

Greetings!

A new year -- and a new beginning. This is a first effort to keep us in touch with each other, to share our common experience and to exchange ideas, news and views. We hope this new venture will be fun and informative for all of us. We promise to remain informal.

We haven't looked too far ahead -- if this kind of newsletter proves helpful and useful, we might consider putting it out, say, quarterly, including in it news and actions from our G.S.O. Archives Committee meetings. (For example, see p. 2 for excerpts from our Jan. 1981 meeting.) Mostly, we'll try to share with you what we're doing here at G.S.O. -- new acquisitions, new and on-going projects, questions and answers researched, interesting letters received, excerpts from Bill's letters on various subjects, anecdotes from the scrapbooks, humor, etc. And, of course, to continue to excerpt from your letters to us or from your Committee minutes.

So...how many are we? At the moment, we're in touch with 56 areas of history-gathering activity in 37 states, including Puerto Rico, 6 Canadian Provinces and 6 overseas countries. The attached list of names carries those who have given their permission for the purpose of sharing. Incidentally, this list includes some committee members who are also especially active, as well as members undertaking the actual archival assignment: it's a little blurry who is most engaged in setting up the program in some areas.

We hope the quotations carried with this bulletin will do justice to the quality of your enthusiasm and dedication. In the interest of brevity, we had to close our eyes and ruthlessly pick excerpts, hoping for a representative distribution of news -- wish we could carry more excerpts...but, next time...!

NELL WING

P.S. Any ideas for a name for the bulletin? Best choice wins a set of 9 historical photos!

#### OUR COMMON PURPOSE

"...To keep the record straight, so that myth does not predominate over fact as to historical accuracy.

"The function of the archives is to give the Fellowship a sense of its own past and the opportunity to study it..."

"The purpose of the Committee is to make recommendations to the General Service Board regarding what should be done and what limitations should be set..."

--From the Minutes of the Archives Committee, 1973

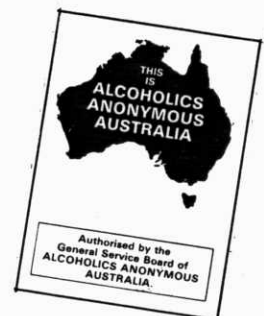
"...We are overhauling our files and making many recordings of oldtimers as a background for some future historian..."

...I know we shall, little by little, accumulate what is needed."

Bill W. 1957

#### RECENT ACQUISITIONS

1. Photos, history tape: Capt. Jack S., founder, Internationalists (Seamen).
2. Oxford Group material, newspaper clippings, Akron, O., 1933. From Dorothy Seiberling (daughter of Henrietta Seiberling.)
3. Tapes, cassettes from early members.
4. Letters from Oxford Grouper and early member Bill D., describing Bill W.'s first visit to Calvary Mission, just prior to his last hospitalization.



5. Australian A.A. history booklet: "This is Alcoholics Anonymous in Australia."
6. Wonderful individual, group and state history: Carol L., So. Fla.; Tom D., Chicago; Bob H., Calif.; George S., B.C.; Elmo S., E.Mo.; Debbie H., Dela. George W. and Sarge E., West Va. Thank you all!

ARCHIVES WORKSHOP: NEW ORLEANS "INTERNATIONAL" 1980

For most people attending our Archives Workshop on Friday morning, July 4, this meeting was an introduction to the work of collecting and preserving A.A. memorabilia and artifacts in the areas and at G.S.O. Judging from comments and letters, the reaction was favorable, even causing some members to start thinking about centers for their own areas.

For those unable to be present, here are a few of the highlights of the meeting:

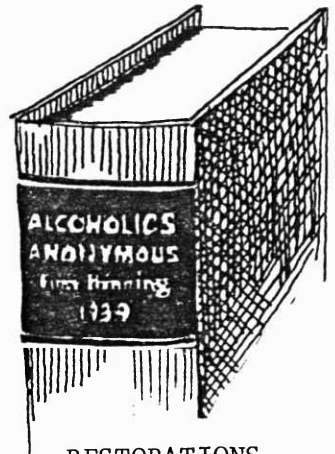
It was a pleasure to introduce Tom S., Jacksonville, Fla. ... Tom, early Florida member and long-time A.A. history "buff," urged us, back in the early 1970's, to undertake a more serious development of our dormant library project. He shared his strong feeling about this, how each visit to G.S.O. further persuaded him of its necessity. In 1973, with the creation of a Trustees' Archives Committee, Tom was asked to chair a sub-committee, whose responsibility was to ask early members for their oral history and/or A.A. memorabilia.

