 - Winter, Henry (Hank) P (Parkhurst - BBS “The Unbeliever”) and John Henry Fitzhugh (Fitz) M (Mayo - BBS “Our Southern Friend”) sobered up at Towns Hospital. Hank and Fitz provided a big help to Bill W.

- Hank started AA in New Jersey at his house and played a major role in the development of the Big Book.
- Fitz M started AA in Washington, DC (AACOA 16-17, 74, LR 101, BW-RT 225-226, NG 43-44) (PIO 191 says 1937)

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1936 to 1939

1936 - After 10 years of operation the Calvary Rescue Mission closed. It is estimated that over two hundred thousand homeless men were helped by the mission. (NW 54)

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 by OG members who were not supportive of their efforts being extended primarily to alcoholics. (NG 44-45, NW 73, AGAA 76)

1936 - June, 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, Massachusetts. (PIO 170) An OG "house-party" (a cross between a convention and a retreat) in Birmingham, England drew 15,000. (GB 46, AGAA 173)

1936 - August 26, Frank Buchman and the Oxford Group experienced an international public relations disaster.

- A New York 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."
- The remark was taken out of context in its reporting but plagued Buchman's reputation for many years and marked the beginning of the decline of the OG. (NW 30, 96, DBGO 155, BW-FH 96, PIO 170-171, GB 53, AGAA 161)

1936 - September, 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)

1936 - December, In December 1936, Charles B Towns offered Bill a lucrative job at his hospital as a lay alcoholism therapist. After years of a hand to mouth existence Bill wanted the job very much.

- The question was put to the NY group meeting in Bill's home and they rejected it. Bill complied with their decision.
- Bill later wrote in AACOA 102 "three blows, well and truly struck, had fallen on the anvil of experience ... The common welfare must come first ... AA cannot have a class of professional therapists ... and God, speaking in the group conscience, is to be our final authority." Bill went on to write "Clearly implied in these 3 embryo principles of tradition was a fourth: Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." (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)

1937 - On the AA calendar of "year two," the spirit of Tradition 3 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" (revealed by Bill W in an audio-taped talk to the 1968 Conference). Guidance came from Dr Bob (the oldest member in Akron, Ohio) asking, "What would the Master do?" The member was admitted and plunged into 12th Step work. (DBGO 240-241 12&12 141-142)
- Note: this story is often erroneously intermingled with an incident that occurred 8 years later in 1945 at the 41st St clubhouse in NY City. (PIO 318).

1937 - Late Spring, during their early years, the Akron and NY groups were affiliated with the Oxford Group. It certainly was helpful in the beginning but over time, it produced problems.

- Leaders of the OG 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)

1937 - April, Ebby T got drunk after two years and seven months sobriety. It began an on-again, off-again pattern of drinking and sobriety that would stay with Ebby. (LR 197, EBBY 77, BW-FH 63, PIO 177)

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1937 - August, Bill and Lois stopped attending Oxford Group meetings. The NY AAs separated from the OG.

- This was the beginning of AA separating itself from outside affiliation and set the groundwork for what would later become Tradition 6.
- The Akron group remained affiliated with the OG for 2 more years. (LR 197, AACOA vii, 74-76)

1937 - Alcoholic residents at 182 Clinton St were Ebby T (Thatcher), Oscar V, Russell R, Bill C and Florence R (Rankin - BBS "A Feminine Victory").

- In October, 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 member in NY, 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)

1937 - October, Bill W and Dr Bob met again in Akron, OH. At the time, there were two groups and about 40 sober members (over 20 of them sober for more than a year). All had been considered hopeless and beyond help.

- Bill had some grandiose ideas for a chain of AA hospitals, paid missionaries and a book of experience to carry the message to distant places. Dr Bob liked the book idea but not the hospitals and paid missionaries.
- In a meeting at T Henry Williams home, Bill's ideas narrowly passed by a single vote among 18 Akron members. The New York group was more enthusiastic. This historic milestone marked the decision to write the Big Book. (AACOA vii, 76-77, 144-146, BW-RT 239-243, DBGO 123-124, NG 56-57, PIO 180, LOH 142)

1937 - October/November, The first challenge for the book project was financing. It was no simple matter. The country was still in the grips of the great economic depression and the prospects of World War II were looming large overseas. During the rest of October and November, Bill W and Hank P tried to raise money for the book without success. (LR 197, PIO 181)

1937 - December, 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 in January 1938 and included Bill W, 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 (Stanley - BBS 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."

- Another factor influencing the renaming was that Buchman's "Hitler" remark caused Oxford University to request that its name stop being used by the movement. (www, NW 44, PIO 171)

1938 - February, Willard Richardson asked Frank Amos to visit Akron and make a report on the Fellowship.

- Amos wrote a very favorable and glowing report that Richardson sent to John D Rockefeller Jr urging a donation of \$5,000 a year for 1 or possibly 2 years (the equivalent of \$76,000 a year in today's dollars).
- Note: BW-FH 105-106 says \$10,000, \$5,000 a year for 2 years, in LOH 61 Bill W says \$30,000 (\$450,000 today) both figures are wrong. (SM S3, BW-RT 246, LR 197, DBGO 128-135, BW-FH 105-106, PIO 185-187, LOH 143, AGAA 217, 258)

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1938 - March, Rockefeller replied to Richardson that it was contrary to the policy of his philanthropies to fully fund a charitable enterprise unless it was decided to carry it indefinitely.

- Rockefeller declined to make a donation for the second year but provided \$5,000 held in a fund in the Riverside Church treasury.
- Much of the fund was used to assist Dr Bob by paying off the mortgage to his home. The remainder provided Bill and Dr Bob (who were both in very difficult financial straits) with \$120 a month (\$1,800 a month today) so that they could continue to dedicate themselves full time to the Fellowship. (BW-RT 247, AACOA 149-151, DBG0 135, PIO 187-188, GSO-AC)

1938 - April (?), (PIO 193 and AACOA 153 say March/April) beginning of the writing of the Big Book at Hank P's office (Honors Dealers, 17 William St in Newark, New Jersey).

- Bill W wrote, edited and rewrote manuscripts at home on legal pads then dictated chapters to Ruth Hock (nicknamed "Dutch" - short for "Duchess") who was then the Honors Dealers Secretary.
- Most of the early hand-written Big Book manuscript documents were discarded during a later move from Newark to Vesey St in NY City.
- A very difficult loss to AA's archives was the draft page containing the initial version of the 12 Steps. (AACOA vii, 159, BW-RT 248-250, LR 197, BW-FH 115, PIO 193, 235, GB 55, LOH 106-107, WPR 79, HIW 96-99)

1938 - April or May (?), Bill W wrote to Dr Bob that he had dictated two chapters of the proposed book ("There Is a Solution" and "Bill's Story").

- Bill stated that he felt that "the completed book should represent the works of many people; particularly the individual stories." Bill W wrote, "My feeling is that Anne should do the one portraying the wife of an alcoholic."
- Bill wrote, "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."
- Bill also asked Dr Bob "What would you think about the formation of a charitable corporation to be called, let us say, "Alcoholics Anonymous?"
- Bill read new drafts to those who met at his home. After making changes, the edited drafts were later sent to Dr Bob for review and further editing by the Akron members. As they worked their way through the chapters, New York and Akron members wrote the personal stories to be included in the book. (GSO-AC, NG 74-75, 333, HIW 108-109)

1938 - June 15, Lois' recollection of the first use of the term "Alcoholics Anonymous." (LR 197)

1938 - July 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)

1938 - July 18, Dr Esther L Richards (of Johns Hopkins, Baltimore) 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)

- Richards suggested to Bill to get a "Number one physician" in the alcoholism field to write an introduction to the book. (NG 332)

1938 - July 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)

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1938 - August 5, the "Alcoholic Foundation" was established as a charitable trust with a board of five Trustees

- Note: in LOH 61 Bill W said it started with seven Trustees. The trust indenture document specified that non-alcoholic trustees were to make up a majority of the board.
- The terms "Class A" and "Class B" trustees were used to make a distinction between non-alcoholic and alcoholic board members. Its first meeting took place on August 11.
- 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 (Ruddell - BBS "A Business Man's Recovery"). Bill R was the first Board Chairman but returned to drinking and resigned in February 1939 after serving less than 5 months. (GSO-AC)
- 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, GSO-AC, NG 330 end note states AACOA date and Amos' date of August 5 are in error and gives the date as Spring 1938, LOH 142 and AACOA 15 say Spring of 1938).

1938 - The Alcoholic Foundation had a small 1-room office and a staff of one non-alcoholic Secretary by the name of Ruth Hock. The Foundation and the office would eventually come to be known as the General Service Board and the General Service Office. Ruth Hock would later become AA's first national secretary.

1938 - September, 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 (\$23,000) 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 (\$380 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 (\$1,500 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. The newly formed Works Publishing Co would later come to be known as AA World Services or AAWS. (LR 197, BW-FH 116-119, SM S6, PIO 193-195, AACOA 157, 188, HIW 99-104)

1938 - Encouraged by Dr Silkworth, Charles Towns loaned Hank and Bill \$2,500 (\$38,000 today) for the book. It was later increased to \$4,000. (\$61,000 today). (PIO 196, SM S7, LOH 176, AACOA 13-14, 153-159)

1938 - October, Bill W's recollection of the first use of the term "Alcoholics Anonymous." (AACOA 165, PIO 202)

1938 - December, the Twelve Steps were written at 182 Clinton St. Bill W claimed it took him 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)

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Notes on the Six Steps and Initial Version of the Twelve Steps

Prior to the writing of the Big Book, the recovery program consisted of six steps that were passed on by word of mouth to new members. Three differing versions of the six steps are in LOH 200, AACOA 160, PIO 197 and the Big Book story "He Sold Himself Short" (pg 263 4th edition).

- It should be noted that the OG did not have anything they specifically called or considered to be "steps." It was only the alcoholics in NY and Akron that exclusively had and practiced Steps as their spiritual program of recovery. Some refer to the six steps as "The Six Steps of the Oxford Group." That is incorrect.
- However, the OG certainly did influence the principles embodied in the Steps.

In a July 14, 1949 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." (GSO-AC)

In AACOA 39 Bill also wrote: "Early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done and working with others straight from the Oxford Groups and directly from Sam Shoemaker their former leader in America and from nowhere else." (AGAA 137)

The version of the six steps below is from Earl T's (Treat - BBS "He Sold Himself Short"). Dr Bob was Earl's sponsor. This version of the six steps reflects a more orthodox Oxford Group influence that prevailed in the mid-west:

1. Complete deflation
2. Dependence and guidance from a Higher Power
3. Moral inventory
4. Confession
5. Restitution
6. Continued work with other alcoholics

The version of the six steps below is in AACOA 160 and PIO 197 and a September 1962 Grapevine Article titled "How the Twelve Steps Were Born." It illustrates how wording variations can occur when something is passed on by word-of-mouth.

1. We admitted that we were licked, that we were powerless over alcohol
2. We made a moral inventory of our defects or sins
3. We confessed or shared our shortcomings with another person in confidence
4. We made restitution to all those we had harmed by our drinking
5. We tried to help other alcoholics, with no thought of reward in money or prestige
6. We prayed to whatever God we thought there was for power to practice these precepts

The version of the six steps below is from a July 1953 Grapevine article titled "A Fragment of History: Origin of the Twelve Steps" which is also preserved in LOH 200. It again shows how wording variations can occur when something is passed on by word-of-mouth.

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol
2. We got honest with ourselves
3. We got honest with another person, in confidence
4. We made amends for harms done others
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could

In the July 1953 Grapevine Article, Bill W wrote: "Though these principles were advocated according to the whim or liking of each of us, and though in Akron and Cleveland they still stuck by the Oxford Group absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, this was the gist of our message to incoming alcoholics up to 1939, when our present Twelve Steps were put to paper."

The Twelve Steps were actually first put to paper in December 1938 at Bill's home at 182 Clinton St in Brooklyn, NY. Bill claimed it took him only about 30 minutes to do it.

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The original draft of the Twelve Steps has been lost. However, there is an approximate reconstruction of them in PIO 198-199 as shown below:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol-that our lives had become unmanageable.
 2. Came to believe that God could restore us to sanity.
 3. Made a decision to turn our wills and our lives over to the care and direction of God.
 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
 6. Were entirely willing that God remove all these defects of character.
 7. Humbly on our knees asked Him to remove these shortcomings-holding back nothing.
 8. Made a complete list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our contact with God, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
 12. Having had a spiritual experience as the result of this course of action, we tried to carry this message to others, especially alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
-

1939 - January, the draft book text and personal stories were completed.

- 400 multilith copies were distributed for evaluation. Bill W labeled the title of the manuscript as “Alcoholic’s (sic) Anonymous.” Each copy of the manuscript was stamped “Loan Copy” to protect the coming copyright.
- Bill credited New York member Joe W for getting the NY membership to favor the name “Alcoholics Anonymous” for the book. (AACOA 165-166, LR 115, 197, NG 74, 319, PIO 200).

1939 - NY member Jim B (Burwell - BBS “The 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, Pennsylvania in February 1940 and started AA there. He also helped start AA in Baltimore, Maryland. (AACOA 17, 164, BW-FH 140, BW-RT-255, GTBT 137, WPR 81, HIW 108)

1939 - January 18, The Alcoholic Foundation Board increased from 5 to 7 members. Non-alcoholics still held the majority.

- New members were alcoholic Harry Brick (BBS “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 December 1939 after serving a little under a year (GSO, PIO 189). Foundation Trustees could appoint their own successors and were “chartered to do everything under the sun.” (LOH 61)
- After the first two alcoholic Board Chairmen returned to drinking, from 1939 on the Board Chair has been a non-alcoholic.

1939 - February/March (?), the multilith review copies were returned. Reader’s comments produced few alterations.

- A major change did occur at the suggestion of a Montclair, New Jersey psychiatrist named Dr Howard (a possible alias) who recommended toning down the use of “musts” and changing them to “we ought” or “we should.” Dr Silkworth and Dr Tiebout offered similar advice.
- The manuscript was turned over to Tom Uzzell (a friend of Hank P, an editor at Colliers and a member of the NY University faculty). The manuscript was variously estimated as 600 to 1,200 pages (including

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personal stories). Uzzell reduced it to approximately 400 pages. Most cuts came from the personal stories, which had also been edited by Jim S (Scott - BBS The News Hawk) a journalist from Akron, OH. (AACOA 164-168, BW-FH 126, NG 74-76, PIO 204)

1939 - March, Bill W, Hank P, Ruth Hock and Dorothy S (Snyder) 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 “make a fresh typing of the whole business.” 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. (AACOA 170-171, WPR 81-82)

1939 - April, 4,650 copies of the first edition of “Alcoholics Anonymous” were published at a selling price of \$3.50 (\$54 today).

- The printer, Edward Blackwell, president of Cornwall Press, was told to use the thickest paper in his shop. The large, bulky volume became known as the “Big Book.” In AACOA 170 Bill W wrote that the idea behind the thick, large paper was to convince the alcoholic he was getting his money’s worth. (AACOA viii, 170, NG 76, PIO 204-205, GB 59)
- Ray C (Campbell - BBS “An Artist’s Concept”) designed the “circus color” dust jacket. The book had eight roman and 400 Arabic numbered pages. “The Doctor’s Opinion” started as page 1 and the basic text ended at page 179.
- The manuscript story of an Akron member Del T (Tryon - BBS “Ace Full-Seven-Eleven”) was dropped because he “thought the book was a racket.” 29 stories were included (10 from the east coast, 18 from the mid-west and 1 from the west coast (“Lone Endeavor”) which was ghost written by Ruth Hock and later removed from the book) (www)

1939 - April 11, Marty M (Mann - BBS “Women Suffer Too”) at age 35 attended her first meeting at 182 Clinton St.

- The prior 15 months, she was a charity patient at Bellevue Hospital in NY City and the Blythewood Sanitarium in Greenwich, Connecticut (under the care of Dr Harry Tiebout).
- Tiebout gave her a Big Book manuscript and arranged for Marty to go to the meeting. Upon her return to Blythewood, she told fellow patient, Grenville (Grennie) Francis Curtis, “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, GB 119-121, MMM 111-123)
- Note: many describe Marty as the first woman AA member - she was not.

