

Archives  
WORKBOOK

# Archives Workbook

This workbook is service material, reflecting A.A. experience shared at the General Service Office. A.A. workbooks are compiled from the practical experience of A.A. members in the various service areas. They also reflect guidance given through the Twelve Traditions and the General Service Conference (U.S. and Canada).

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“We are trying to build up extensive records which will be of value to a future historian...

“It is highly important that the factual material be placed in our files in such a way that there can be no substantial distortion...

“We want to keep enlarging on this idea for the sake of the full length history to come...”

— Bill W., 1957



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## **Mission**

The mission of the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office Archives is to document permanently the work of Alcoholics Anonymous, to make the history of the organization accessible to A.A. members and other researchers, and to provide a context for understanding A.A.'s progression, principles and traditions.

### *Purpose*

Consistent with A.A.'s primary purpose of maintaining our sobriety and helping other alcoholics achieve recovery, the Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous will:

- Receive, classify and index all relevant material, such as administrative files and records, correspondence, and literary works and artifacts considered to have historical importance to Alcoholics Anonymous;
- Hold and preserve such material;
- Provide access to these materials, as determined by the archivist in consultation with the trustees' Archives Committee, to members of Alcoholics Anonymous and to others who may have a valid need to review such material, contingent upon a commitment to preserve the anonymity of our members;
- Serve as a resource and laboratory to stimulate and nourish learning;
- Provide information services to assist the operations of Alcoholics Anonymous;
- Promote knowledge and understanding of the origins, goals and program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Adopted: October 30, 2006  
By the General Service Board  
of Alcoholics Anonymous





## Introduction

The idea for organizing an historical collection of the Fellowship's records came from co-founder Bill W. in the early 1950s. Bill was becoming increasingly concerned that "the history of Alcoholics Anonymous is still veiled in the deep fog." Knowing that the office correspondence was loosely maintained in the drawers at the General Headquarters, he set out to arrange our historical records. He personally recorded oldtimers' recollections in the Akron/Cleveland area; he sent out boxes of blank tapes to others, encouraging them to record their recollections.

Bill's far-reaching vision outlined an archival message that is still sound today. As he said: "Every one of the new and unexpected developments (in A.A.) has, lying just underneath, an enormous amount of dramatic incident and experience—stories galore.... It isn't hard to prepare a fact sheet of what happened—that is, dates when people came in, groups started and so forth. The hard thing to lay hold of is the atmosphere of the whole proceedings and anecdotal material that will make the early experience alive."

After many decades of tireless organizing and arranging, the G.S.O. Archives room was opened with a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony in November 1975.

Since then, the G.S.O. archivists and the trustees serving on the Archives Committee of the General Service Board have encouraged the importance of archival service, which is vital to the survival of the Fellowship. As a result of that work, today almost all areas have set up archival collections, and there is a significant growth at the district level.

Historical records help us to sift through our day-to-day experience in recovery and reach back for the shared experience from the past. As we sort out the myth from the facts we ensure that our original message of recovery, unity and service remains the same in a changing, growing, expanding Fellowship that constantly renews itself.

Archives are frequently associated with the past, but they are also to be linked with true value. We maintain records of permanent value so we can go back and consult the original sources again and again.

In the following sections you will read about various aspects of archival work. As mentioned later, there is a natural growth process in the life of an archival collection. Although sharing is helpful, collections are essentially unique entities existing under unique conditions. It is the responsibility of the archivists and the archives committees to address the needs of their collections and set up policies accommodating local conditions.

Your journey of setting up and maintaining an archival collection will be a truly rewarding experience of service to benefit Alcoholics Anonymous.

Like the A.A. program itself, the sections that follow are neither rules nor laws. They are offered as suggestions only and the G.S.O. Guidelines are presented as examples—subject to whatever changes may be necessary to best serve your collection.

## A Word About Anonymity

We are often asked by members if, in collecting and writing up their local or area history, full names should be used of group founders, early members or group officers, regardless of whether the manuscripts are to be retained in the area only, or are also intended for sharing with G.S.O. and other area archives. Development of procedures seems to be a matter of local policy decision by the archives committee, but the necessity for protecting the confidentiality of correspondence and the anonymity of the correspondents is without question an important consideration and a trust that falls upon all A.A. archivists and archives committees.

