

# MARKINGS

YOUR ARCHIVES INTERCHANGE

VOL. XX • No. 1 — 2000

c/o G.S.O., 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115

## History of Alcoholics Anonymous in Manhattan, Kansas

The first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous in Manhattan, Kansas was held the evening of October 12, 1947, in the old Community House building at Fourth and Humboldt Streets. On that first evening, Dr. Miles N., from the "Shrine of the Hill" in Kansas City, Kansas, met with Peter H., Walter J., Herg G., and Clyde B. Reverend David J. Arnold, the local minister (nonalcoholic), played an important part in joining these men, all of whom are now deceased.

For some time, this group met in each others' homes and attended meetings in Kansas City, Topeka, and elsewhere. They called themselves, "The A.A. Group of Manhattan." During this period, several other Manhattanites entered the picture: Bud C., George P., Lorraine K., Ray M., Bill L., Aldon G., Jack B., Wes J., Harold H., Tiny L., Dan M., Kinsley G., George S., and Harlan W. Still meeting in each others' homes, they decided to find a meeting hall. The members' wives had formed an "auxiliary group" (before the days of Al-Anon) and had their own little meetings too.

About 1950, the Wareham brothers gave us our first meeting hall, free of charge, upstairs in their building over Waters Hardware at 406 Poyntz. We managed to scrape up a table, chairs, divan, and a hot plate, which were just enough to furnish it. We had two meetings a week and a large meeting once a month, which included speakers from other towns that had A.A. groups. Dinners were served at these meetings and the auxiliary ladies prepared the food. The George P. Meat Company provided meat at wholesale prices. At that time, "Tiny" L. was without a place to stay, so he lived in the meeting hall for a few months.

From 1950-1953, the officers of this group consisted of a secretary, treasurer, and a board of directors composed of four men, all elected for a term of six months. In January of 1950, Lorraine K., manager of the Elks Club, took office as secretary and Pete H. was chairman of the board. During his time in office, Lorraine K. started keeping minutes of all the meetings (two per week). Danny M. was secretary for the last six months of 1953 and the minutes of the meetings were discontinued after his term in office. All of these minutes are now in our archives.

The standard procedure for sobering up drunks in their own homes, in those days, was copied from the method used at the "Shrine on the Hill." It consisted of one ounce of whiskey

mixed in water to settle them down, a large glass of really strong salt water to clean them out, and a large portion of Karo Syrup with grapefruit juice served in iced tea glasses, to counteract the alcohol in their systems. These solutions were given at one-hour intervals until the person got straightened out to the point where he could eat food. Bill L. and Aldon G. had been through this treatment at the "Shrine on the Hill" in November of 1949.

Bud C. and Bill L. were well known statewide for their work in the program. They were always available for Twelfth Step calls, any time of the day or night.

After the 1951 flood, we were forced to move to new quarters, upstairs over the Wallace Barber Shop at 111 North Fourth Street. Our rooms had been rented to the A.S.C.S. Office, which had lost their place in the high water.

The Manhattan Group was host to the 1952 State Conference, which was held in the Terrace Garden room at the Wareham Hotel on Sunday, October 26, 1952. Harold H., of our group, was the chairman. Speakers were Dr. B. of Wichita, Doris S. of Salina, Ray L. of Topeka, and Lee S. from Paola. State delegate, Dr. Nason of Kansas City, Kansas, gave a report on the Third Legacy. Judge Lawrence D. of Atchison, gave the state treasurer's report.

At one time our group dwindled down to about four members. Times were tough and we had meetings once a week at the little Boy Scout house at Fourth and Bertrand Streets. However, things finally started picking up and we found a new home at 301 Poyntz over the candy store. Around this time, we acquired a new member, Al A., who with his dry wit and humor was a big asset to our group. Al is still with us and had 30 years of sobriety as of September 13, 1987.

As time went on, we picked up more new members, such as Marshall W. and Duane B., who became very active in the program. The building at 301 Poyntz was sold and remodeled, resulting in another move to some rooms over Holiday Jeweler at 425 Poyntz. The only entrance was from the rear and the rooms were not very desirable, with holes in the ceiling and a leaky roof.

Finally, we found our present location at 321A Poyntz Avenue, over Pollom's Book Store. It's quite comfortable, but at some



*This anniversary mug was hand delivered to the G.S.O. Archives in Manhattan, by a member of the Manhattan, Kansas Group.*



time in the future, if we continue to grow, we should have larger quarters. We now have seven A.A. meetings a week downtown, along with Al-Anon on Thursday night and Wednesday noon and Alateen on Tuesday nights. We're still staying with Step meetings on Monday night and Big Book meetings on Wednesday night. We feel these are necessary for everyone.