1939 - April 25, Morgan R (Ryan) 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 (\$7,700 today) to mail out 20,000 post cards to physicians about the broadcast. It resulted in only 12 replies. (AACOA 174-176, PIO 207-210, GB 60-61)

1939 - April 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, and AACOA 173 says May 1)

1939 - May 10, Led by pioneer member Clarence S (Snyder - BBS “Home Brewmeister”) the Cleveland, OH members announced to the Akron Group that they would meet separately from Akron and the Oxford Group at 2345 Stillman Rd, Cleveland Heights in Cleveland at the home of Grace and Albert (Abby) G (Goldrick - BBS “He Thought He Could Drink Like a Gentleman”).

- This was AA’s third group. Clarence S claimed that it was the first group to call itself “Alcoholics Anonymous.”

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- However, the term was used a number of times in correspondence by Bill W almost a year prior to the founding of the Cleveland group. The Clevelanders still sent their most difficult cases to Dr Bob in Akron for treatment. (HIW 140, AACOA 19-21, NW 94, SI 35, DBGO 161-168, NG 78-79, PIO 224, AGAA 4, 201, 242, GSO-AC).

1939 - June 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)

1939 - Summer, Bill W and Hank P attended the first AA meeting in New Jersey at Hank's Upper Montclair house. (AACOA 11)

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1939 - August Dr Bob and Sister Ignatia (in charge of admissions) started working together at St Thomas Hospital in Akron.

- St Thomas Hospital was the first religious institution to open its doors to AA and later had a full hospital wing dedicated to alcoholism treatment. The NY group had a similar arrangement with the Knickerbocker Hospital in NYC.
- On August 16, Sister Ignatia arranged for the first AA admission, Walter B (Bray - BBS "The Back-Slider") His non-alcoholic wife Marie's BBS is "An Alcoholic's Wife." Dr Bob requested the admission and revealed to Sister Ignatia his own problems with alcohol. (AACOA viii, SI 15-19, NG 79-80 DBGO 187-188)

1939 - August (?), NY member Bert T (Taylor) put up his 5th Ave tailor shop as collateral for a \$1,000 loan (\$15,400 today) to keep Works Publishing afloat. NY members met for a time in the tailor shop loft. (AACOA 177-178, MMM 121, WPR 86).

1939 - September 30, In the late 1930s and early 1940s public relations had the most dramatic impact on AA membership growth.

- 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)

1939 - October 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)

1939 - Membership grew suddenly in Cleveland due to the September Liberty Magazine article and editorials in the Cleveland Plain Dealer by Elrick B Davis.

- As a result, the Cleveland group was flooded with appeals for help. Newcomers with just a few days of sobriety were assigned to make 12th Step calls.
- Cleveland membership surged from 20 to several hundred. 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)

1939 - October (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.
- The founding of the Cleveland Group and this action by the Akron Group ended all outside affiliation between the AA Fellowship and the OG or anyone else. (NW 93-94, SI 35, DBGO 212-219, NG 81, GTBT 123, AGAA 8-10, 188, 243)

1939 - October, Hank P's business failed. Hank, Bill W and Ruth Hock moved to a smaller 1-room office at 17 William St, Newark, New Jersey. (BW-RT 261, AACOA 176)

1939 - December, 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 meetings in New York and New Jersey (AACOA viii, 12, BW-FH 128)

1939 - December 27, Robert Shaw joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as the third Chairman and the first non-alcoholic to hold the position. (GSO)

- 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.

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1940 to 1944

1940 - January, Akron meetings moved from Dr Bob's house to King's School on Wednesday night. (SI 35-36, DBGO 219, NW 94)

1940 - Early, the "Rule # 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)

1940 - Late January/early February, the Houston Press ran a series of six articles about AA written anonymously by Larry J (Jewell).

- Larry was rescued from Cleveland's skid row by AA members there and had set out by train from Cleveland to live and work in Houston.
- Larry had never attended an AA meeting. While reading the Big Book on the train he had a spiritual awakening.
- Soon after the articles were published, Larry was joined by Roy Y (Yeargan) and Ed H (Hudson) and AA started in Texas. The first Texas AA meeting was on March 15, 1940 at the YMCA.
- The Houston Press articles also attracted the first Texas woman AA member, Benita C, who later married Larry J.
- Sadly, though, Larry J later returned to drinking and it lead to his death in 1944. (GSO-AC correspondence, AACOA 24, DBGO 259, LR 198)

1940 - February 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 (\$33,300 today) from the attendees (\$1,000 from Rockefeller).
- Rockefeller and the dinner guests continued to provide about \$3,000 a year (\$46,000 a year 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).

1940 - February, the first clubhouse was rented at 334 ½ W 24th St in NY City for \$100 a month (\$1,500 today). It was formerly the Illustrators Club. (LR 197)

1940 - November, Bill W and Lois moved into a small upstairs bedroom of the clubhouse 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)

1940 - March 16, (AACOA viii says Feb) the Alcoholic Foundation office moved from 17 William St Newark, New Jersey to 30 Vesey St, Room 703, in NY City. 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)

1940 - April, Hank P got drunk after 4 years sobriety. He had objected violently to the office move to Vesey St, was fighting with his wife, and wanted to divorce her. He also wanted to marry Ruth Hock who refused him. (AACOA 179, BW-RT 268, PIO 228-229, WPR 84)

1940 - April 16, Cleveland Indians baseball star "Rollicking" Rollie H (Helmsley) had his anonymity broken in the Cleveland Plain 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)

1940 - May 22, Works Publishing Co. was legally incorporated as a publishing arm of the Alcoholic Foundation.

- Bill W and Hank P gave up their stock with a stipulation that Dr Bob and Anne receive 10% royalties on the Big Book for life.
- Hank was persuaded to relinquish his shares in exchange for a \$200 payment (\$3,000 today) for office furniture he claimed belonged to him. (AACOA 189-190, LR 199, BW-FH 119, SM 11, PIO 235-236, GTBT 92, GSO-AC)

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1940 - 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, HIW 197)

1940 - October, 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 December, 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)

1940 - November 14, a publication called the "AA Bulletin" was first mailed to groups by the NY Office. It was intended to keep groups informed of important events and information.

- Note: The 1954 Conference approved renaming the publication to the "Exchange Bulletin." In December 1966, it was renamed again to "Box 4-5-9." (Box 459 Oct/November 2002, GSO-AC)

1940 - December, Bill W met Father Edward Dowling SJ, at the 24th St Clubhouse. Tom M (Mullholland) the club caretaker 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 (\$14,500 today) to pay Cornwall Press for Big Books being held for payment. (BW-FH 92, AACOA 18)

1941 - March 1, Jack Alexander's Saturday Evening Post article was published to a readership in excess of 3,000,000.

- It was AA's most notable public relations blessing and caused 1941 membership to jump from around 2,000 to 8,000.
- Bill W's 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. (SM S7, PIO 249)
- Consequently, the office asked groups to donate \$1 (\$14 today) per member, per year, for support. This began the practice of financing what is today called the General Service Office from group and member donations. (AACOA 112, 192, LOH 149, SM S7)

1941 - March 2, the wording of Step 12 was changed in the second printing of the Big Book.

- The terms "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 edition).
- An appendix titled "Spiritual Experience" was added. Many members thought they had to have a sudden, spectacular spiritual experience similar to the one Bill had in Towns Hospital. The appendix emphasized that most spiritual experiences developed slowly over time and were of the "educational variety." Note: the term "educational variety" does not appear in any of the written works of William James.
- The story "Lone Endeavor" of Pat C (Cooper) from California was removed. (AACOA 256, www)
- The brightly colored dust jacket of the first edition Big Book was called the "circus color" dust jacket. It was designed by Ray C (Campbell BBS "An Artist's Concept) who also designed an art deco style dust jacket that was never used.

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- Ray C began his Big Book story with a quotation that he attributed to Herbert Spencer which said: "There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which can not fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance - that principle is contempt prior to investigation." Ray's story was not included in the 2nd edition Big Book. However, the quotation was added to Appendix II "Spiritual Experience" when the second edition was published in 1955.
- The attribution of the quote to Spencer in Appendix II in the Big Book is in error. It should be attributed to an English clergyman, author and college lecturer by the name of William Paley who lived from 1743 to 1805. Herbert Spencer (who lived from 1820 to 1903) was a great rival of his fellow Englishman Charles Darwin who is credited with the theory of evolution. It was Spencer, not Darwin, who popularized the term "evolution" and it was also Spencer who coined the term, "survival of the fittest." But Spencer did not author the quotation attributed to him in the Big Book.

1941 - April 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 (\$94,200 today). The mortgage payment was \$40 a month (\$580 today). (BW-RT 284, PIO 259-260, MMM 337, WPR 66)

1941 - May 8, Ethel M (Macy - BBS "From Farm To City") was the first woman member in Akron to sober up. (SI 131, AACOA 7)

1941 - June 30, Ruth Hock sent out AA Bulletin # 3. At the end of the bulletin Ruth reported "One of our New York members clipped the following from the personal column of a New York paper, and since it seems to 'hit the spot' here it is: GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE, COURAGE TO CHANGE THINGS I CAN, AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE: DIFFERENCE" (GSO). For years within AA it was called "The AA Prayer" instead of "The Serenity Prayer." The prayer is attributed to Reinhold Niebuhr whose version differs somewhat from the popular version. The individual who discovered the prayer is reputed to be NY newspaperman, and AA member, Jack C (Carney). It was from the obituary section of a June edition of the Herald Tribune (PIO 252, GTBT 167).

- Member, Horace C (Crystal) suggested printing the prayer on a card and sending it in mail going out from the NY office. He personally paid to have the cards printed. (BW-RT 261-262, GTBT 167-187, PIO 252, AACOA 196, WPR 79-80)
- Note: There are many recorded inconsistencies regarding the time of discovery and source of the Serenity Prayer:

BW-40 and the June 1950, November 1964 and June 1994 Grapevine issues say 1939

PIO 252 and GTBT 167 say 1941

AACOA 196 says just before Ruth Hock left to get married which would be 1942

The August/September 1992 Box 459 says 1942

Some sources say the obituary came from the New York Times.

1941 - August, Clarence S (Snyder) founder of AA in Cleveland, joined with Cleveland pioneer Abby G (Goldrick) and other local group members to help start AA's first Central Office.

- Bill W also credits the Cleveland Central Office with introducing the principle of rotation to AA. (DBG) 202, HIW 181-186, www)

1941 - November, Dr Sam Shoemaker left the Oxford Group (then called "Moral Re-Armament") and formed a fellowship named "Faith at Work."

- MRA was asked to vacate the premises at Calvary House.
- Shoemaker's dispute with Buchman was amplified in the press. MRA was losing many adherents. (EBBY 75-76, AGAA 161, 244)

1941 - November, Margaret Farrand became the first woman Trustee on the Alcoholic Foundation Board. Also joining the board was Leonard Harrison. (GSO)

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1941 - December 8, the United States entered World War II.

1941 - With the possibility of being recalled to active duty in the Army, Bill W requested that he be granted a royalty on book sales to provide financial support for his wife Lois.

- The board approved a 10% royalty.
- Prior to this, Dr Bob was voluntarily giving Bill half the 10% royalty that he and Anne were receiving.
- Bill W's 10% royalty became his sole source of income. One exception to this occurred sometime in the mid-1940's when Bill's income averaged \$1,700 (\$24,600 today) over seven years. The board made a grant to Bill of \$1,500 (\$21,700 today) for each of the seven years for a total of \$10,500 (\$152,000 today) 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 (\$112,000 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.
- By acquiring all the outstanding shares it ensured that complete ownership of the Big Book would be held in trust for the entire AA Fellowship.
- Rockefeller's custom was to forgive \$1 of debt (\$13 today) 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)

1942 - Ruth Hock left the NY office to marry on February 28. Margaret "Bobbie" B (Burger) took her place as AA's second and last national secretary. (AACOA 16, 195-196, GTBT 168, PIO 304, LOH 152 says 1941)

1942 - October, 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 his spiritual sponsor, Father Edward Dowling, who suggested that Bill and Bob could not accept money for 12th Step work, but should accept royalties as compensation for special services. This later formed the basis for Tradition 8 and Concept 11.
- Due to the amount of time both co-founders dedicated to the Fellowship, it was impossible for either of them to earn a living through their normal professions. (AACOA 194-195, PIO 322-324)

1942 - October, 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. It generated much favorable national publicity. State and federal prison groups quickly spread across the country. (AACOA viii, 89-90, August 1945 Gv, June 1950 Gv)

1942 - October, Volume 1, No. 1 of the Cleveland "Central Bulletin" was published by the Cleveland Central Office. It preceded the AA Grapevine by almost two years and later provided inspiration to the NY members who started the Grapevine. (June 1989 and 1994 Gv)

1942 - In the early 1940s, the NY office was variously called the Headquarters or Central Office or General Office.

- It had the vital job of responding to letters from groups and members. This also provided a central communications link to members attempting to start groups and helping them with growing pains.
- By the early 1940s, the accumulated letters from groups and members gave firm signals of a need for guidelines to help with problems that occurred repeatedly. Basic ideas for the Twelve Traditions came from these letters and the principles defined in the Foreword to the first edition Big Book. (AACOA 187, 192-193, 198, 203-204, PIO 305-306, LOH 154)

1943 - July, the first summer session of the Yale University School of Alcohol Studies. 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)

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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)

1943 - October 4, Fitz M died from cancer. (AACOA 18)

1943 - November 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. It described five days in the life of an alcoholic and 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, was borrowed from AA - a bartender's comment to its central character, alcoholic Don Birnam, about his drinking stated: "one drink is too many and a hundred not enough."
- The book and Jackson were later discussed and lauded in the Grapevine. (Gv January 1945)

1944 - Dr Harry Tiebout published his first paper on AA titled "Therapeutic Mechanisms of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the American Journal of Psychiatry. (HT 130)

1944 - January, in the 6th printing of the first edition Big Book its physical dimensions were reduced to a more conventional size. However, it continued to be called the "Big Book." (www)

1944 - April 1, Marty M (Mann) moved to New Haven, Connecticut to found the National Committee for Education on Alcoholism (NCEA). Its office initially resided at Yale University.

- Marty stayed with the Jellineks and attended the Yale Summer School. The office later moved to NY City.
- Information on the NCEA was published in the October 1944 Grapevine with an explanation on why Marty was breaking her anonymity. (MMM 164-165).
- The NCEA changed its name to the National Committee on Alcoholism (NCA) in 1950, then to the National Council on Alcoholism (NCA) in 1956. In 1990, it was renamed again to the "National Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence" (NCADD). (SD 186-187)

1944 - April 14, the Alcoholic Ward opened at St Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH. (SI 108)

1944 - May 1, the Vesey St office moved to 415 Lexington Ave, New York, 17, NY near the Grand Central Terminal. The new mailing address was PO Box 459, Grand Central Annex. (AACOA 198-199, LOH 152)

1944 - May 9, at the invitation of Drs. Silkworth and Tiebout, Bill W presented a talk to the Medical Society of the State of New York. (SW 80, GSO, LOH 155, BW-FH 163, SM S9, AACOA 205)

1944 - June, Volume 1, No. 1 of the Grapevine was published (1,200 copies).

- A 1-year subscription was \$1.50 (\$18 today).
- Six volunteers ("six ink stained wretches") started it as an 8-page newsletter for members in the NY City area and GIs overseas. Its founders were Marty M (Mann), Priscilla P (Peck), Lois K, Abbott, Maeve and Kay (Bill W also credited Grace O and her husband).
- It soon expanded to become the AA Fellowship's official magazine. The Grapevine played a critical and central role in the development of the Traditions and General Service Conference.
- It is also recognized in the long form of Tradition 9 as AA's "principal newspaper" given its newspaper format at the time. AACOA viii, 201-203, 212, LOH 153-154, SM S79, PIO 305)

1944 - June, Bernard B Smith joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board replacing Margaret Farrand. (GSO)

1944 - Summer, Bill W began twice-a-week treatment with Dr Tiebout for debilitating episodes of depression.