We also welcomed our past Committee chairman, Mike R., Okla., whose very special feel for this archival project continues to inspire us all. Mike spoke of his belief that all members ought to be aware of or informed about the nature, contents and accessibility of the Archives and its usefulness to the whole fellowship.

And our good friend, Fernand I., Que., presently heading up our committee, gave a brief resume of the formation of the Trustees' Archives Committee of the General Service Board and introduced committee members present at the meeting.

We also paused to remember with gratitude the very valuable contributions to the early Archives effort by George G., our first chairman, whose skill and knowledge about electronic and communication methods are so especially helpful...George serves our committee as a valued consultant. And Midge M., our first committee secretary, who helped to set up the committee and guided the whole archival operation through its first few years, was happily able to be with us at this workshop

(continued p. 3...)



RESTORATIONS

1. Three first printings of the Big Book have been rehabilitated; repaired and beautifully boxed (red covering). Frequently handling had caused bad deterioration.
2. Two more newspaper clipping scrapbooks, 1948-49 and 1950-52. With completion of years 1953-56, will end current rehabilitation project.

PRESERVATIONS

1. Bound volumes of:  
World Directory (3 Vols.), 1973-1979  
G.S.O. Bulletins (1 Vol.), 1973-1979  
Conference Reports (1 Vol.), 1974-1980

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?  
(100 years!)

Commonly confused: Oxford Movement and Oxford Group Movement:

Oxford Movement -- a movement within the 19-cent. Anglican Church, about 1833; an attempt to link Anglican Church more closely to Catholic Church.

Oxford Group Movement -- Frank Buchman, founder; began Oxford Campus, 1921. Stressed sharing of Christian religious experiences in informal social gatherings. Popular U.S.A. and worldwide 1930's, attracted alcoholics seeking sobriety; Dr. Bob and Bill W. and many early A.A. members attended group meetings in New York, Akron, Phila., Chicago, etc.

RECENT G.S.O. ARCHIVES COMMITTEE ACTIONS

- .The Committee presented to the 30th General Service Conference the filmstrip, "Markings on the Journey" for approval. The Conference approved the use of the filmstrip within the Fellowship. (Available from G.S.O.)
- .The confidentiality of the GSC tapes was re-affirmed. As before, the Conference Saturday morning meeting tapes will be made available to participants who request them.
- .For material protection, all retaping and transcripts are to be made professionally, and under strict control of the archivist.

Coming next time...  
New quarters for our Archives...more space! Also, we'll share response to this newsletter, among other items.

ARCHIVES WORKSHOP (continued...)

- Following a report on G.S.O. Archives, four panelists shared so beautifully their experiences in creating and maintaining area repositories:
- Jan P., Washington State area... Area had long been interested in state history, issued a fine book (1966), "History of Washington State A.A.," compiled by Everett K. In 1977, Area Assembly appointed an Archivist to serve 2-yr. period.. and allocated \$300 for supplies. Archivist is appointed by elected Area Chairman, approved by Dist. Comm. members...See merit in rotation...try to keep Archives mobile ...Want each member to feel Archives in a personal way...Exciting to have oral history program; tapes will be cross-indexed, filed according to person's name, group and city... Anonymity will be protected and tapes available for check-out by members. Younger members very interested, volunteer to help ..."I see all of us in A.A. preserving our past in order to enrich our present and guarantee our future."
- Jim S., S. Calif.: Held organizational meeting at L.A. Central Office, May 1977; authorization from So. Calif. Assembly Area in 1975. Guidelines approved...three requirements met: 1)..safe, centrally-located repository, 2)..broad based appeal to all S. Calif. area, 3)..steady source of income for rent and materials. Half of Archives Comm. selected from outside L.A. area...had early traveling display. Still in collecting and cataloging state, but rich in material...all printings of Big Book, GVs, SEPs, etc. But what makes Archives "sing": collection of 120 tapes. Aiming to write a thorough A.A. history of area. Taking slow, small steps, learning to share with other, beginning centers..."Building towards the future, using the past."
- Carol L., So. Fla.: We became interested in setting up Archives July 1979, on suggestion at General Serv. Conf. that areas consider this idea. Each of 12 Districts checked groups for approval; So. Fla. Area Quarterly Conf. in October voted in favor of an Archives...Agreed at Jan. 1980 meeting that each Dist. create its own center instead of trying to find suitable central setting at this time. Dists. would accumulate material, bring select items or oral interviews to future meetings to share with rest of area. Archives Comm. consists of one representative from each Dist. Some Dists. have designated their Intergroup Central Offices as repositories and display centers.
- John M., West Mass.: Just started Jan. 1980...thought want to share is -- just get started! Idea talked about for long time. Gradually things -- facts, events -- were getting distorted..main reason archival project did start. A.A. in area began in 1948, many early members still around...need to get their memories. Important to gain and build area members' confidence in Archives Comm.; lots of people have accumulated material...important to get them to share with Comm. Area has started to accumulate all issues of the Grapevine, etc. Have room in Intergroup Office for Archives, tape recorder...Group meetings featuring area history as well as larger A.A. history are popular.