In 1970, the Manhattan Group was asked to start a group at the Lansing Prison Honor Camp, located on Tuttle Creek Lake in Randolph, Kansas. Aldon G. wrote to Charles McAtee, Director of State Penal Institutions in Topeka, regarding this and received whole-hearted approval from his office. In fact, he directed them to furnish transportation and guards to bring the prisoners to our meetings once a month. Approximately 15 to 20 prisoners became members. We also visited their camp for meetings monthly. They called themselves the Tuttle Puddle Group. Bud K. and the Onaga Group also participated in the venture. On October 24, 1971, they celebrated their first anniversary. The prisoners consisted of men earning parole, who worked at the lake doing various maintenance jobs. Paul P., of our group, was an ardent supporter of Tuttle Puddle, and was always available for Twelfth Step work at any time of the day or night. Marshall W. was instrumental in starting an A.A. group in the correctional facility at Ft. Riley. The meetings were held at the Post Stockade for inmates with alcoholic problems.

Over the years, we have had many exchange meetings and visitations to and from groups in this area—Junction City, Onaga, Wamego, Marysville, and others in addition to participating in the Round Robins in this district.

We are still active in service work of all kinds. Bill L. was the first state delegate from our group that went to New York for the General Service Conference in 1968-1969. Aldon G. was chosen as alternate state delegate to Jerry S. in 1975-1976. Aldon did not finish the last part of his term because he suffered a stroke. There have also been several D.C.M.s from our groups representing the sixth district: Bill L., Aldon G., Will J., Sally W., and Garry P.

Some members of the clergy have been staunch supporters of our meetings, such as Reverend Wander, Reverend Arnold, Reverend Fink and Father Merchant. Pastor Paul Olson was our "sky pilot" until he passed away. He was a great worker for A.A. and did a lot of good for our program.

Several doctors also became interested and worked with us, such as Dr. Selzer, Dr. Ball, Dr. Durkee, and Dr. Lafene, among others.

In the later years we have had several spin-offs from our group, both locally and in neighboring towns. Locally, we have the following groups: The Week That Was, The Noon Investors, Good Life, and New Life groups. All of these newer groups are doing well with growing attendance. Now, there are 17 A.A. meetings a week and three Al-Anon meetings. These vary in size from 6 to 45 members.

When the newer groups started forming, we changed the original group's name to the Poyntz Avenue Group. We have many referrals from the courts and several that have been through treatment centers.

The newer groups are mostly younger people, many of whom go downtown to the Poyntz Avenue Group for the Step and Big Book meetings. There is also a women's meeting at 6 p.m. on Monday, which I understand has a very good attendance. We have several members still active with eight to sixteen years of sobriety in the Poyntz Avenue Group and other groups. We also have two members with 30 and 34 years of sobriety.

There are probably many of us that would not be sober, or even alive today, if it hadn't been for that little meeting in 1947. We have an awful lot to be thankful for. Don't forget where you got your sobriety.

*Aldon G., November 1987*

## **Fifth Archives Workshop— Seattle, 2000**

The 5<sup>th</sup> National Archives Workshop will be held in Seattle, Washington, September 29, 30, and October 1. This year's workshop will be held at the Sea-Tac Holiday Inn (located next to the Airport).

This will be a regional workshop, with participants from the Washington, Oregon, Idaho and British Columbia Areas. Participants will bring a traveling display to show us their unique histories and G.S.O. will have their traveling display present, as well. On Friday night we will have a long-timers panel, with someone from each area telling how A.A. began in their region.

This year's Archives Workshop will have many of the same programs as past workshops. Friday will be a full day with conservation and preservation training, once again hosted by Bob W. of Little Rock, Arkansas. Joining him will be Ron R. of Southeastern Pennsylvania Intergroup. Saturday will include many unique workshops for archive-minded people, with topics such as, "How to Put an Area History Book Together." Also, G.S.O. archivist Judit Santon will offer a workshop on the preservation of photographs, audiotapes and electronic media. Additionally, we have asked both the Puget Sound Regional Archivist for the State of Washington and the American Society of Archivists to talk about "Archives in General." We felt that learning from an archivist, that is not directly related to A.A., would help broaden our view.