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- 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)

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1945 to 1949

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)

1945 - 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 and group contributions could pay the office expenses. If these were insufficient, the reserve accumulated out of literature sales could meet the deficit.

- In total, Rockefeller and the dinner guest donated \$30,700 (\$365,000 today) to AA. The donations were viewed as loans and paid back out of Big Book income.
- This led to the principle of being fully self-supporting declining all further outside contributions and later formed the basis of Tradition 7. (AACOA 203-204)

1945 - April, by the mid-1940s the accumulated letters sent to the NY office by groups and members led to reliable conclusions on what practices worked well and what did not.

- Groups were also asked to send in their membership rules and it provided quite a jolt. If all the rules were applied everywhere, it would be impossible for any alcoholic to join the AA Fellowship.
- Earl T (Treat - BBS “He Sold Himself Short”) founder of AA in Chicago, suggested to Bill W that the experiences sent in from group and member correspondence might be codified into a set of principles to offer tested solutions to avoid future problems. Earl recommended to Bill W that he codify the Traditions and write essays on them in the Grapevine.
- Earl had a major role in the development of the Traditions (both long and short forms). He later served as a Class B Trustee from 1951-1954 and helped establish the General Service Conference.
- Earl is also the member described in the Big Book chapter “The Family Afterward” (pg 135) as getting drunk again after his wife nagged him about his smoking and drinking coffee.(AACOA 22, 203, GTBT 54-55, 77, SM S8, PIO 306, LOH 20-24)

1945 - April, the Grapevine included a questionnaire by E M Jellinek soliciting information that was later used to produce a chart titled “The Progressive Disease of Alcoholism” (also popularly called the “Jellinek Chart”). (1989 GSC-FR 24)

1945 - Spring, Bill W's non-alcoholic half-sister Helen Evans became the AA Grapevine's first paid employee at \$40 a month (\$480 today). She also served in two other capacities: as part-time secretary to Bill W (and helped him with both the Traditions and Concepts) and part-time secretary to Marty M. (June 1979 Gv, March 1981 Gv)

1945 - Bill W was called by Barry L (Leach - who would later author “Living Sober”) from the 41st 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)
- Note: Anecdotal accounts erroneously say that this individual went on to become one of the best 12th Steppers in NY.
- This story is also 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).

1945 - June, the Grapevine announced that Bill W would be a senior editorial advisor and contribute future articles.

1945 - June 9-10, Cleveland hosted a 2-day “Big Meeting” at the Cleveland Music Hall and Carter Hotel to celebrate AA's 10th anniversary. Estimated attendance was 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.”

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- 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 "13th chapter of First Corinthians" in the Bible for his fundamentals." (GSO, GTBT 27-28, Gv June and July 1945)

1945 - Bill W wrote in AACOA 208 that the period from 1945-1950 was one of immense strain and test. The three main issues were money, anonymity and what was to become of AA when its old timers and founders were gone. This 5-year period saw Bill's most intensive and exhaustive work of establishing a service structure and advocating the Traditions.

1945 - August, the Grapevine carried Bill W's first article (titled "Modesty One Plank for Good Public Relations") setting the groundwork for his 5-year campaign for the Traditions.

- The July Grapevine edition had an article by member CHK of Lansing, Michigan about the Washingtonians (the article contains a number of errors). Bill used this article to begin his essay commentaries on the Traditions.

1945 - October 20, Dr William Duncan Silkworth was hired as director of alcoholic treatment at the Knickerbocker Hospital in NY City. He worked at both 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)

1945 - December 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)

1945 - December, the Grapevine announced it would add four more pages and raised the subscription rate to \$2.50 (\$30 today) per year or 25 cents per copy (\$3 today) starting in January 1946.

- Bill W sent a letter to 600 groups that the Grapevine would be the national AA periodical.

1945 (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)

1946 - April, 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)

1946 - April, nine months after his first Traditions essay, the Grapevine carried Bill W's essay titled "Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition."

- They later came to be called "the long form of the Traditions."
- Bill W wrote Grapevine essays on the Traditions up to late 1949. The essays are preserved in LOH and were used in writing the 12&12 and AACOA.

1946 - Bill started to feel out the board and the Fellowship on the idea of various geographical Areas coming together as an elected service conference. The board and Dr Bob were not very enthusiastic about the idea. This marked the first suggestion for the General Service Conference. (LOH 338, SM 12 says 1945)

1946 - A dispute arose 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 was printed in the October 1946 Grapevine to disavow AA affiliation. (GTBT 29, NG 119, MMM 185)

1947 - February 20, Charles B Towns died. (SD 86)

1947 - March 3, Nell Wing started work at the Alcoholic Foundation, 415 Lexington Ave, NY City. Starting as a typist earning \$32 a week (\$305 today) she stayed for 36 years. (GTBT 15, GB 67)

1947 - April 8, after a difficult year of talks on policy and structure, Bill W wrote a paper titled "Our AA General Service Center-The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

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- It outlined a history of the Foundation and recommended a General Service Conference and renaming the Alcoholic Foundation to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- The Trustee's reaction was at first defensive and then outright negative. They saw no need for change.
- Most members would not associate the seeds of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts with the years 1946 and 1947 respectively. AA was on the verge of its teenage years and a visionary Bill W was laying the groundwork for the membership's coming of age. (AACOA 210-211, www, GSO-AC)

1947 - June, in the 11th printing of the first edition Big Book, the term "ex-alcoholic" was replaced by the terms "ex-problem drinker" or "non-drinker." (www)

1947 - June, what we today call the "AA Preamble" first appeared in the Grapevine.

- It was written by Tom Y, Grapevine's first editor and was based on the foreword to the first edition Big Book. Today, it is a common reading at the beginning of AA meetings and that is how, over time, it came to be called the AA Preamble.
- The June 1947 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 (\$31 today). (1991 GSC-FR 23)

1947 - 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)

1947 - August, 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)

1947 - December, 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. It was AA's first piece of literature dedicated totally to the Traditions.

1947 - A sad and gloomy cloud emerged in 1947; Dr Bob was stricken with cancer. (AACOA 209, BW-RT 303-304)

1948 - Summer, Dr Bob's cancer was diagnosed as terminal. He retired from medical 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 Buick Roadmaster).

- Bill W was spurred into greater urgency by Dr Bob's illness and pressed harder for a General Service Conference. It resulted in hot debates and a serious rift developed between Bill and the Class B trustees over Bill's use of "sledge-hammer tactics."
- In AACOA 210 Bill W admits to writing a sizzling memo that nearly blew the Foundation apart." It caused 4 trustees to submit letters of resignation. Bill wrote each of them a letter of apology and the resignations were either withdrawn or not accepted at the next Board meeting. (AACOA 210-211, DBGO 320, 348, GSO-AC)

1948 - August, the Grapevine announced that, based on a subscriber survey, the September 1948 issue would be in a new pocketsize 5 ½ x 7 ½ inches format of 32 pages.

1949 - As plans for the first International 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 or thereabouts") Bill, with Earl's help, set out to develop the short form of the Twelve Traditions. (AACOA 213, GTBT 55, 77, PIO 334, www)

1949 - April, Bill W became a trustee of the Alcoholic Foundation Board that had been increased to 15 Trustees. (GSO)

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1949 - May, Bill W presented a talk to the American Psychiatric Association's 105th Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada. (GSO, LOH 156, SM S9, PIO 334, AACOA 205)

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1949 - June 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. Anne was much revered by the Akron members and by Bill and Lois. Her last years were spent nearly blind due to severe cataracts.
- In a July 1949 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).

1949 - July 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.”

- In AACOA 39 Bill also wrote, “Early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others straight from the Oxford Groups and directly from Sam Shoemaker, their former leader in America, and from nowhere else.” (AGAA 137)

1949 - October, Dr William D Silkworth and Fulton Oursler joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board. (GSO)

1949 - November, the short form of the Twelve Traditions was published in the Grapevine.

- Two wording changes were subsequently made to the initial version published: the term “primary spiritual aim” was changed to “primary purpose” in Tradition Six, and the term “principles above personalities” was changed to “principles before personalities” in Tradition Twelve.
- The entire November 1949 Grapevine issue was dedicated to the Traditions in preparation for the forthcoming Cleveland Convention in 1950.
- It also contained an article by Bill W titled “A Suggestion for Thanksgiving.” Bill endorsed a suggestion in a letter and article from member TDY titled “You have a stake in the future of AA.”. The suggestion was to “adopt Thanksgiving Week as a time for meetings and meditation on the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous.” (LOH 95-96). The November 1949 Gv first used the title “Traditions Week” in all its Tradition articles.

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1950 to 1954

1950 - The NY office moved to 141 East 44th St. (LOH 157, GTBT 106, AACOA 207).

1950 - March 29, second Saturday Evening Post article written by Jack Alexander titled "The Drunkard's Best Friend" (GTBT 34)

1950 - July, AA's 15th anniversary and first International Convention at Cleveland, OH with an estimated 3,000 attendees. Registration was \$1.50 per person (\$13 today). The Traditions meeting was held in the Cleveland Music Hall. Following talks on the Traditions by 6 old-timer members, Bill W was asked to sum up the Traditions for the attendees.

Contrary to popular belief, the short form of the Traditions were not approved at the 1950 Convention, Bill W did not recite either the short or the long form of the Traditions to the attendees. Instead, he paraphrased and summarized a variation of the Traditions that is preserved in LOH 121. This is what Bill W read and was approved:

- "That, touching all matters affecting AA unity, our common welfare should come first; that AA has no human authority - only God as he may speak in our Group Conscience;
- that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern; that any alcoholic may become an AA member if he says so - we exclude no one;
- that every AA Group may manage its own affairs as it likes, provided surrounding groups are not harmed thereby;
- that we AAs have but a single aim, the carrying of our message to the alcoholic who still suffers; that in consequence we cannot finance, endorse or otherwise lend the name 'Alcoholics Anonymous' to any other enterprise, however worthy;
- that AA, as such, ought to remain poor, lest problems of property, management and money divert us from our sole aim;
- that we ought to be self-supporting, gladly paying our small expenses ourselves;
- that AA should remain forever non-professional, ordinary 12th Step work never to be paid for;
- that, as a Fellowship, we should never be organized but may nevertheless create responsible Service Boards or Committees to insure us better propagation and sponsorship and that these agencies may engage fulltime workers for special tasks;
- that our public relations ought to proceed upon the principle of attraction rather than promotion, it being better to let our friends recommend us;
- that personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and pictures ought to be strictly maintained as our best protection, against the temptations of power or personal ambition;
- and finally, that anonymity before the general public is the spiritual key to all our Traditions, ever reminding us we are always to place principles before personalities, that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

Following Bill's summation, the attendees unanimously approved the Traditions by standing vote. Notably missing from what Bill recited to the attendees were the principles in Tradition 10 of AA having no opinion on outside issues and not drawing the AA name into public controversy. Nevertheless, the attendees unanimously approved what Bill W presented. (AACOA 43, PIO 338)

1950 - July 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)

1950 - August (?) (PIO 344 says Nov12), Bill W visited Dr Bob in Akron for their last visit together. Bill advised Bob that the board would likely give its consent to a multi-year trial period for the General Service Conference. Dr Bob gave Bill his endorsement as well. (AACOA 213-215, DBG 325, 340, 342-343, PIO 342)

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1950 - November 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 his wife Anne. The Rev Walter Tunks conducted the funeral service.

- In his 15 years of sobriety, Dr Bob helped more than 5,000 alcoholics and never took any fee for his professional services. In his eulogy, Bill W described Dr Bob as “the prince of the Twelfth Steppers.”
- Dr Bob served as a Class B Trustee on the Alcoholic Foundation Board from its inception in 1938 up to 1944 and again from 1949 to the time of his death. (AACOA 7, 9, GSO, DBGO 344, GTBT 90, GB 69)

1950 - Fall, Class A trustees Leonard Harrison and Bernard B Smith resolved a 5-year conflict between Bill W and the Board on having a Conference.

- Smith, who Bill later called “the architect of the service structure,” chaired a trustee’s committee that recommended that Conferences be held on a trial basis from 1951-1954 and that in 1955 it would be evaluated and a final decision made.
- The recommendation was approved at the Board’s Fall meeting. (AACOA 209-212, PIO 344)

1950 - November, Bill W wrote a pamphlet titled “Your Third Legacy Will You Accept It?” 50,000 copies were distributed.

- He also wrote a December 1950 Grapevine article titled “Your Third Legacy.” Both publications used Bill and Dr Bob’s names in the byline.
- The pamphlet explained the Conference plans and Assembly election procedures and contained a “Temporary Charter for the Conference” of “Twelve Suggested Principles.”

1950 - The Alcoholic Foundation invited one Conference delegate from each of the then 48 States and from the Canadian Provinces. Seven states with large AA populations were assigned additional delegates.

- All the delegates were divided into two Panels so that half would be elected and half would rotate in odd and even numbered years. Panel 1 areas were asked to form a temporary committee to organize an election assembly no later than March 1951.
- Bill W traveled throughout the country to attend more than 2 dozen assemblies electing area committees and Conference delegates. (AACOA 216-217, PIO 347)

1950 - In the early Conference years, area assemblies were held only to elect new area officers and a new Conference delegate. The “Your Third Legacy” pamphlet offered guidelines for the first election assembly.

- Each group could select a Group Representative to attend and vote at the assembly. Group Representatives later came to be called “General Service Representatives” or GSRs.
- The first item of assembly business was the election of Committeemen for each district. Committeemen later came to be called “Committee Members” and then later “District Committee Members” or DCMs.
- Elections were by plurality and ended when a nominee received at least 25% of the total votes cast. The first three Committeemen elected automatically became the area Chair, Treasurer and Secretary in that order.
- The delegate election required a 2/3 majority of the total votes cast. If a 2/3 majority could not be obtained, the delegate was chosen by lot from among all the Committeemen whether they were standing for the delegate election or not.

1950 - AA members were asked to donate \$2 per year (\$18 today) to support the NY office. (LOH 159)

1951 - January, Dr John Norris (“Dr Jack”) and Earl T joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as Trustees. (GSO)

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1951 - March 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 81st St, NY City.

- 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 NY City and he was laid to rest in Glenwood Cemetery in West Long Branch, NJ. (AACOA 14, SW 110-111, 127, BB xvi, Gv April 1951)

1951 - April 20-22, (NY City) 37 United States and Canadian delegates (half the planned number) convened at the Commodore Hotel as the first Panel of the General Service Conference. Its theme was “Not To Govern-But to Serve.” Bernard B Smith presided. 15 Trustees and various staff members from the New York and Grapevine Offices joined the Conference as voting members.

The Conference unanimously recommended several advisory actions. Among them that:

- Nonalcoholic Board members should continue in office and alcoholic Board members should have fixed terms of office.
- AA literature should have Conference-approval.
- The Alcoholic Foundation ought to be renamed the “General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.” (Note: this suggestion was brought up repeatedly over the next 3 years and was finally adopted in 1954).
- 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 Bill would write in the future. Bill insisted this increase be submitted to the 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)
- The Conference also affirmed that the subject of AA auxiliaries or family groups should be taken back to local groups for further discussion and be considered at the 1952 Conference.

1951 - At the close of the Conference, Lois W with her close friend and neighbor Anne B (Bingham) invited the delegates’ wives and local family group members to meet at her home (Stepping Stones). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ideas for an organization that was then being called “AA Family Groups.” This was the beginning of the planning for the establishment of the Al-Anon Family Groups (AFG) Fellowship. (1951 GSC-FR, LR 174-176, WPR 69-70)

1951 - April Jack Alexander joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as a Trustee. (GSO)

1951 - October 30, the American Public Health Association presented the Lasker Award to AA at the San Francisco Opera House. It was originally 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 (\$8,200 today). (AACOA viii, 4, LOH 136, PIO 350)

1952 - January 9, the first family groups office, called the “Clearing-house Committee,” started at the 24th St Clubhouse in NY City. In March 1952, non-alcoholic groups using various names such as AA Helpmates, AA Auxiliary, Triple A, Non-AA and AA Associates adopted the name “Al-Anon Family Groups” for their Fellowship.