FIRST ARCHIVISTS:

Bill & Lois W.

Very early, by the late 1930s Lois, at Bill's request, began to preserve many kinds of records: letters, photos, magazine articles, newsclippings, etc. Even today her interest is still keen in this area and her files at Bedford Hills contain some of the earliest items of A.A. history, many copies of which she has generously shared with the G.S.O. Archives.

But perhaps we owe our deepest debt to Bill, who realized almost right from the beginning the need to preserve A.A. records.

In 1953 and 1954 he traveled with a tape recorder to Akron, Cleveland, Chicago -- as well as in New York -- interviewing the oldtimers and their families... also nonalcoholic friends of A.A. The immediate objective was to obtain a selection of stories for the second edition of the Big Book, but the long-term benefit was to provide a base for a history library.

ARCHIVAL ACTIVITY...HOW TO INFORM THE MEMBERSHIP

- by...Central Office Newsletters
- Area Assemblies
- Area Conference and Conventions
- Archives News Bulletins
- Traveling Displays
- Oldtimers and Group Anniversary Meetings
- Public Information News Letters, meetings
- General Service weekends
- ...etc...

Thomas Carlyle said: "History is the essence of innumerable biographies.." Isn't this a perfect description of A.A. history?

"Markings on the Journey" has been shown to many groups and will be shown at the Assembly on Nov. 1; other commitments are on the calendar...47 people have shown interest in working on the committee..."  
(Phil H., Eastern Mass.)

"...great to be able to tell you that the Chicago Committee on Archives is active and enthusiastic again -- we have had about 3 meetings now at Chan F.'s and are getting things sorted out..."  
(Tom D., Past Delegate, Panel 27, Illinois)

"Jim McK. and Susan G. are busy formulating a system to collect valuable memorabilia from the Wilmington A.A. groups and oldtimers...a Committee is now being formed in the Northern part, as well as the Southern section of the State of Delaware..."  
(from Newsletter "News from Trolley Square," Wilmington, Delaware)

"There is a lot of interest here in Colorado in the Archives...We all feel that we will get a lot of support from A.A.'s in this project... haven't heard anything but positive comments since we got started. Most people say, 'It's about time, '"  
(Bob J., Colorado)

"...Am enclosing progress reports on California Northern Coastal Area Archives Committee...perhaps CNCA Archives will grow in the next few years as I am -- forward! It was the consensus of the Archives Committee to: (1) File incoming donations to Archives by community, (2) try to locate a member with library experience to help catalog information, (3) search local newspapers for A.A. articles, (4) encourage Area and Districts to include Archives Workshops in their Sharing Sessions, mini-Conferences, etc. to generate enthusiasm, (5) go to District meetings and talk about Archives at group level and encourage G.S.R.'s to discuss this as part of meetings..."  
(Merilyn W., Recording Secretary, CNCA Archives Committee minutes)

"...have been asked by our Delegate and the Tennessee Assembly to head up an Archives Committee in the State... We have many volunteers. Fortunately for me, my wife is a former English teacher with a good background in library science. By this time you have probably discovered that I intend to make great use of her training and experience, and she is as rabid about the project as I am..."  
(Buford L., Tennessee)

"...The progress to this date is at least to the point of a constructive beginning. I do hope my understanding of it will now lead to forming a committee and an outreach for assistance on the part of other members and an established repository..."  
(Jess B., Utah)

"...Our Archives are really beginning to be meaningful to the fellowship...We are finally getting some treasures: first printing of the Big Book, a first printing of the 12 & 12, with signatures, including Bill W., photographs of Bill and early Washington members..."  
(Jan P., Washington State)