Some of this year's new events will include a banquet on Saturday night, followed by a speakers meeting. Our guest speakers will be: Fay W., archivist from Little Rock, Arkansas; Ray G., archivist from Dr. Bob's House; and Judit Santon, G.S.O. archivist. We will also offer tours of the Western Washington Area Repository throughout the weekend. Last, but not least, we will begin the process of developing a Pamphlet for Archives, hosted by Jan P., A.A.W.S. director and member of the trustees' Archives Committee. More will be revealed!

Flyers and registration forms are available. For more information, call me at: (425) 821-4021. See you at the workshop!

*David C.  
2000 Workshop Chairman*



## Tennessee Archives' New Facility

Sunday April 18, 1999 was a memorable day for Area 64, State of Tennessee Archives. We had our dedication ceremony and open-house for our new A.A. archival repository located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, the geographical center of the state. For many years our "precious memories" have been housed in whatever was available. It is with great relief and humility that we finally have a safe and accessible building in which to place our history, memorabilia, artifacts, historical documents, and the records of many of the groups and districts that compose Area 64. This was a combined effort between the area (which financially funds and supports our facility) and many individual members and groups who contributed effort, time, monetary donations and encouragement, while holding onto a continuous vision. Truly, the power of something greater than ourselves is revealed by the cooperation and dedication of the whole Fellowship of Tennessee A.A.s. We are truly blessed! As a result, we can now safely house Tennessee's *Precious Memories* and have the capacity to house and maintain much more.

The dedication/open-house coincided with our Second Quarter Assembly, held at the Holiday Inn in Murfreesboro, April 16-18, 1999. The theme of the assembly was "Remembering Our Heritage," and the Saturday night speaker was one of our former state delegates, and the earliest Tennessee archivist, Buford L., who emphasized the importance of collecting and recording our history. We were also blessed with the attendance of several past delegates, as well as all of the past and present archive chairpersons, who presented a chronology from our humble beginnings to our present state of the art communication, conservation, preservation, cataloguing and filing system.

Upwards of 200 registered guests from all districts of Tennessee and several from out of state shared this event laced with gratitude and humility while enjoying the food and fellowship. Donations by individual A.A.s, groups and districts far exceeded our expectations. An invitation is extended to anyone that would like to visit us and be uplifted by our Tennessee A.A. We encourage you to share with us your experience, and make any suggestions, criticisms or comments.

We also have a newly connected Web site with links to the Central Office, G.S.O., and other recovery sites. We are constantly mindful of anonymity and are very careful as to what we place on the site; we don't display pictures or last names of A.A. members. Our Web site address is <http://www.tennesseeestatearchives.org> Currently, we are in the process of placing group histories, personal stories, up-to-date information regarding other standing committees; in general just being of service to A.A. while remaining committed to carrying the message of recovery to A.A.s anywhere. Our Web site is in its infancy, and more will be revealed to us as time goes by. We hope in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, by using the electronic medium available to us, to reach more people.

The next issue of our newsletter, *Precious Memories*, will be the fourth one; it is also in its infancy. Our purpose is, of course, to carry the message of hope and recovery to the alcoholic who still suffers, and our aim is to keep the record straight, so that no distortion of our history occurs. We solicit news from our Fellowship pertaining to districts, individuals, and any addition to our Tennessee A.A. history; we utilize a somewhat different format than the Web site to keep our organization informed. We are ever mindful of anonymity at all levels. As with the Web site, any and all comments are welcomed and encouraged.

Our Archives Committee, at the present time, has a rotating chairperson, alternate chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. These are two-year service positions and we will rotate in 2000 at the First Quarter Assembly in Knoxville. Our agenda for the coming year includes being more accessible, acquiring a permanent nonrotating archivist, utilizing the knowledge base of other areas of the U.S. to improve our technical and communicative skills, and to share our experience, strength and hope with others. Always remembering that, "The will of God will never lead you where the Grace of God can't keep you."

Pauline L.,  
Area 64 Archives chairperson



Crowds gathered to celebrate the opening of the new Area 64 Archive Repository.



## History of A.A. in Chicago

*The following was written in 1949 by Luke H., who later served Chicago as the elected Panel 1 Delegate to the 1951 General Service Conference.*

A. A. in Chicago is a direct descendant of the original group in Akron. The Chicago Group probably ranks fifth in among the larger groups, the earlier ones being Akron, New York, Cleveland and Detroit. Since there are no records to refer to, our place in line may be challenged by some group in the northern Ohio seedbed, of whose history we are not aware of.

