

I walked into the Honor Dealers office in Newark, NJ on Williams Street** one Monday morning—was interviewed by Hank—and started to work immediately that morning ...

By the end of that very first day I was a very confused female for, if I remember correctly, that first afternoon you had a visitor in your office and I think it was Paul Kellogg.*** Anyway, the connecting door was left wide open and instead of business phrases what I heard was fragments of a discussion about drunken misery, a miserable wife, and what I thought was a very queer conclusion indeed—that being a drunk was a disease. I remember distinctly feeling that you were all rather hard hearted because at some points there was roaring laughter about various drunken incidents ...

The activity of Honor Dealers, as I remember it, was never of paramount importance—it seemed to me after I began to know most of you original men, that it was only a means to an end—that end being to help a bunch of nameless drunks. Having come from a thrifty German family I know that I thought if you two would spend as much energy and thought and enthusiasm on Honor Dealers as you did on drunks you might get somewhere ...

Anyway I soon stopped caring whether Honor Dealers was successful or not and became more and more interested in each new face that came along with the alcoholic problem and caring very much whether they made the grade or not ...

Well—the activities of Honor Dealers slowly but surely declined and there was more and more correspondence with drunks and more of them showing up in the office. In those days it was part of the procedure, if the prospect was willing to go along, to kneel and pray together—all of you who happened to be there. To me, drunkenness and prayer were both very private activities and I sure did consider all of you a very revolutionary lot—but such likable and interesting revolutionaries!³⁰

Several years later, Ruth offered another glimpse of the kind of active drunks she had to deal with while working for Honor Dealers

... The first one I was really aware of was quite a nice looking gentlemen in a hat and a beautiful black overcoat, [who was] reeling, desperately reeling up the stairs ... And, he wanted to see Bill Wilson and I insisted on knowing why and what his business was, and I thought that's what secretaries always did. And, he refused to give me any kind of name. He had to see Bill Wilson, and I said that Mr. Wilson was busy. It didn't get me anywhere anyway, but Bill finally heard us out there and came out and roared, "Hello, Bob! And "How are you today? Are we ever glad to see you!" and hauled him into the office.

... They were in there a long time, laughing their heads off and I couldn't understand that. Here was this poor fellow, under the [influence], really in bad shape with liquor, and they were thinking it was funny, and he was telling them how he was afraid to go down the stairs alone because he might fall down, and that amused Bill.

You know, the door was open ... and the first thing I know, there was Hank and this man, Bob, and Bill [and they] were all kneeling around the desk and praying, and I desperately didn't know whether I was going to [stay or not] —I really didn't—it really worried me whether I ought to stay or not. I was 25 but I didn't think my father would approve at all! I really didn't.^{31*}