"I take pleasure in reverting to our previous correspondence...in regard to keeping Archives. As we have now made a small room available for this purpose, I would be delighted to hear your further news in this matter..."  
(Philemon B., Brussels, Belgium)

"An attempt is being made by the Australian General Service Office to compile the beginning of an archival record...a working committee has now completed the task of producing an historical record of A.A. in Australia...I will forward a copy to you." (received 1/20/81)  
(Bob McC., Sydney, Australia)

"Blair brought up the subject of Archives. He feels that Wyoming has built up a past and feels we should collect and preserve the history of A.A. in Wyoming...He said it is a lot of fun for him to collect this material and feels a display at the Conferences will be very enjoyable..."  
(From Wyoming Area Service Conference minutes, 8/80)

"...We care; the Archives are the mementoes, the written and spoken records, the memorabilia, the photographs -- everything that has to do with our beginnings. Oklahoma has made a start in this area...we have an opportunity to meet a great number of people who may have archival material that they would be willing to part with...we need guidance on how material should be catalogued and stored..."  
(Elizabeth E., Past Delegate, Panel 27, Oklahoma, speaking on panel subject:"Archives --Does Each Area Need One?" at Southwest Region Delegates Assembly, Mar. 14-16, 1980)

"...am very pleased to have our history on tape and am now working on each group to get together and have their city or town history compiled before all us oldtimers pass on. The newcomer is interested in knowing how each group started and with a little push, each area should get done..."  
(Paul S., Past Delegate, Panel 24, N. Wisc.-Upper Mich.)

"...Authorized to purchase a Kodak Slide Projector by which we can project slides of archival items, with a taped talk explaining our setup...also, to purchase 4 more display panels, for a total of 12...can send out four at a time for display so viewers won't get tired of seeing the 'same old things.' Flossie L., gave us additional gifts, as did Goldene (will be listed later, in a Spring Newsletter)."  
(Dennis A., Co-Custodian, Southern California Area Archives)

"...One of the general aims of the (Southern California) area is to eventually write a history of A.A. as it began in Los Angeles and/or Southern California. Group histories or area histories are needed. The Archives are used to help "carry the message" through displays at local conventions, showing the more colorful, historic material that has been collected..."  
(Lucetta D., Past Delegate, Panel 29, Area Assembly, Colton, Oct. 1980)

"...I was most interested to learn that you were in touch with about 35 states all in the process of gathering and preserving A.A. history in their particular patch...Although we have made a start, we have still a long way to go. I must try and see what additional efforts may be made..."  
(Gordon W., Manchester, England)

"At the Archives Committee meeting yesterday were over 50 people from 10 or our 12 Districts...Districts 2,3,4, and 11 gave progress reports of recent meetings, plans to raise funds, and oral histories being gathered. District 10 displayed some of the books, tapes, photos and correspondence they've acquired. Importance was given to collecting NOW records of your group's and your district's affairs, before these are forgotten and lost..."  
(Carol L., Archives Committee Chairman, South Florida Area, General Service Conference.)

"My small attempt to start a Nevada Area History has received many favorable comments from the A.A.'s in Nevada -- a real 'plus' -- to enjoy doing something and have others enjoy it also..."  
(Ruth J., Past Delegate, Panel 29, Nevada)

(From the B.C./Yukon Archives Committee to Groups:

"...We would like some help in collecting data dealing with the start of A.A. in each local region...we are seeking information about your group, and urging your group to collect and preserve artifacts, photos, letters, clippings, etc. ... the collected material could be sent to us for safekeeping or kept in a safe place in your own area...We plan to expand the pamphlet, 'Alcoholics Anonymous Comes to British Columbia' to include accounts of how A.A. started in each center in B.C./Yukon Area..."

(Colin McL., Co-Chairman)

"I'm chairman of an Archives Committee for our Alberta Assembly. There are three other members who have been in A.A. a long time. We've had about 6 sessions...would appreciate it if you could supply us with some information on setting up and maintaining an Archives..."

(Art M., Calgary, Alberta)

"...I am delighted to have been asked to be the official Archivist for A.A. in South Africa. I would most certainly like to participate in any sharing of experience and knowledge...I have only had time and opportunity to make a request around the country for letters and cuttings.-- memorabilia of all kinds. I have been lucky enough to be given a small corner of an office in which I can house them...I am also having a small display of anything of interest that we have collected at our next National Convention and hope it will stimulate people to look for things which they might have..."

(Jean G., Archivist, Benoni, Trans. South Africa)

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March 1981

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