1952 - Al-Anon later wrote to AA asking to use its 12 Steps. AA agreed unofficially and later, through the Conference, recommended that Al-Anon should be a separate Fellowship and not a subsidiary of AA.

1952 - Henry (Harry) Z (Zoeller - BBS “A Close Shave”) joined the Alcoholic Foundation Board as a Class B Trustee. (GSO-AC)

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1952 - April 23, (NY City) the 2nd experimental Conference. Its theme was "It's a Question of Lives That May Be Lost if AA Does Not Survive." Panel 2 (consisting of 38 additional delegates) joined with Panel 1 for the first Conference of all Delegates attending.

- The first women Delegates joined Panel 2. They were Lois Abare of Barre, VT and Fay Brown of Bismarck, ND.
- At the request of the Delegates, all sessions of the Conference opened with the Serenity Prayer and concluded with the Lord's Prayer.
- Based on a 1951 Conference advisory action recommending that AA literature should have Conference approval, the Board formed a special Trustees' committee on literature to recommend literature items that should be retained and future literature items that would be needed.
- Bill W also reported on the many literature projects he was engaged in. The 1952 Conference unanimously approved the Board proposals and Bill's projects. There are not specific advisory actions but by approving existing literature to be retained, the Conference retroactively approved the Big Book and several existing pamphlets, which included the long form of the Traditions. (1952 GSC-FR 4) Bill's book projects resulted in:
 1. "The Third Legacy Manual" published in 1951 (renamed "The AA Service Manual" in 1969);
 2. The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions published in 1953;
 3. The 2nd edition Big Book published in 1955;
 4. "AA Comes of Age" published in 1957;
 5. "The Twelve Concepts for World Service" published in 1962; and
 6. "The AA way of Life" published in 1966 (later renamed to "As Bill Sees It" in 1975).
- A motion was made and seconded that, subject to consideration of the Trustees, steps be taken to incorporate the Society by an Act of Congress. There was extended an impressive discussion of both sides of the question, following which the motion was tabled. A subsequent motion requested the Trustees to appoint a Special Committee to study the problem and submit recommendations at the 1953 Conference.

1952 - In September 1952, Al-Anon adopted and adapted AA's 12 Traditions using the version that was first published in the November 1949 Grapevine (this is why the AFG version of Traditions 6 and 12 differ in wording from AA's version). (LR 174-178, GB 142)

1952 - December 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 - April, (NY City) the 3rd experimental Conference. Its theme was "The Milestones Ahead." Board Chairman, Bernard B Smith, reported that the corporate name of "Works Publishing" had been changed to "Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing."

- The first Conference-approved book distributed under the new publishing name was the 12&12. It contains the final wording of the short form of the Traditions, as we know them today. Betty L and Tom Powers helped Bill in its writing. Jack Alexander also helped with editing. It was published in two editions: one for \$2.25 (\$21 today) for distribution through AA groups, and a \$2.75 (\$22 today) edition distributed through Harper and Brothers for sale in commercial bookstores. (AACOA ix, 219, PIO 354-356)
- 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."

The Conference 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."
- 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. (Reaffirmed in 1954)

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- 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?”

Failed 1953 advisory action:

- The Conference rejected the idea of incorporating the AA name in the US and foreign countries as a means of protecting against misuse of the name by AA members and outside groups. One of the incidents that stimulated discussion on the matter in 1952 was a Houston Texas group, which had incorporated itself as “The Alcoholic Foundation of Texas.”

1953 - December, the 1953 Conference recommended that a pamphlet be developed to clarify the duties and responsibilities related to General Services.

- It was published in December 1953 under the title “Your Role in the General Service Conference.”
- The pamphlet explained the duties and responsibilities of Group Members, Group Representatives, Area Committeemen and Conference Delegates. It also contained the first structure diagram of the General Service Conference. (GSO-AC)

1954 - Actress and nightclub singer Lillian R (Roth) 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 and it generated bad publicity for AA. (GB 77, PIO 308-309)

1954 - January 18, Hank P died in Pennington, New Jersey.

- Note: It is attributed to Ruth Hock 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.” (PIO 195) Hank was also credited with writing all but the first paragraph of the Big Book’s Chapter 10 “To Employers.” (PIO 200, www)

1954 - January 24, Lois W suffered a heart attack on her and Bill’s 38th anniversary. It severely restricted her activities for a year (PIO 360-362)

1954 - February 2, Bill W declined an honorary Doctorate from Yale University. (LOH 205, GB 69, BW-FH 201)

1954 - February 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)

1954 - April 21-25, (NY City) the 4th experimental Conference. Its theme was “The Great Debate and the Future of AA.”

- Board Chairman Bernard B Smith delivered an eloquent talk at the 1954 Conference. Its next to last paragraph is today highlighted in Chapter 1 of the AA Service Manual with the title “Why Do We Need A Conference?” The actual title of his talk was “The Lost Commandment, The Dictionary and AA.”
- He left no doubt, whatsoever that he was firmly in favor of continuing the Conference on a permanent basis.

The Conference recommended that:

- It unanimously approved the corporate renaming of the “Alcoholic Foundation” to the “General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.” The renaming took place in October 1954.
- All Conference-approved literature have on its face an identifying symbol.
- The AA Exchange Bulletin (now Box 459) be approved.

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Failed 1954 advisory actions:

- The Conference was asked to consider the offer of the publisher who wished to give to AA Publishing, Inc. publication rights to the booklet, "Twenty-Four Hours a Day." A two-page letter from the publisher, favoring this proposal and answering certain objections to the proposal, was read to the Conference. The letter noted that current net profit from sales of the booklet is about \$5,300 annually (\$42,400 today).
- Requests that AA Publishing, Inc. undertake publication of the booklet have been received from many areas, largely as the result of suggestions by the present publisher, it was reported.
- Comment by the Delegates indicated they felt it unwise to set a precedent in the case of this booklet and expressed fear that AA Publishing "would be flooded with similar requests" if it did so. The Delegate from the State in which the booklet is published said it was the consensus of his group and of his area that the proposal not be approved.
- Following full discussion of the proposal, the Conference adopted a resolution that publication rights to "Twenty-Four Hours a Day" not be accepted and further asked that the publisher be thanked for his offer.
- A proposal that "AA Publishing, Inc. should produce a Conference-approved pamphlet on the general theme of the role and attitude of the older member of AA, with specific reference to conditions and attitudes that lead to 'slips'" was not approved by the Conference.
- The Conference voted not to approve the proposal to list Hospital and Prison Groups in the 1955 Directory. It was agreed that, while it was in the spirit of AA to regard all groups as essential parts of the fellowship, certain problems might arise if groups in this category are listed.

1954 - 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)

1954 - September 17, Bill D, (AA #3) died. (LOH 360)

1954 - October, the Alcoholic Foundation was renamed to the General Service Board of AA. (AACOA ix, NG 131)

1954 - October, the AFG Clearing House incorporated under the name of Al-Anon Family Group Hq. (LR 179)

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1955 to 1959

1955 - January 6, Bill W's stepmother Christine Wilson died. (PIO 362)

1955 - April, the General Service Board adopted the practice of using the titles Chairman and Vice Chairman instead of President and Vice President. (GSO)

1955 - June 26-29 and July 3, (St Louis, Missouri) the 5th and last experimental Conference. Its theme (focus) was "The Paradoxes of AA."

- The 75 Delegates unanimously recommended adoption of a permanent Conference Charter subject to approval of the second International Convention that would convene in St Louis on July 1.
- Bill W brought up the first Conference discussion to change the Board ratio to a 2/3 majority of alcoholics. After much debate, the matter was tabled for the agenda of the 1956 Conference. The board ratio issue would be debated endlessly by Bill, the Board and 10 Conferences before it was finally resolved in 1966.
- The Conference also decided that future Conferences should not be combined with International Conventions. (1955 GSC-FR) The Conference also recommended that a plan for selecting Class B trustees be approved. This was the first move to establish Regions (the initial geographical groupings were called "Area A" thru "Area E")

1955 - July 1-3, AA's 20th anniversary and 2nd International Convention was held in St Louis' Kiel Auditorium. Estimated attendance was 3,800. Its theme was "Coming of Age."

- On July 3, Bill W made some introductory remarks and presented a resolution, the heart of which read: BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous should become, as of this date July 3, 1955 the guardian of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the perpetuator of the World Services of our Society, the voice of the group conscience of our entire Fellowship and the sole successors to its co-founders, Dr Bob and Bill. It was unanimously approved.
- The approval also extended to a new publication titled "The Third Legacy Manual of World Service as Proposed by Bill" the forerunner of today's AA Service Manual both of which contain the Conference Charter. The Conference Charter has 12 Articles, the 12th of which is also called "The General Warranties of the Conference." The 6 Warranties in Article 12 are a condensed version of the Traditions to ensure the Conference always functions in the spirit of the Traditions. In 1962, the Warranties also formed Concept 12 of the Twelve Concepts for World Service.
- The second edition Big Book was introduced at the 1955 international Convention at a retail price of \$4.50 (\$36 today). It contained 30 new personal stories.

In the introduction to the story section Bill W wrote that 22 of the original 29 case histories (or 76%) had made full recovery as of 1955. Some in AA erroneously state that most of these early members returned to drinking.

Bill renumbered the pages of the second edition Big Book. Page 1 was changed to begin with "Bill's Story" instead of "The Doctor's Opinion." It is not known why Bill did this but there has been much creative and entertaining speculation.

The second edition Big Book also had a new appendix with the short and long form of the Traditions. However, it mistakenly listed the short form version published in the November 1949 Grapevine instead of the version published in the 12&12 in 1953. The error was not fully corrected until the 6th printing in 1963.

Bill W thanked the Convention 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)

- AFG's first book "The Al-Anon Family Groups" was released at the 1955 International Convention. (AACOA ix, 32-34, LR 180)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1955 - December, the Grapevine center spread carried an oil painting by volunteer illustrator Robert M portraying a man on a bed being 12th Stepped by two members.

- It's original title was "Came To Believe."
- When the book "Came To Believe" was published in 1973, 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)

1955 - 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 edition Big Book.

- The term "as the result of those steps" was changed back to the original term "as the result of these steps."

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

1956 - April 18-22, (NY City) the 6th Conference. Its theme was "Petition, Appeal, Participation and Decision."

- It voted to continue the structure of the General Service Board as 8 Class A and 7 Class B trustees. It began a 10-year campaign by Bill W to change the board ratio to a 2/3 majority of alcoholics.
- Bill W gave a talk at the Conference on the rights of petition, appeal, participation and decision describing them as four principles that might someday permeate all of AA's services. They later became key principles of the Twelve Concepts for World Service, specifically Concepts 3, 4, 5 and 6. They would also be called "traditional rights" in the Concepts and lead some to later call the Concepts "AA's Bill of Rights."

1956 - April, Dr Harry Tiebout joined the GSB as a Trustee. (GSO)

1956 - May, the "AA Bulletin" was renamed the "AA Exchange Bulletin" (later to become "Box 459"). (Box 459 Oct/November 2002)

1956 - August 29, Bill W joined with Aldous Huxley and took LSD in California under the guidance of Gerald Heard and Sidney Cohen.

- Others invited to experiment (and accepted) were Nell Wing, Father Edward 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)

1956 - 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. (GB 166, LOH 190, SD 188)

1957 - Creation of the first overseas GSB of AA in Great Britain and Ireland. (AACOA ix)

1957 - April 17-21, (NY City) the 7th Conference. Its theme was "Stability and Responsibility Without Complacency."

- It approved publication of "AA Comes of Age." One version was printed by Harper & Brothers and sold in commercial bookstores. The other version was sold at a discounted price within AA.
- The Conference also approved a new set of "BYLAWS of the General Service Board" written by Bernard B Smith. They are today contained in the AA Service Manual as Appendix E.
- The 1957 Conference further recommended that no change in Article 12 of the Conference Charter or in AA Tradition or in the 12 Steps may be made with less than the written consent of three fourths of AA groups.

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Failed 1957 advisory action:

- At the 1956 Conference, Delegates had approved the recommendation of the Literature Committee that the suggestion for a leather-bound gift edition of the "Big Book" be tabled for re-consideration by the 1957 Conference. During the year, a formal proposal on this project was distributed to all areas for analysis and discussion. Discussion on the proposal during the 1957 Conference revealed strong and divergent opinions on this proposal, reflecting both Area opinion and individual Delegates' feelings. A show of hands indicated that probably a majority favored the proposal but, in the absence of relative unanimity, the Conference promptly accepted the suggestion of the chair that the discussion be terminated. It was apparent during the discussion that a number of Delegates felt that no additional publishing project should be permitted to detract from Area interest in Bill's forthcoming new book, "AA Comes of Age."

1957 - October, "AA Comes of Age" was published. Guised as a 3-day diary of the 1955 Convention, it is in fact a definitive history of AA up to 1955. (AACOA ix, PIO 354, 359)

1958 - April 28, Bill W presented a talk to the NY City Medical Society on Alcoholism.

1958 - April, (NY City) the 8th Conference. Its theme was "Promise and Progress."

- It approved removing the word "honest" from the term "honest desire to stop drinking" in the *AA Preamble*. AA legend sometimes erroneously states that the word "honest" was removed from Tradition 3. Neither the long nor the short form of Tradition 3 ever contained the word "honest." The term "honest desire to stop drinking" is from the Foreword to the first edition Big Book.
- It also led to changing the wording of the AA 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 ("Best of the Grapevine" vol.1, 274-275)
- In the continuing debate over the trustee ratio (which was to go on for 6 more years) the 1958 Conference proposed that the Board be changed from 8 nonalcoholic and 7 AA trustees to 9 of each and that this proposal be taken back to the areas and be decided upon at the 1959 Conference.
- The 1958 Conference also recommended that the name "General Service HQ" be changed to "General Service Office."
- The 1958 Conference voted unanimously to ask Bill W to provide continuing leadership on all projects of movement-wide concern in which he was currently interested.
- The Conference also approved the action of the GSB in reassigning to Bill royalty rights in his three books (AACOA, 12&12 and AACOA) and in books he may write in the future, for the duration of the copyrights involved.

1958 - October, "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). (GB 77) AA cooperated in its production 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)

1959 - April 22-26, (NY City) the 9th Conference was held at the Hotel Commodore. Its theme was Confidence, "Absence of Fear of Future."

- It voted to change the corporate name "Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing" to "Alcoholics Anonymous World Services." The board approved the change in October 1960.
- Failed 1958 advisory actions:
- There was discussion on the subject of contributions to the General Service Office. Several Delegates cited ways and means money is collected in their Areas. A motion to rescind the action taken by the Delegates at an earlier session in approving fund appeals based on \$3.00 (\$22 today) per member per year failed.

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- A motion that the words "there are no dues or fees" be deleted from the "official" definition of AA failed.
- A carefully considered policy decision was recorded at the 2nd session of the 1959 Conference. The proposal to change the ratio on the General Service Board to 9 alcoholic Trustees and 9 non-alcoholic Trustees failed (46 in favor, 36 opposed). The ratio thus continues to be 8 non-alcoholics and 7 AAs.
- Refused to consider by an overwhelming margin that the future the term of office of Conference Delegates be extended from 2 to 3 years. The Delegates voted unanimously to continue the 2-year term of office.

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1960 to 1969

1960 - Between 1959-1964 (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 Marty's biography in 2001 (MMM 262-266)

1960 - E M Jellinek published "The Disease Concept of Alcoholism." (NG 312, GB 166)

1960 - April, Bill W declined the opportunity to be on the cover of Time magazine. (BW-FH 201)

1960 - April 3, Father Edward Dowling SJ, died in Memphis, TN. (LOH 364)

1960 - April 20-24, (NY City) the 10th Conference was held at the Roosevelt Hotel. Its theme was "Need for Internal and External Communication."