Nevertheless, Chicago was among the early strongholds of the movement. A former resident of Akron, then living in Evanston, brought it from the fountainhead in the summer of 1937, which may legitimately be regarded as the birth date of A.A. in Chicago, although the first group meeting was then two years in the future. Why did two years have to go by before a group was formed? Looking back, Lonesome No. 1 realizes now that he was being taught an important lesson in A.A. His idea was that a group would spring up at once, as it had in Akron, but in spite of his best efforts at Twelfth Step work, nothing happened.

"I went back to Dr. Bob in Akron and asked him what it was I was doing wrong or what I was failing to do. I went back more than once, and each time he told me the same thing: 'When the time is ripe for a group in Chicago, you'll have one.' That's the way it turned out. By September 1939 there were five A.A.s in Chicago, four of whom had sobered up and been indoctrinated in Akron, and the first meeting was held. All six brand new A.A.s and three nonalcoholic spouses gathered at the home of No. 1 on a Tuesday night in September. One of the first matters discussed was the obligation to make A.A. available to all in the Chicago area, which meant first establishing a meeting place in the Loop.

This historic spot, A.A.'s first home, was the top of two floors of the Medical and Dental Arts Building at Lake and Wabash. The first meeting there was held on a Tuesday night in October 1939. As a bonus for our mass patronage of the 65 cents *table d'hote* on the topside, we were granted the freedom of the lounge on the floor below. It was convenient and congenial and much good was accomplished there. We gained our first 110 members at Lake and Wabash and held our first New Year's Eve party, with a complete A.A. orchestra for dancing on the restaurant floor. Tuesday night was established as the main meeting night. The feeling that A.A. was an affair for the whole family was fostered from the start, and the practice of inviting nonalcoholic wives and husbands was founded.

The system of Thursday group meetings, open only to A.A.s, got its start during this period. Also started at this time was a simple form of set-up committee that handled the few administrative details. This has since developed into the rotating committee, with its appended policy, public relations, finance, and program committees. The programs were simple. Members took turns leading the meetings, and in early months a new man was likely to be called on three weeks after he first showed up. Following the Akron custom, the leader read a few verses of scripture and then told his story.

Looking back to those days in the beginning, it is notable that there was never any deviation from the spiritual essence of the program. At that time, as now, the program was accepted as a divine gift beyond questioning. Unlike some other places, Chicago had not suffered from improvements to improve on its founders. The principle of "Easy Does It" became firmly rooted. As Dr. Bob had promised No. 1, it came to pass that a group was formed in Chicago, and its subsequent sound growth seems to indicate that it was founded when the time was ripe.

Similarly, all of the branching out, the formation of committees and other affairs of that sort have taken place when the need to form them became evident. A.A. in Chicago has revealed its strength of character by never organizing for the sake of organization and never promoting any matters that might overshadow the fundamentals of the program. These things are part of the history of the Chicago Group, and they are impressive because they came to pass early and in a completely natural fashion.

Occupation of the Medical and Dental Arts Building ended suddenly after eight months. We made a switch to a \$20 private room in the LaSalle Hotel and it was necessary to pass the hat. Up until then, A.A. got along without receiving a nickel. The A.A. spirit burned bright that night. Nearly three times the \$20 was collected. Thus, a policy of generous giving came into being. Later we moved to Madison Street. Then the LaSalle Hotel in the old Hamilton Club, then building on Lake and Wabash, and then back again to the Medical and Dental Arts Building. It was there that the 1940 New Year's Eve party was held, with a large assortment of sobered-up piano players.

By the following spring, a brisk rate of growth was evident. Attendance at meetings ran about 250. The next move in summer, 1945, took us to the YMCA, where we had the use of the auditorium for a small fee and where the cafeteria served prime rib for 45¢. At the Y, the style of program was changed from one or two speakers to a panel. The custom of inviting comment from the floor died out. Another departure was the beginners meeting. At first, this was only a premeeting conversation between a sponsor and two of his new patients being helped in one corner of the auditorium. The next week some other new ones asked to sit in and listen, and presently a score or more were making it a weekly custom.

A.A. outgrew the YMCA, by the spring of 1944, and we moved to the engineering building on Wacker Drive, a pleasant chamber with a normal capacity of 800. We moved in May 1946, to the current meeting place at 32 West Randolph. Counting all of the stop-offs, it is the eighth meeting place in the group's history, which will end its first decade next September. In that time, membership has grown from the six who attended the first meeting to 4,000. By way of branching out, the city and the suburban areas served by the Chicago Central Office have 175 neighborhood groups. Each of them, at its Thursday or Friday night meetings, is more equal in numbers to the whole group when it moved downtown. These milestones tell of A.A.'s growth in terms of members, from the beginning to the present.

*Courtesy, Chicago Area 19 Archives Committee*