- Bill W announced that for the prior 3 years, he had worked 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."

Failed 1960 advisory action:

- The Delegate from Southern California Panel #1 (Los Angeles Area) presented a resolution designed to change the Trustee selection plan approved by the Conference in 1955 and assure permanent representation on the General Service Board of two Trustees from West of the Rocky Mountains. The resolution **was** said to have been approved unanimously by 23 Committeemen in the Los Angeles Area.
- During floor discussion of this resolution it was pointed out by the chair that the concept of Trustees, approved by earlier Conferences, is that they do not represent geographical areas but AA as a whole. The discussion failed to develop support for the resolution, which was then referred to the Conference Committee on Trustees.
- The latter reported that it did not look favorably upon this request and recommended that the matter be referred to the Committee on Policy and to the Nominating Committee, both committees of the General Service Board, for further study and preparation of a report to be presented at the 1961 Conference.

1960 - July 1-3, 25th Anniversary and 3rd International Convention at Long Beach, CA. Its theme was "Recovery, Unity and Service." Estimated attendance was 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)

1961 - January 23, Bill W wrote to Dr Carl Gustav Jung acknowledging Jung's contribution to the movement. (NW 9, PIO 381-386)

1961 - January 30, Dr Jung replied to Bill's letter. (NW 11)

1961 - April 19-23, (NY City) the 11th Conference was held at the Roosevelt Hotel. Its theme was "A True and High and a Constant Purpose":

- It unanimously adopted a motion that: "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 General Service Conference 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." (PIO 393).

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1961 - March 20, Bill W replied to Jung's letter (PIO 384)

1961 - April, first AFG World Service Conference was held on a trial basis in NY City with 12 Delegates. (LR 181)

1961 - May 15, Bill W's mother Emily (age 91) died in Dobbs Ferry, NY. (PIO 387)

1961 - June 6, Dr Carl Gustav Jung died. (PIO 386)

1962 - Yale University ended the School of Alcohol Studies. - it relocated to Rutgers State University in New Brunswick, NJ. (GB 172)

1962 - January, Grapevine Director Mary B (Bernson) joined the GSB as the first alcoholic woman Trustee. (GSO)

1962 - April 25-29, (NY City) the 12th Conference was held at the Roosevelt Hotel. Its theme was "One Primary Purpose."

- It reaffirmed that a majority of non-alcoholics be retained on the board. Bill's proposal to change the ratio of the GSB was voted down. (GTBT 79) However, it also voted to enlarge the Board from 15 to 19 trustees and proposed that, after a 1-year review, the 1963 Conference consider a 6-region zoning plan under which each region would elect a Class B trustee at 6-year intervals.
- The Conference unanimously approved Bill W's manuscript titled "Twelve Concepts for World Service." The Conference recommended that the manuscript be distributed initially as a supplement to, and eventually as an integral part of, the Third Legacy Manual

Failed 1962 advisory actions:

- The following motion was discussed but failed to carry: "It is the sense of our Assembly that, as a matter of policy and within the framework of the Traditions, GSO should carefully weigh and consider the unanimous recommendations of General Service Assemblies respecting a matter peculiar within its knowledge. In such matters, the recommendation filed by the Assembly Chairman and the Delegate should be recognized as representing the group conscience of the local Assembly."
- The Conference discussed, but did not approve, a proposal to make the Areas responsible for the first \$150 (\$1,060 today) of a Delegate's travel expense, rather than for the first \$100 (\$705 today) of such expenses, as has been the procedure since the Conference was formed. The prevailing feeling was that the proposed change might work a hardship in certain "developing" AA Areas.

1962 - July, the cartoon strip "Victor E" drawn by Editor Jack M, first appeared in the Grapevine. (1989 GSC-FR 24)

1962 - 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)

1962 - Publication of the booklet "Twelve Concepts for World Service." (AACOA x)

1963 - April 24-28, (NY City) the 13th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Function Rather Than Structure."

- It approved the multi-state grouping plan recommended by 1962 Conference that organized the US into 6 geographical Regions. Regional Trustees would be elected to the Board as Class B (or alcoholic) Trustees.
- It also approved a GSB Trustees' action in making a special monthly grant (\$200 per PIO 393 - \$1,400 today) to Ebby Thatcher, 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)

1963 - Bill W modified his royalty agreement with AAWS so that 10% of his royalties went to his mistress, Grapevine Editor, Helen W (Wynn).

- 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 \$233,000 today). At the time of Bill's death (1971) it was around \$56,000 (\$295,000 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)

1963 - October 22 (?), E M Jellinek died.

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1963 - October 31, Dr Sam Shoemaker died.

- In a February 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 - General Service Board membership was increased to 19 Trustees. (GSO)

1964 - April 21-26, (NY City) the 14th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Practicing These Principles."

- It 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 (April 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.

1965 - April 19-24, (NY City) the 15th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Responsibility To Those We Serve."

- An historic measure of responsibility was introduced by the Trustees at the 1965 Conference for final decision at the 1966 Conference (at which it passed). It was a Board proposal to restructure the composition of the GSB to consist of a 2/3 majority of Class B (alcoholic) Trustees.

Bill W addressed the 1965 Conference after the Trustees' proposal was submitted:

"Speaking on behalf of AA's Board of Trustees, our devoted friend and Chairman Dr Jack Norris has called upon us to face a far reaching responsibility. Future AA historians will no doubt record this occasion as a major turning-point in the unfoldment of our well-loved Fellowship. This is because we are now to reconsider, and perhaps to recast, the whole nature and composition of AA's future world leadership.

As we meditate upon this long unresolved problem, it would be well to recall that in the affairs of new societies and of nations, the determination of their ultimate leadership has ever been a matter of crucial importance. This is the teaching of all human history.

Dr Jack has specifically requested us of Alcoholics Anonymous - at the level of our Board of Trustees - to assume the primary role in the conduct of AA's world affairs. He has presented a detailed program for achieving this, a plan almost unanimously recommended by his fellow Trustees. Should we adopt this new concept in 1966, the chief responsibility for the guidance of our world affairs would then be shifted from the non-alcoholics of our present Board to the alcoholic Trustees of the new Board."

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1965 - July 2-4, AA's 30th Anniversary and 4th International Convention at Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Estimated attendance was 10,500. The spirit of the 1965 Conference theme also pervaded the 1965 International Convention. Its theme was simply stated as "Responsibility." Estimated attendance was 10,500. The keynote was "The Declaration."

- Dr Jack" Norris, Chairman of the Generals Service Board in 1965 wrote a message for the memento booklet prepared for the 1965 International Convention. He ended it with:

"But as we talk of thousands of Groups we must remember that AA will continue strong only so long as each of us freely and happily gives it away to another person, only as each of us takes our fair share of responsibility for sponsorship of those who still suffer, for the growth and integrity of our Group, for our Intergroup activities, and for AA as whole."

"It is in taking responsibility that real freedom and the enduring satisfaction of life are found. AA has given us the power to choose -to drink or not to drink - and in so doing has given us the freedom to be responsible for ourselves. As we become responsible for ourselves, we are free to be responsible for our share in AA, and unless we happily accept this responsibility we lose AA. Strange, isn't it?"

Convention attendees filled the Toronto Maple Leafs Garden on Saturday night, July 3. Bernard B Smith, nonalcoholic Trustee who had been associated with AA for 21 years, spoke that "one of the most glorious fruits of AA, recovery from alcoholism; namely, individual freedom to accept responsibility for ourselves and for our share in AA as a whole. As long as one man dwells in the darkness you once knew, you cannot rest; you must try to find him and help him become one of you. By the grace of God, may AA last for all time!"

Following the addresses by Bill W and Bernard B Smith, 90 Delegates and members from all over the world emerged from behind an immense banner at the rear of the stage, depicting the AA circle and triangle. They joined the Trustees already seated on stage. All rose, clasped hands, and led by Bill W; about 10,000 attendees recited the Responsibility Declaration in unison: "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."

Printed on wallet cards and in many AA pamphlets, the Responsibility Declaration has been quoted and recited innumerable times. At least two attempts have been made at General Service Conferences to change the wording of the Declaration to make it more specific to alcoholics and less inclusive. The attempts failed largely due to the historical nature of the event that took place in Toronto in 1965.

The Declaration was written by Alfred (Al) H S (Steckman). He served in the past as a Class B (alcoholic) Trustee, AAWS Director, Grapevine Director, Grapevine Editor and Director of the New York Intergroup Association. When Al became the Grapevine Editor in 1949, the magazine wasn't too well known around the country. There were many months when he wrote the entire issue by himself, signing each article with a different set of initials and giving a different locality. Al S was also the member who drove a grievously ill Dr Bob home to Akron from his last public appearance at the 1950 International Convention in Cleveland.

1965 - The film "Bill's Own Story" was first shown at the International Convention. (AACOA x, NG 142)

1965 - December, Bill W enthusiastically embraced a campaign to promote vitamin B3 (niacin or nicotinic acid) therapy and created Traditions issues within the Fellowship. (PIO 388-390)

1966 - March 21, Ebby T died of emphysema. He had 2 ½ years sobriety. Throughout his life, Bill W always referred to Ebby as his sponsor. (LOH 367, EBBY 143, PIO 336)

1966 - April 1, Sister Mary Ignatia Gavin (age 77) died. (LOH 371 says April 2)

1966 - April 2, Dr Harry Morgan Tiebout (age 70) died. (LOH 369, HT viii)

1966 - April 18-23, (NY City) the 16th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Principles Before Personalities."

- It approved a restructuring plan proposed by the Board in 1965, which changed the Board ratio to 14 alcoholic and 7 non-alcoholic Trustees. This ended Bill W's 10-year campaign to have alcoholics make up a 2/3 majority of the Board. The number of Regional Trustees was also increased from 6 to 8 (6 from the US and 2 from Canada).

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- The Conference also established a Conference Institutions Committee. (Policy)

1966 - December, the "Exchange Bulletin" was renamed to "Box 459." (Box 459 Oct/November 2002)

1967 - "The AA Way of Life" (title changed in 1971 to "As Bill Sees It") was published. Janet G assisted with editing. (AACOA x, PIO 360)

1967 - April, the US copyright to the first edition Big Book expired and was not renewed.

- The oversight was not discovered until nearly 20 years later in 1985. It was also discovered in 1985 that the US copyright to new material in the second edition Big Book had lapsed in 1983.
- It should be noted however that the Big Book copyright has expired only in the US. It is still in force outside the US under international treaty agreements. (NG 299, GSO)

1967 - April 17-22, (NY City) the 17th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Sponsorship-the Hand of AA."

- It approved Guidelines for group separation of AA and Al-Anon. (an 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).
- It recommended that the Serenity Prayer be incorporated into the Grapevine's regular monthly format.
- The board report accepted by the Conference 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, New York in order that Bill's personal interest in these items not involve the Fellowship." (PIO 391)

1967 - June 17, T. Henry Williams died. (AGAA 69)

1967 - 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 - January 24, Bill W and Lois celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. (LR 159)

1968 - April 22-27, (NY City) the 18th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Personal Recovery Depends Upon AA Unity."

It recommended that

- The first World Services Meeting be held in NY City, in the fall of 1969, and accepted a 7-point proposal of the Trustees' World Service Planning Committee.
- The Conference also resolved that 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.

1968 - The first AA membership survey was taken. (NG 273)

1969 - April 21-26, (NY City) the 19th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Our Group Conscience: Voice of AA."

- It approved 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.
- The Conference also approved a resolution of gratitude to AFG.

1969 - October 9-11, the first World Service Meeting was held in NY City. Delegates from 14 countries attended. (AACOA x)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1970 to 1979

1970 - April 20-25, (NY City) the 20th Conference was held at the Hotel New Yorker. Its theme was “Service-the Heart of AA.”

- It approved going on record as opposing the use of the title “AA Counselor.”

Failed 1970 advisory action:

- Recommended that the area Hi-Lites be given in the second year of a delegate's term in order that the delegate might be more familiar with the subject matter and new delegates be simply introduced to the Conference by name and area. (Not accepted by Conference.)

1970 - April, GSO moved to 468 Park Ave South in NY City. (PIO 399)

1970 - July, AA's 35th anniversary and 5th International Convention at Miami Beach, Florida. Estimated attendance was 10,700 (13,000?) Its 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.”

- Bill W appeared on Sunday morning for what proved to be his last public appearance and talk. Bill's health had steadily weakened due to emphysema. He was confined to a wheel chair and required the administration of oxygen. (AACOA xi, NG 145-146)

1970 - Summer, long-time GSB Trustee Bernard B Smith died. (NG 392)

1970 - December, Lois W's brother Rogers Burnham died (he introduced Lois to Bill). (GTBT 85)

1971 - January 24, William Griffith Wilson (age 75) co-founder of AA, 36 years sober, died at Miami Beach, Florida.

- The date was also Bill and Lois' 53rd wedding anniversary.
- Bill was the architect and author of AA's 3 Legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service, and all the written works that explained them. It was an amazing achievement. He had no training at all as a writer.
- In 1990, Life Magazine named Bill W as one of the 100 most important figures of the 20th century. (AACOA xi, BW-FH 5, BW-FH 4)

1971 - April 19-24, (NY City) the 21st Conference was held at the Hotel New Yorker. Its theme was “Communication: Key to AA Growth.”

- It recommended that the short form of the Twelve Concepts be approved.
- The final Conference report started referring to the book “The AA Way of Life” as “As Bill Sees It.” There is no Conference advisory action recording the change.

1971 - April, Milton Maxwell, PhD joined the GSB as a Trustee. (GSO)

1972 - Nell Wing was appointed the first AA Archivist. (GTBT 132, WPR 102)

- During 1972, she submitted brief biographies of AA's co-founders in leaflet form to the Literature Committee for Conference approval.
- Two years later, she submitted a companion leaflet consisting of the co-founders' last talks. In 1978, the two were combined into the Conference-approved pamphlet “The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous.”

1972 - April 17-22, (NY City) the 22nd Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was “Our Primary Purpose.”

It recommended that:

- The “Twenty-Four Hour Book” not be confirmed as General Service Conference-approved literature.
- GSO should not accept contributions from clubs.
- In accordance with AA's Tradition of self-support, the General Service Conference voted unanimously that AA not accept the Stepping Stones property (the home of Bill and Lois W) for any purpose.(NG 263)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- 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.

1972 - October 5, the second World Service Meeting was held in NY City.

1973 - April, 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)

1973 - April 24-29, (NY City) the 23rd Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was “Responsibility-Our Expression of Gratitude.”

- It approved publication of “Came To Believe” the first Conference-approved book not written by Bill W.

1973 - 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 October 24. Its members were Chairperson George C, Rev Lee Belford and Dr Milton Maxwell. (GTBT 134-135)

1974 - April 22-27, (NY City) the 24th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was “Understanding and Cooperation-Inside and Outside AA.”

- It approved a short form of the Twelve Concepts for World Service for inclusion in the AA Service Manual.
- The Conference also resolved that ex-officio committee members be discontinued. Past delegates can keep themselves informed through their delegates and the Conference Report.

1974 - In order to maintain subscriber’s anonymity, the legal name of “The AA Grapevine” was changed to “Box 1980” to comply with postal regulation requiring the corporate name of an organization be placed on official envelopes and on the magazine itself. (1989 GSC-FR 24)

1975 - April 21-26, (NY City) the 25th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was “Unity: Through Love and Service.”

- It recommended that GSO discontinue distribution of the “Bill W” book (the biography published by Harper and Row).

1975 - July, AA’s 40th anniversary and 6th International Convention at Denver, CO. Estimated attendance was 19,300. Its keynote was “Let it Begin With Me.” The first flag ceremony was held at this convention. (AACOA xi)

1975 - The booklet “Living Sober” was published. It was written by AA member Barry L (Leach). When Conference-approved in 1974, it was originally titled “Staying Sober.” (AACOA xi)

1975 - September 19 (?), Jack Alexander died.

1975 - November 3, AA Archives formally opened in NY City. (NG 294, GTBT 140) (SM S73 says 1973)

1976 - April 19-24, (NY City) the 26th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was “Sponsorship-Our Privilege and Responsibility.”

- It approved the publication of the third edition Big Book.

It also expanded a provision of Article 3 of the Conference Charter that any change to the Steps, Traditions or 6 Warranties of Article 12 of the Conference Charter, would require written approval of 75% of the registered AA Groups known to General Service Offices around the world. (Note: This advisory action make any proposed change to the Steps, Traditions and Warranties a virtual impossibility even so much as adding or removing a comma).

The 1976 Conference further recommended that:

- The Trustees and General Service Conference Institutions Committees be divided into two subcommittees each: (a) Correctional Institutions, (b) Hospitals and Rehabilitation Centers. (Institutions)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- We go forward with mini-conferences and provide them as often as possible, and that these be held at the request of the region. For the time being the regional meetings should be known as “AA Regional Forums.”

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

Failed 1976 advisory actions:

- That the General Service Board and AA World Services board of directors consider reducing the net income from the sales of literature by appropriate means, such as:
 - a Special consideration be given to a substantial reduction in the price of the Big Book.
 - b Liberalizing the discount structure.
 - c The distribution of gratis or low-cost literature to PI committees, institutions committees, or new groups.

Delegates should emphasize that this recommendation is made in anticipation of increased group participation and that further efforts to control literature costs to the Fellowship, the Conference structure and AA unity depend upon a solid base of group support.

A minority report accompanied this recommendation: "That the General Service Board and AA World Services board of directors reduce the price of the Big Book by at least \$.75 (\$3 today).

1976 - April, Michael Alexander joined the GSB as a Trustee. (GSO)

1977 - April 18-23, (NY City) the 27th Conference was held at the Statler Hilton Hotel. Its theme was "The AA Group-Where It Begins." It 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. (DBGO 5)
- The publication of a facsimile of the first edition Big Book should not be undertaken as it would destroy the sentimental value of the actual first edition
- AA groups be discouraged from selling literature not distributed by the GSO and Grapevine.

1978 - April 16-22, (NY City) the 28th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "The Member and the Group-Recovery Through Service."

It recommended that:

- in the next printing of Alcoholics Anonymous the foreword to the second edition be included as originally published in the second edition (Lit.) and that Delegates should be made aware of any changes under consideration in the Big Book prior to publication. (Lit.)

Failed 1977 advisory action:

- The Conference did not accept the recommendation of the committee re observers at committee meetings. It was the sense of the meeting that we adhere to paragraph 2, on Composition of the Conference (AA Service Manual, page 23).

1978 - Distribution of the Big Book passed the 2 million mark. (AACOA xi, NG 267)

1979 - April 22-28, (NY City) the 29th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "The Legacies: Our Heritage and My Responsibility."

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

1979 - Summer "Not-God, A History of Alcoholics Anonymous" by Ernest Kurtz was published. It was his doctoral dissertation. He was given unprecedented cooperation by, and access to, AA Archives for research. (NG)

1979 - December 5, Henrietta Sieberling died in NY City. She was buried in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky.

- An inscription on her tombstone reads "Let go and let God." (AGAA 84)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1980 to 1989

1980 - April 20-26, (NY City) the 30th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Participation: The Key to Recovery."

It recommended that:

- The Archives film "Markings on the Journey" be approved."
- The unedited manuscript of "Dr Bob and the Good Old-timers" be accepted.

Failed 1980 advisory actions:

- A suggestion to do a pamphlet for those who have slipped and are returning to AA was not accepted, because much of our literature speaks to this.
- The committee felt that, in the spirit of rotation, retired staff members of GSO and the Grapevine would not be eligible for nomination as trustees or as directors of the AAWS or Grapevine Corporate Boards. [This recommendation was not accepted; see Advisory Action 71, p. 49.1

1980 - July, AA's 45th Anniversary and 7th International Convention at New Orleans. Estimated attendance was 22,500. Its keynote was "The Joy of Living." (AACOA xi)

- The Convention hosted the first showing of the film "Markings on the Journey" (NG 290) and the first Archives Workshop. (GTBT 141)

1980 - July 22, Marty M died at St Vincent's Medical Center in Bridgeport, Connecticut. (SD 187, MMM 318)

1981 - February (?), the first issue of "Markings" the AA Archives newsletter was published.

1981 - April 26-May 2, (NY City) the 31st Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "AA Takes Its Inventory."

It recommended that

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

Failed 1981 advisory actions:

- Two recommendations from Canadian delegates regarding the method of electing the trustee-at-large/Canada were reviewed. The second was rejected. The first was recommended, subject to the approval of the Conference Committee on Trustees. The suggested new procedure called for delegates from Western Canada to caucus and present two nominees, and for those from Ontario, from Quebec, and from the Maritimes to caucus separately and present one nominee each, for a total of three.]

1981 - August, distribution of the Big Book passed the 3 million mark. (AACOA xi, NG 267)

1982 - April 18-24, (NY City) the 32nd Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "The Traditions-Our Way of Unity." It recommended that the word "suggested" in the title of the Twelve Steps not be reinstated.

1982 - December, Nell Wing retired as AA Archivist and was replaced by Frank M (Mauser). (GTBT 141)

1983 - The copyright to the new material in the second edition Big Book expired without being renewed. AAWS did not discover the oversight until 1985. (NG 299)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1983 - April 17-23, (NY City) the 33rd Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Anonymity-Our Spiritual Foundation."

It recommended that

- Membership surveys be continued on a random basis.
- It also resolved that it is not appropriate for AAWS. or Grapevine to produce or license the production of sobriety chips/medallions.

1983 - Distribution of the Big Book reached the 4 million mark. (NG 268)

1984 - April 15-21, (NY City) the 34th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Gratitude-The Language of the Heart."

- It recommended that the Bill Wilson biography be approved with the title "Pass It On."

1984 - Anne B (age 84) co-founder of Al-Anon Family Groups, died in California. (GB 142, WPR 70)

1985 - AAWS discovered that the copyrights to the first and second edition of the Big Book had expired. The copyright on the first edition lapsed in 1967. The copyright on new material in the second edition lapsed in 1983. Both AAWS and the Wilson estate shared responsibility for copyright renewal. (NG 299, www)

1985 - April 14-20, (NY City) the 35th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Golden Moments of Reflection."

It recommended that:

- Since each issue of the Grapevine cannot go through the General Service Conference-approved process, the General Service Conference recognizes The AA Grapevine as the international journal of AA (includes wording amendments made in 1986).

1985 - July, AA's 50th anniversary and 8th International Convention at Montreal, Canada. Its theme was "50 Years With Gratitude." Estimated attendance was 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 50th anniversary, Stepping Stones, the Wilson's home since 1941, was declared a NY State Historic Site. (BW-FH 3)

1985 - Distribution of the Big Book reached the 5 million mark. (NG 268)

1986 - April 20-26, (NY City) the 36th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "AA's Future-Our Responsibility."

It recommended that:

- A definitive book on AA history from 1955-1985 be prepared and brought to the 1987 General Service Conference for consideration
- And the 1987 General Service Conference Policy/Admissions Committee consider the formation of a General Service Conference Archives Committee.

1986 - May 4, Ruth Hock Crecelius died. (WPR 88)

1986 - September 12-16, the first International AFG General Services Meeting. (AFG pamphlet AR-2)

1986 - November, the first paperback edition of the Big Book was published. (NG 301)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1987 - April 26-May 2, (NY City) the 37th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "The Seventh Tradition-A Turning Point."

It recommended that:

- A General Service Conference 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.
- Statements regarding AA's primary purpose be available. (Note: these are the "blue card" definitions of open and closed meetings)
- The undertaking of the development of a daily reflections book.
- A report on the progress of The History of AA: 1955-1985 book be made to the 1988 Conference.

Failed 1987 advisory action:

- A recommendation to develop a simplified Twelve Steps Illustrated pamphlet to carry the message to the illiterate inmate **was** not accepted by the Conference.

1987 - Distribution of the Big Book reached the 6 million mark. (NG 268)

1988 - April 17-23, (NY City) the 38th Conference was held at the Hotel Roosevelt. Its theme was "Our Singleness of Purpose-Key to Unity."

It recommended that:

- 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.
- The 1971 General Service Conference 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.

1988 - October 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)

1988 - October 28, Milton Maxwell died. (1989 GSC-FR 40)

1988 - October, "Language of the Heart" was published by the AA Grapevine. (GTBT 57, LOH)

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

1989 - AAWS took action against Nan R (Robertson) regarding 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)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1989 - April 23-29, (NY City) the 39th Conference was held at the Omni Park Central Hotel. Its theme was "Anonymity-Living Our Traditions."

It recommended that:

- Work continue on a definitive book on AA history from 1955, as recommended by the 1986 General Service Conference, 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.
- The listing of clubs be deleted from the AA Directories.
- The book Alcoholics Anonymous be available in large print because of an indicated need over the years.

1989 - April 26, Dr Leonard V. Strong died. (GSO)

1989 - April 30, the film "My Name is Bill W" premiered on ABC TV's "Hallmark Hall of Fame."

- James Garner portrayed Dr Bob,
- James Woods portrayed Bill W
- JoBeth Williams portrayed Lois W
- Gary Sinese portrayed Ebby T
- Woods was awarded an Emmy for Best Actor. (www)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1990 to 1999

1990 - Life magazine named Bill W among the 100 most important figures of the 20th century. (BW-FH 4)

1990 - April 22-28, (NY City) the 40th Conference was held at the Omni Park Central. Its theme was "The Home Group-Our Responsibility and Link to AA's Future."

- It recommended that the AA History book project continue until completion and that the time frame covered be expanded to include 1955 to the present.

1990 - July, AA's 55th anniversary and 9th International Convention held at Seattle, WA. Its theme was "55 Years-One Day At A Time." Estimated attendance was 48,000.

- Nell Wing was presented the 10 millionth copy of the Big Book.
- (PIO 206 says 10 millionth copy was printed March 1991)

1991 - March, distribution of the Big Book actually reached the 10 million mark. (PIO 206)

1991 - April 14-20, (Rye Brook, NY) the 41st Conference was held at the Rye Town Hilton. Its theme was "Sponsorship-Gratitude in Action." It recommended that:

- The AA History book project continue to completion, and that a manuscript be forwarded to the 1992 General Service Conference Literature Committee for consideration and approval.
- The Grapevine discontinue publishing the "About Alcoholism" section.
- The Conference approved an advisory action that the 1992 General Service Conference annual meeting be held in the city of New York. Note: the 1991 Conference was the second Conference held outside of NY City (the 1955 Conference was in St Louis).

1992 - March, the GSO moved to the 10th and 11th floors of 475 Riverside Dr and 120th St in New York City. (SM S10, 1992 GSC-FR 26)

April 26-May 2, (NY City) the 42nd Conference was held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza. Its theme was "The AA Message In a Changing World."

It recommended that:

- The new AA History Book manuscript be returned to the 1992 General Service Conference Literature Committee for further review and then forwarded to the 1993 General Service Conference Literature Committee.
- The proposal of the GSB to directly manage AAWS/GSO on an experimental basis for nine months not be implemented.
- 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.)
- 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.

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

1993 - April 18-24, (NY City) the 43rd Conference was held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza. Its theme was "AA Takes Its Inventory-The General Service Conference Structure."

It recommended that::

- In agreement with the consensus of the 1958 General Service Conference, the use of sobriety chips/medallions is a matter for local autonomy and not one on which the General Service Conference 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.
- 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.
- The 1977 Advisory Action pertaining to the production of a facsimile of the first edition of the Big Book be reaffirmed:

"The publication of a facsimile of the first edition of the Big Book should not be undertaken as it would destroy the sentimental value of the actual first edition" The committee further felt no need exists for such a book.

- 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.
- In response to the proposal to create a General Service Conference Committee on Archives, the 1987 General Service Conference 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 General Service Conference 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."

Committee recommendations not adopted by the 1993 Conference:

- The Conference find that the initiation of litigation involving trademarks and service marks is a violation of Warranty 5.
- The General Service Board take the steps necessary to bring all policies and practices into conformity with the spirit of the Warranties and the report and recommendations of the 1993 Ad Hoc Committee on Chips/Medallions.
- Given the fact that the above two recommendations were not adopted by the Conference, the following recommendation was withdrawn by the Committee:
- The General Service Board develop a new policy statement on the "Use of AA's Trademarks and Logos" (The AA Service Manual, p S103) that reflects the spirit of the committee's report and recommendations and report back to the 44th General Service Conference on the policy and its implementation.

1994 - April 17-23, (NY City) the 44th Conference was held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza. Its theme was "Spirit of Sacrifice."

It recommended that:

- The circle and triangle logo be discontinued on all General Service Conference-approved literature.
- The words "This is AA General Service Conference-approved literature" be displayed on the front cover of all AA Conference-approved literature wherever possible.
- No moratorium be placed on topics to be considered by the General Service Conference.

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Based on an expressed need, a Spanish edition of the Grapevine be produced.
- We not form an ad hoc committee to relocate GSO out of New York, because it is not financially prudent, and such project is not needed at the present time.

1995 - April 30-May 6, (NY City) the 45th Conference was held at the Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza. Its theme was "Pass it On-Our Three Legacies."

It 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.
- A pocket edition of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions be published.
- 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.
- Since no General Service Conference is binding on the next, each General Service Conference will determine by a sense of the meeting as part of its "house-keeping" chores whether or not that the annual meeting of the General Service Conference will be smoking or non-smoking.

Motion that did not result in a 1995 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.

The 1995 Conference voted not to consider the following proposed floor actions::

- Floor Action #1 (proposal not considered): That the AAWS Board's permission to Great Britain to adapt the Twelve Concepts for World Service for their own requirements be withdrawn pending review and recommendation by the Conference Report and Charter Committee at the 1996 General Service Conference.
- Floor Action #2 (proposal not considered): Area 44 requests that the 21 trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous meet with representatives of the two service structures in Mexico (Central and Seccion). The purpose of this meeting, if needed, is to mediate the conflict and to bring to the 1996 Conference recommendations that would preclude reoccurrence of this type of conflict in any other situation/country.
- Floor Action #3 (proposal not considered): Seccion Mexico has sent three letters to our General Service Conference asking the Conference to review their petitions of grievance, which is their right under Concept V of World Service. To fulfill our spiritual responsibility I propose the following motion: "That this Conference review and discuss these petitions and forward a response to Seccion Mexico"
- Floor Action #4 (proposal not considered): The Conference recommends that the General Service Board and its subsidiary boards, AA World Services, Inc and AAGrapevine, Inc. initiate no litigation in defense of copyrights and trademarks, in accordance with Tradition 10 and Warranty 5.

1995 - July, AA's 60th anniversary and 10th Int'l Convention was held at San Diego, CA. Est. attendance (?)

1996 - April 21-27, (NY City) the 46th Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza. Its theme was "Preserving Our Fellowship-Our Challenge."

It 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

Floor actions that did not result in 1996 Conference Advisory Actions::

- Floor Action #1: Propose a Conference resolution that the 46th General Service Conference recommend to the Fellowship of AAs of the world 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 be unchanged without approval of three quarters of groups of the world.
- Floor Action #2: Propose a Conference recommendation 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.

1996 - June, the first issue of La Viña was published on a bi-monthly basis. (SM S81-S82)

1997 - April 13-19, (NY City) the 47th Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza. Its theme was "Spirituality-Our Foundation."

It 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.

Committee Recommendations that did not result in 1997 Conference Advisory Actions:

- Finance: the General Service Board Policy that states:
"Whenever a discount or subsidy is that which would be offered to any other organization of similar size requiring a purchased service or product of similar character and magnitude, i.e., convention rates at hotels, it may be accepted. Whenever a discount or subsidy is partly or in total offered because we are Alcoholics Anonymous, it must be declined"
be changed to:
"Whenever a discount is that which would be offered to any other organization of similar size requiring a purchased service or product of similar character and magnitude, e.g., convention rates at hotels, it may be accepted. Whenever a discount is partly or in total offered because we are Alcoholics Anonymous, it must be declined. Alcoholics Anonymous may not accept any money from outside sources to defray expenses."
• It was recommended that there be a reaffirmation of the 1981 Conference Advisory Action - "All future events, such as the International Convention, not be planned to operate on a deficit basis, and it was also recommended that all future events of this type be self-supporting" as this is still a prudent policy. (No advisory action)
• Literature: It was recommended that the suggested changes to the Living Sober booklet be approved with some modifications. (Tabled)
• Public Information: It was recommended that the following language be added to the back cover and List of Contents of the Public Information Service Kit and to the back cover of the Public Information Workbook:
• "This service material is approved by the Conference Public Information Committee." (No advisory action)
• Treatment Facilities: It was recommended that the Treatment Facilities Workbook and the Treatment Facilities Handbook be Conference-approved literature rather than service material. (No advisory action)

Floor actions that did not result in 1997 Conference Advisory Actions:

- Floor Action #1: It was recommended that when fiscally prudent, AAWS Publishing ought to place as a high priority goal, the audio-taping in English, and the audio-taping in Spanish of current AA (book) printed literature. (Failed)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Floor Action #2: It was recommended that the following changes to the “Living Sober” booklet be approved: Page 55, after the ninth full paragraph: (footnote) "AA World Services publishes a pamphlet titled “The AA Member-Medications and Other Drugs.” Many members who must take medications for medical conditions have found its suggestions very helpful. The pamphlet is AA General Service Conference approved literature. It may also be helpful to give this pamphlet to our personal physicians to assist them in increasing their knowledge of the nature of our illness, alcoholism." Page 4, second paragraph: Remove the sentence: "We have also found that we have to stay away from mind-changing drugs." (Failed)
- Floor Action #3: It is recommended that last names of GSRs and group contacts be eliminated from the confidential AA directories and that only the first name and first initial of the last name of those members be listed. (Not Considered)

1998 - April 19-25, (NY City) the 48th Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan. Its theme was “Our Twelfth Step Work.”

It recommended that :

- A GSC Archives Committee composed of nine delegates (5 from Panel 48 and 4 from Panel 49) meet at the 49th GSC as a secondary committee assignment and that the committee meet jointly with the Trustee’s Archives Committee.

Floor actions that did not result in 1998 Conference Advisory Actions:

- Floor Action #1: That the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc return the \$150,000 transportation subsidy (\$196,000 today) received from the city of San Diego for the 1995 International Convention. (Conference voted not to consider)
- Floor Action #2: That the entire book “Living Sober” be sent to a subcommittee for evaluation and possible revision. (Not adopted)
- Floor Action #3: That group contributions to the General Service Office be include in the directories, i.e., Eastern, Western and Canadian. (Conference voted not to consider)

1998 - June 1, GSO received 1,222 personal stories for consideration for the 4th ed Big Book. (2001 GSC-FR 11)

1999 - April 18-24, (NY City) the 49th Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan. Its theme was “Moving Forward: Unity Through Humility.” The first Conference Archives Committee met as a secondary committee assignment.

It recommended that

- The annual limit contributed to the GSO from individual AA members be increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000 (\$1,300 to \$2,600 today).

Floor actions that did not result in 1999 Conference advisory actions:

- Floor Action #2 : That the 49th General Service Conference direct the trustees' Literature Committee to evaluate the Conference Literature Committee's "strong suggestion" to distribute a questionnaire soliciting input from all Conference areas on whether there is a need for the continued development of "special interest" literature in a society that has many faces in one Fellowship. In this evaluation, the trustees' Literature Committee should weigh out the benefits of such a questionnaire and determine if such a questionnaire would in fact, give us a group conscience. They should report back to the Conference Literature Committee. (Not approved)
- Floor Action #3: That the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc. return the \$250,000 cash incentive (\$320,000 today) received from the city of San Diego for the 1995 International Convention. (Not approved)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- Floor Action #4: That the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous, Inc., refrain from accepting the \$100,000 cash incentive (\$128,000 today) from the city of Minneapolis for the 2000 International Convention. (Not approved)

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

2000 to 2009

2000 - April 30-May 6, (NY City) the 50th Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan. Its theme was "Trusting Our Future to AA Principles."

Floor actions that did not result in 2000 Conference advisory actions:

- That the Grapevine not move forward with a Web site message board, forum, or other online meeting format until this issue can be fully discussed by the 51st General Service Conference and go through the committee and Conference process. (Not approved)
- That in selection of regional trustees, two-thirds of the voters be the delegates from the region involved and one-third be divided between the Conference Committee on Trustees and the Trustees' Nominating Committee. (Not approved)
- That all work on the Black African American pamphlet cease as it does not promote unity or our common welfare. (Conference voted not to consider)

2000 - June 29-July 2, 65th anniversary and 11th International Convention at Minneapolis, Minnesota. Estimated attendance was 47,000.

2001 - April 22-28, (NY City) the 51st Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan. Its theme was "Love and Service."

It recommended that:

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

Floor actions that did not result in 2001 Conference advisory actions:

- That the proposed draft of the posthumous anonymity policy be made available to this Conference to review and vote on as a general policy of this Fellowship.

2001 - September 12, AA trusted servants in NY City organized AA meetings around the clock near Ground Zero for AA members engaged in rescue and emergency work at the 9/11 World Trade Center tragedy. (2002 GSC-FR 26)

2001 - The "Archives WORKBOOK" was published as a service piece.

2001 - November 1, the 4th ed of Alcoholics Anonymous was published.

- It contained 24 new personal stories.
- GSO sent a complimentary copy to US/Canadian groups. (2002 GSC-FR)

2001 - December 8-9, the first Special Hispanic Forum was held in Austin, TX. (2002 GSC-FR 28)

2001 - Estimated AFG membership: 600,000 in 26,500 groups. (AFG pamphlet AR-2)

2001 - Distribution of the Big Book reached the 22 million mark.

2002 - April 21-27, (NY City) the 52nd Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan. Its theme was "Sharing the Steps, Traditions and Concepts."

It recommended that:

- 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."
- 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.
- 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 fourth edition, be deleted in future printings of the Big Book.

A Narrative Timeline of AA History

- After careful consideration of the request to restore “The Doctor’s Opinion” to page 1 as published in the first edition 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.

Floor actions that did not result in 2002 Conference advisory actions:

- If and when a new Spanish-language Big Book is produced by AAWS, an appeal be made to the Fellowship for stories originally written in Spanish by Spanish-speaking members of Alcoholics Anonymous for possible inclusion.
- It is recommended that an ad hoc committee be formed to evaluate options for the review of material proposed for General Service Conference approval by Conference members, and report its findings to the 2003 General Service Conference Policy/Admissions Committee. The ad hoc committee shall be comprised of the general manager, trustees, GSO staff and delegates appointed by the General Service Board chair.
- The Twelve Concepts of Alcoholics Anonymous be produced in a window shade display format similar to the M-14 "Twelve Steps" window shade display and a parchment format similar to the M-3 Twelve Steps parchment, for sale and distribution to our Fellowship.
- Reconsider the request to restore "The Doctor's Opinion" to Page 1 as published in the First Edition of the Big Book from 1939-1955 in future printings of the Big Book.
- Request that AAWS consider printing an 8 1/2" by 11" poster of the Twelve Concepts.
- A statement be added to the letter sent to convention bureau contacts, before they submit their bids, from the chairperson of the trustees' International Conventions Committee, expressing the thought: that in keeping with our Tradition of Self-support, Alcoholics Anonymous does not accept cash subsidies.

2002 - Reported distribution of the Big Book (2002 GSC-FR 15)

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

2003 - “Experience, Strength and Hope: Stories From the First Three Editions of Alcoholics Anonymous” was published.

2003 - April 27-May 3, (NY City) the 53rd Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan. Its theme was “Living AA’s Principles Through Sponsorship.”

It recommended that

- A comprehensive review of the AA Group pamphlet be undertaken and returned to the 2004 GSC. (Lit)

Floor action that did not result in 2003 Conference advisory actions:

- That changes to the Correctional Facilities Workbook/Kit shall be reported annually to the Conference Committee on Correctional Facilities and distributed as background material. The Correctional Facilities Workbook/Kit will continue to be reviewed annually by the Conference Committee.

2004 - April 18-24, (NY City) the 54th Conference was held at the Crowne Plaza Manhattan. Its theme was “Our Singleness of Purpose-The Cornerstone of AA.” It recommended that:

- The punctuation in Dr Bob’s Nightmare in the Fourth Edition be restored as it appears in the Third Edition of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. Note: prior to this floor action: the Conference Literature Committee considered the request and had agreed to take no action.

2005 - January, Distribution of the Big Book reached the 25 million mark. (GSO)

2006 - To be continued as time permits ...

A Narrative Timeline of AA History
Appendix 1: Authors of Big Book Stories

Story Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Slip?	RIP	Notes
A Business Man's Recovery	William J	Bill	Ruddell	OM, 1	1/1937	Y	1962	NY: 1 st Board Chairman 11/38-2/39
A Close Shave	Harry D		Zollars	OM, 1	1/1937			OH:
A Different Slant	Harold	Harry	Brick	OM, 1	6/1938	Y		NY: 2 nd Board Chairman 2/39-12/39
A Drunk Like You	Unknown			4				
A Feminine Victory	Florence D		Rankin	OM, 1	3/1937	Y	1941	NY: committed suicide in Washington DC
A Five-Time Loser Wins	Morris		B	3				NC
A Flower of the South	Esther		Elizardi	2,3	5/16/1941		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 Horn	OM, 1	2/1937			OH
AA Taught Him To Handle Sobriety	Robert	Bob	Pearson	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	Ohliger, MD	3, 4	7/1967		5/19/2000	CA: story title changed to "Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict" by a Grapevine Editor
Ace Full-Seven-Eleven	Delmar	Del	Tryon	OM				OH: withdrawn - thought "book was a racket"
Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three	William I	Bill	Dotson	2-4	6/26/1935		9/17/1954	OH: Delegate to 1951 GSC, Panel 1
An Alcoholic's Wife	Marie		Bray	1				OH: non-alcoholic
An Artist's Concept	Ray		Campbell	1	2/1938			NY: designed 1 st Edition dust jacket First cited "Herbert Spencer" quote
Annie The Cop Fighter	Annie		Collohouse	2	4/1947		1974	NY
Another Chance	Bertha		V	3, 4	3/1972			KY
Another Prodigal Story	Ralph		Furlong	1	7/1938			MA
Any Day Was Washday	Unknown			3	1973			
Because I'm An Alcoholic	Unknown			4				
Belle Of The Bar	Unknown			3				
Bill's Story	William Griffith	Bill	Wilson	OM, 1-3	12/11/1934		1/24/1971	NY co-founder. Trustee 4/49-1/51
Building A New Life	Unknown			4				
Calculating The Costs	Unknown			3				
Crossing The River Of Denial	Unknown			4				
Desperation Drinking	Pat		M	2, 3				NY

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Story Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Slip?	RIP	Notes
Dr Bob's Nightmare nee The Doctor's Nightmare	Robert Holbrook	Dr Bob	Smith, MD	OM, 1-4	6/10/1935		11/16/1950	OH: co-founder. Trustee 11/38-10/49
Educated Agnostic	Norman		Hunt	OM, 1	2/1938			CT
Empty On The Inside	Unknown			4				
Fear Of Fear	Ceil		Mansfield	2-4	7/1949			NY
Fired Again	Wallace	Wally	Gillam	OM, 1	10/1938	Y		OH
Flooded With Feeling	Unknown			4				
Freedom From Bondage	Wynn Corum		Laws	2-4	1947			CA
From Farm To City	Ethel		Macy	2,3	5/8/1941		4/9/1963	OH: first woman to get sober in Akron
Gratitude In Action	David	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	Richard	Dick	Stanley	1-3	2/1937		11/1957	OH: brother of Paul Stanley Trustee 4/1946-1/1953
He Lived Only To Drink	Unknown			4				
He Sold Himself Short	Earl		Treat	2-4	2/1938	Y	10/1962	Chicago: Trustee 1/1951-1/1955
He Thought He Could Drink Like A Gentleman	Albert R	Abby	Goldrick	2, 3	4/1939			Cleveland: started principle of rotation
He Who Loses His Life	E B	Bob	R	2, 3	1/1947			NY
Hindsight	Myron		Williams	1	4/1936			NY
His Conscience	Unknown			2	1938			Canada
Home Brewmeister	Clarence H		Snyder	OM, 1-3	2/11/1938		3/22/1984	Cleveland founder
It Might Have Been Worse	Chet		Rude	2-4				
Jim's Story	James	Dr Jim	Scott, MD	2-4	1943			DC
Joe's Woes	Joseph	Joe	Mina	2	4/1939			NY
Join The Tribe!	Maynard		B	3				Canada
Lifesaving Words	Unknown			3	1/1973			Lucknow, India
Listening To The wind	Unknown			4				
Lone Endeavor	Patrick	Pat	Cooper	1	1/1939	Y		CA: ghost written by Ruth Hock
Me An Alcoholic?	Unknown			2-4	11/1947			
My Bottle, My Resentments, and Me	Unknown			4				
My Chance To Live	Unknown			4				
My Wife And I	Tom & Maybell		Lucas	OM, 1	12/1937			OH

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Story Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Slip?	RIP	Notes
New Vision For A Sculptor	Fred			2	5/1947			NY
On His Way	Horace R	Popsy	Maher	1	9/1938			NY:
On the Move	Unknown			4				NY
Our Southern Friend	John Henry Fitzhugh	Fitz	Mayo	OM, 1-4	10/1936		10/4/1943	NY, Washington DC, Baltimore
Physician Heal Thyself	Earl	Dr Earl	Marsh, MD	2-4	6/15/1953		1/13/2003	CA
Promoted To Chronic	Helen		B	2, 3	1945			NY: GSO senior staff member
Riding The Rods	Charles	Charley	Simonson	OM, 1	5/1937			OH
Rum, Radio And Rebellion	Peter	Pete	Wasser	2, 3	1945			PA
Safe Haven	Unknown			4				
Smile With Me, At Me	Harold		Sears	OM, 1	6/1938	Y		NY
Stars Don't Fall	Countess Felicia		Gizycka	2, 3				NY
Student Of Life	Unknown			4				
The Back-Slider	Walter		Bray	OM, 1	2/1936	Y		OH: sober again 8/1939
The Career Officer	Sackville		Mollins	2, 3	3/28/1947		1979	Dublin, Ireland
The European Drinker	Joseph	Joe	Doppler	OM, 1-3	8/1936			OH
The Housewife Who Drank At Home	Unknown			2-4				
The Independent Blonde	Nancy		Flynn	2	6/1945		4/16/2005	NY
The Keys Of The Kingdom	Sylvia		Kauffmann	2-4	9/13/1939			Chicago
The Man Who Mastered Fear nee The Fearful One	Archie		Trowbridge	OM, 1-4	9/1938			Detroit
The Missing Link	Unknown			4				
The News Hawk nee Traveler, Editor, Scholar	James	Jim	Scott	OM, 1-3	9/1938	Y		OH: helped edit 1 st Edition stories
The Perpetual Quest	Unknown			4				
The Prisoner Freed	Unknown			2, 3				NY
The Professor And The Paradox	John	Stone	Parr	2	2/1949			OH: Professor at Kent State U
The Rolling Stone	Lloyd		Tate	1	2/1937			OH
The Salesman	Robert	Bob	Oviatt	OM, 1	12/1936			OH
The Seven Month Slip	Ernie W		Galbraith	OM, 1	8/1935	Y	6/11/1971	OH: Dr Bob's son-in-law
The Unbeliever	Henry G	Hank	Parkhurst	OM, 1	10/1935	Y	1/18/1954	NY: wrote chapter "To Employers"
The Vicious Cycle	James	Jim	Burwell	1-4	6/16/1938		9/8/1974	NY, Philadelphia, Baltimore
There's Nothing The Matter With Me!	William	Bill	Green	2	1945			NJ
Those Golden Years	Cecil	Teet	Carle	3	12/1970		6/26/1992	

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Story Title	First Name	Nickname	Last	Editions	Sober	Slip?	RIP	Notes
Tightrope	Unknown			4				
Too Young?	Unknown			3				
Truth Freed Me!	Paul J		Stanley	OM, 1	7/2/1936	Y	9/19/1953	OH: brother of Dick Stanley
Twice Gifted	Unknown			4				
Unto The Second Generation	Unknown			2, 3	2/1950			Chicago
Window Of Opportunity	Unknown			4				
Winner Takes All	Unknown			4				
Women Suffer Too	Margaret	Marty	Mann	2-4	4/1939	Y	7/22/1980	NY: started NCEA (NCA & NCADD) Drank again in 1959

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Appendix 2: AA Membership Composition and Growth Trend

In October 1937, AA's co-founders, Bill W and Dr Bob met in Akron, OH. According to "AA Comes of Age" they "compared notes" on the membership that existed at the time. "40 alcoholics were sober (more than 20 over a year). All had previously been diagnosed as hopeless."

This meeting led, among other things, to a proposal to develop a book of experience to help those who were distant from the Akron and New York City areas. The book of experience became AA's "Big Book." In his later book, "The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" (pg 23), Bill W wrote:

"Alcoholics Anonymous" published when our membership was small, dealt with low-bottom cases only. Many less desperate alcoholics tried AA, but did not succeed because they could not make the admission of hopelessness.

It is a tremendous satisfaction to record that in the following years this changed. Alcoholics who still had their health, their families, their jobs, and even two cars in the garage, began to recognize their alcoholism. As this trend grew, they were joined by young people who were scarcely more than potential alcoholics. They were spared that last ten or fifteen years of literal hell the rest of us had gone through ..."

The tables that follow show an "AA Membership Growth Trend" and "Estimated Counts of AA Groups and Members." From 1954 on, the figures were derived from final General Service Conference reports. Data for years prior to 1954 are from a May 1953 AA Grapevine article titled "How Many AAs?" which contained the following excerpt:

If the first million is the hardest, Alcoholics Anonymous has done one-eighth of the job ... worldwide membership in our Society has passed the eighth-of-a-million mark, according to the new 1953 AA World Group Directory: 128,361 strong, to be exact. **Exact membership statistics in AA, however, are not and never will be available**, (emphasis added) since protection of individual members' anonymity guarantees that general membership rolls will not be kept.

The latest count of total members in 58 countries around the globe is based on reports from 5,243 groups and 127 "loners." And, as all observant group members know, the active membership of a group may vary at any given moment, sometimes according to the interpretation of "when is a member?" [sic] In addition, many groups fail to report new membership figures from year to year.

Another variable, which follows an unpredictable pattern, is the precise method of "counting noses" used by the various groups. Some suggest that those who attend and take part regularly in meetings declare themselves members (or not, as the case may be) of that group; others may count everyone who has been dry and shows up fairly regularly for at least three months; still others base the count on a rough division of the average financial collection; some count only those who come out in bad weather, never turn down a Twelfth Step call, and are always willing with the broom or dish-pan. There may even be some, it has been unauthoritatively suggested, that count the cigarette butts after a meeting ...

Since General Service Headquarters never issues instructions, rules and regulations or anything else that might suggest an AA "government" the compilers of AAs annual census rely, by and large, on the faithful reporting by each group secretary of what appears to be the more or less stable core of membership in the group. In New York, a staff of four toiled for three months, processing the thousands of information cards, and the countless letters received from the groups who preferred supplying the desired information in that form, to produce the new Directory.

Continuing to today, the autonomous and anonymous nature of AA makes the derivation of a precise census a very difficult undertaking that is inherently inaccurate. The data shown in the tables are figurative and should not be construed literally. The numbers shown are likely understated.

Group membership counts include only those groups asking the US/Canada General Service Office to be listed (thousands do not). Groups may or may not report membership estimates or update previously submitted 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." Accordingly, the data must be interpreted carefully, skeptically and in proper context.

AA is in about 150 countries (with over 50 GSOs overseas). The AAWs/GSO obtains data from other GSOs and groups requesting to be listed in their records. Where current data are lacking, earlier year's figures are used.

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Estimates of membership of non-reporting groups are arrived at by taking an average of reporting groups. From the beginning, the numbers are at best, “fuzzy” and need to be interpreted prudently to avoid drawing erroneous conclusions. The data are not an accurate measure of a specific year’s increase or decrease. However, decade trends are indicative (but not exact) of AA groups reaching more places and more AA members achieving recovery.

AA Membership Growth Trend				
Time Span	Total Members	Amt Changed	% Changed	Notes
1935	5	5		Founding of Akron #1 and NY
1935 to 1939	100	95	n/a ¹	At publication of Big Book
1939 to 1949	75,625	75,125	n/a	Growth mostly after WW II
1949 to 1959	151,606	75,981	100%	Annual growth leveled off in 1952
1959 to 1969	297,077	145,471	96%	
1969 to 1979	867,411	570,334	192%	Overseas numbers revised
1979 to 1989	1,793,236	925,825	107%	
1989 to 1993	2,062,011	268,775	15%	Counting system changed
1993 to 1999	1,989,740	-72,271	-4%	Counting system changed
1999 to 2007	2,044,655	54,915	3%	

In 1979, overseas numbers were revised to be double that of 1978. In 1993 and 1994, a major revision occurred in the US/Canada GSO’s counting methods and records system. The number of groups reported no longer included those described as “meetings” which chose not to be considered “groups.” Those “meetings” (typically special interest such as “alcohol and pill” and “family” meetings) are included in prior year’s data and inflate the numbers.

For a number of years, GSO also offered “estimates” of what they believed the actual counts to be. The “estimates” were substantially higher than the data reported (usually around three times higher).

The 1993 and 1994 revisions are often erroneously cited as a steep drop in AA membership from prior years when, in fact, it simply reflects procedural changes in the GSO administrative counting methods and criteria used.

It should also be noted that the baseline for each year is not consistent for the month range contained. Data for the years 1960 through 1982 contain counts reported up to April 1 of the designated years. Data for the years 1983 through contemporary data contain counts reported from January 1 through December 31 of the designated year. Data in contemporary Conference reports apply to the year prior to the Conference year (i.e. the 2006 Conference report contains count data for calendar year 2005).

AA’s overall membership estimates, if observed as a broad indicator, signal that that Fellowship is doing something right and has been doing so for quite some time. In seven decades, estimated membership has grown from 2 members and 2 groups in the United States to almost 2,000,000 members and over 100,000 groups internationally.

¹ n/a is shown because the % numbers are so large and out of the ordinary in terms of context.

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Estimated Counts of AA Groups and Members

Yr	Group Counts							Member Counts							Sources and Notes	Decade Growth		
	% Chg	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	% Chg	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons		% Chg	Chg	
1935		2							5						1935-1953 membership counts are from the May 1953 Grapevine article "How Many AAs?"			
1936	0%	2						200%	15							1935 to 1939		
1937	0%	2						167%	40									
1938	0%	2						63%	65									
1939	50%	3						54%	100								n/a	97
1940								400%	500						Growth mostly in Cleveland			
1941		200						300%	2,000						Jack Alexander article in Sat Eve Post			
1942								200%	6,000									
1943								33%	8,000									
1944		325						25%	10,000									
1945	72%	560						40%	14,000						WW II demobilization			
1946	79%	1,000						107%	29,000								1939 to 1949	
1947	65%	1,650						38%	40,000									
1948	21%	2,000						50%	60,000									
1949	50%	3,000						26%	75,625								n/a	75,525
1950	17%	3,500	3,500					28%	96,475									
1951	27%	4,436	3,606	399	216	82	133	24%	120,000									
1952	11%	4,925	3,938		713	98	176	-4%	114,724									
1953	20%	5,905	4,663	504	354	151	233	12%	128,361									
1954	0%	5,927	4,484	559	441	184	259	-2%	125,856	89,780	8,671	10,766	4,511	12,128	Conference report data used from 1954 on			
1955	5%	6,249	4,610	574	564	211	290	8%	135,905	93,951	9,545	14,397	4,956	13,056	GSO estimated members were around triple of that reported		1949 to 1959	
1956	8%	6,779	4,893	624	710	256	296	3%	139,798	95,661	10,235	15,129	5,936	12,837				
1957	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	14%	7,765	5,443	775	915	285	347	3%	145,830	98,858	11,181	14,471	7,077	14,243				
1959	6%	8,211	5,719	801	1,033	302	356	4%	151,606	101,724	11,175	16,651	6,509	15,547		100%	75,981	

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Estimated Counts of AA Groups and Members

Yr	Group Counts							Member Counts							Sources and Notes	Decade Growth	
	% Chg	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	% Chg	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons		% Chg	Chg
1960	5%	8,615	5,875	833	1,112	360	435	7%	161,549	108,004	11,524	17,973	6,675	17,373	GSO estimated members > 300,000		
1961	8%	9,305	6,208	876	1,274	445	502	9%	176,474	109,923	12,554	22,768	10,778	20,451			
1962	8%	10,070	6,600	946	1,484	476	564	7%	189,702	117,953	13,093	25,642	10,602	22,412			
1963	9%	10,956	7,033	1,075	1,690	514	644	10%	209,434	122,483	15,410	32,371	11,417	27,753	GSO estimated members > 350,000		
1964	7%	11,761	7,543	1,146	1,854	570	648	4%	217,368	128,498	15,928	37,178	10,764	25,000			
1965	6%	12,444	7,821	1,241	2,136	569	677	6%	231,477	133,786	17,180	43,580	10,774	26,157			
1966	7%	13,279	8,177	1,282	2,522	561	737	9%	251,615	140,379	18,630	48,417	14,384	29,805			
1967	7%	14,154	8,484	1,411	2,784	645	830	4%	262,562	142,566	18,757	55,062	16,307	29,870	GSO estimated members > 400,000		1959 to 1969
1968	4%	14,747	8,595	1,556	3,057	648	891	8%	283,329	148,574	21,676	60,756	18,548	33,775	GSO estimated members > 425,000		
1969	6%	15,624	9,047	1,590	3,350	742	895	5%	297,077	156,974	22,706	63,366	20,160	33,871	GSO estimated members > 450,000	96%	145,471
1970	5%	16,459	9,541	1,667	3,559	767	925	5%	311,450	167,313	26,008	67,044	18,604	32,481	GSO estimated members > 500,000		
1971	8%	17,776	10,342	1,815	3,921	783	915	6%	329,429	181,419	29,073	71,737	16,900	30,300	GSO estimated members > 575,000		
1972	17%	20,829	12,137	2,031	4,761	914	986	20%	394,742	211,686	32,740	86,344	28,995	34,977			
1973	8%	22,467	12,869	2,122	5,428	1,030	1,018	7%	420,754	225,911	35,091	102,073	22,915	34,764	GSO estimated members > 725,000		
1974	11%	25,030	14,448	2,427	6,088	1,046	1,021	19%	502,283	287,699	42,922	107,643	28,057	35,962	GSO estimated members > 800,000		
1975	6%	26,456	15,308	2,511	6,153	1,351	1,133	6%	533,209	292,646	43,903	126,991	32,711	36,958	GSO estimated members > 1,000,000		
1976	11%	29,352	16,557	2,683	7,597	1,285	1,230	8%	574,018	320,913	47,843	135,147	30,792	39,323			1969 to 1979
1977	8%	31,587	18,382	2,950	7,597	1,400	1,258	7%	612,483	352,807	50,783	135,144	33,544	40,205	Overseas 1977 data used		
1978	5%	33,241	18,926	3,157	8,737	1,285	1,136	2%	627,021	356,383	53,601	149,943	30,788	36,306			
1979	20%	39,964	20,359	3,349	14,016	1,156	1,084	38%	867,411	387,875	56,672	363,572	23,956	35,336	Overseas figures being revised	192%	570,334
1980	5%	42,105	22,169	3,624	14,016	1,182	1,114	5%	907,067	414,434	61,531	363,360	24,822	42,920			
1981	14%	47,797	24,293	3,781	17,650	935	1,138	3%	937,212	455,505	64,244	355,000	24,310	38,153	Much overseas data estimated		
1982	12%	53,576	26,608	3,948	20,669	1,030	1,321	14%	1,064,784	518,790	66,344	412,949	25,750	40,951	GSO stopped quoting estimates		
1983	9%	58,576	29,827	4,197	22,156	1,052	1,344	12%	1,191,408	585,823	69,931	467,419	25,899	42,336	Base changed to January 1		
1984	7%	62,860	31,754	4,286	24,221	1,047	1,552	13%	1,351,282	630,679	71,632	576,236	26,175	46,560			
1985	7%	67,019	33,840	4,445	27,054		1,680	7%	1,445,502	676,234	74,277	644,591		50,400	Hospital (TF) category dropped by GSO		
1986	9%	73,192	36,002	4,540	30,868		1,782	8%	1,555,796	727,145	76,377	698,814		53,460			1979 to 1989
1987	4%	76,184	38,276	4,654	31,387		1,867	4%	1,616,770	775,040	78,057	707,663		56,010			
1988	12%	85,270	40,693	4,749	38,060		1,768	7%	1,734,195	835,489	81,293	762,605		54,808			
1989	3%	87,696	43,107	4,866	38,060		1,663	3%	1,793,236	896,033	82,949	762,701		51,553		107%	

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Estimated Counts of AA Groups and Members

Yr	Group Counts							Member Counts							Sources and Notes	Decade Growth	
	% Chg	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons	% Chg	Total	US	Can	O'seas	Hosp	Prisons		% Chg	Chg
1990	7%	93,914	46,450	5,046	40,755		1,663	14%	2,047,252	1,012,623	87,532	894,563		52,534	1989 to 1993		
1991	3%	96,458	48,747	5,173	40,755		1,783	4%	2,119,744	1,079,719	90,735	894,508		54,782			
1992	-8%	89,215	50,325	5,275	31,700		1,915	-3%	2,048,519	1,135,395	94,986	770,437		47,701		Overseas figures revised	
1993	1%	90,155	50,541	5,287	32,190		2,137	1%	2,062,011	1,134,500	96,500	778,829		52,182	GSO records system revision underway	15%	268,775
1994	-1%	89,239	49,443	5,133	32,578		2,085	-13%	1,790,169	1,127,471	95,546	516,169		50,983	GSO records revision continues		
1995	7%	95,166	50,671	5,259	37,082		2,154	7%	1,921,936	1,153,795	97,397	614,611		56,133	Only 18 out of 40 foreign GSOs sent in updated figures		
1996	2%	96,997	50,681	5,275	38,765		2,276	2%	1,959,513	1,158,850	98,720	642,769		59,174			
1997	1%	97,568	50,997	5,277	38,895		2,399	0%	1,967,121	1,166,079	102,499	636,414		62,129		1993 to 1999	
1998	1%	98,710	51,183	5,257	39,804		2,466	1%	1,988,777	1,166,927	101,786	657,062		63,002			
1999	0%	99,024	51,151	5,132	40,222		2,519	0%	1,989,740	1,161,436	97,054	666,527		64,723		-4%	-72,271
2000	2%	100,766	51,735	5,104	41,423		2,504	9%	2,159,700	1,162,112	98,816	833,100		65,672			
2001	-1%	100,131	51,245	4,965	41,390		2,531	3%	2,214,978	1,160,651	97,124	891,167		66,036			
2002	4%	103,768	51,537	4,903	44,762		2,566	-6%	2,092,460	1,169,204	96,100	760,214		66,942			
2003	1%	104,589	52,735	4,884	44,425		2,545	-1%	2,066,851	1,187,373	96,446	716,523		66,509			
2004	1%	105,298	52,651	4,872	45,209		2,566	1%	2,082,980	1,190,860	95,984	729,173		66,963	Canada numbers "blip" looks unlikely.		
2005	1%	106,227	52,050	6,214	45,436		2,527	-6%	1,947,662	1,068,761	110,449	702,609		65,843		1999 to 2007	
2006	8%	114,561	53,665	4,874	53,590		2,432	2%	1,988,968	1,213,269	95,443	616,899		63,357			
2007	-1%	113,168	53,595	4,745	52,469		2,359	3%	2,044,655	1,220,993	93,559	669,057		60,912		3%	54,915
2008																	
2009																	