At G.S.O., the group histories and correspondence files (going back to 1939) contain full names and addresses. It is important to remember that many of these letters were shared as individual opinions and not with the intention of making them public.

When new material arrives from groups and individuals, we continue to protect the anonymity of individuals by placing the incoming material in its category of classification, and monitor carefully each occasion when research permission has been granted a person to review the history files. Also, while adhering to the tradition of first name and last initial may be preferable, confusion can occur where two or even three people have the same first name and last initial.

## How is an Archivist Different from Other Related Professionals?

Though archivists, librarians and museum curators share the mission of maintaining recorded information and other materials, their objectives and functions vary. It is important to examine what makes archives work unique among other related professions so as to better understand the overall role of the archivist. Historians and archivists have had a longstanding relationship, but there is an important distinction between the two professions. The task of the *historian* is to gather, organize, analyze, interpret and describe information about the past by drawing on a wide variety of historical resources. Although they do not typically maintain historical materials while performing academic or scholarly work, historians often seek these materials and the services of the archivists who keep them. Archivists do not typically engage in the work of a historian, as that would run the risk of crossing a fine ethical line. More information, support and guidelines for archivists are provided by professional archival organizations such as those listed in the “Reference Information and Resources” section.

*Archivists* are responsible for collecting, arranging, preserving and providing access to permanent historical records of enduring value, not writing or interpreting history. The nature of the archival materials they deal with is usually unpublished and unique. They may also handle groups of related items. Archivists employ professional standards and practices unique to archiving to ensure the safety, security, integrity and authenticity of the materials under their care. Special procedures and policies permit researchers access to the collections; typically, original items do not leave the archives’ premises. Depending on the institution or organization, some archivists conduct historical research for the community they serve.

*Librarians* collect, preserve and make accessible published information sources such as books, newspaper clippings, magazines, audio- and videotapes, and other published materials. Librarians employ professional standards and practices that are unique to published materials. Materials are usually maintained in open stacks, and most items often leave the library's premises.

*Museum curators* abide by standards and best practices for professional curatorial conduct in managing the artifacts and other tangible objects under their care. Their functions and responsibilities include a broad range of tasks. Typically, a curator is responsible for assembling, preserving, displaying and arranging for the purchase or exchange of tangible objects for the collection. In most museums, curators are likely to be experts in specific subjects or in particular collections they oversee. Access to museum collections are restricted and usually available through exhibits.

### *A word about private collectors...*

Private collectors within the A.A. Fellowship search out rare, unusual items and memorabilia associated with A.A.'s history for their personal keeping. There are many differences between archivists and collectors, but this does not mean the two roles are in opposition. Collectors often purchase and sell items through rare book dealers or auctions. Conversely, archivists do not typically purchase materials, but instead receive them as donations. There is a thriving market for rare A.A.-related materials, but this can and should remain outside the realm of archives. Collectors sometimes exhibit their collections at A.A. events or offer access to them to interested parties. Sometimes, though, these collections remain privately held and little access is possible. Collectors have the right to decide whether or not to provide access. Archivists cannot make this decision for others' archives, but they must provide the highest possible level of access to their archives to everyone. Based on these differences, in general an archivist should not also be a collector of A.A. memorabilia and literature. While many archivists may own small collections of materials, this can be problematic to be both an archivist and a collector. There is an innate conflict of interest: the heart of a collector wants to own rare materials, whereas the archivist is merely a steward.

## **Role of the Archivist**

The archivist is the focal point of the collection, determining on one hand what to include in the collection, and on the other hand working towards making the collected material available to the greatest extent possible to members of our Fellowship and those in the public realm with a valid interest in A.A.

- The archivist collects, organizes and preserves material of historical interest. Typically, the archivist selects a representative sample of the collection and arranges those into a traveling display.
- The archivist is responsible for both the physical and the intellectual integrity of the collection. It is important to ensure the privacy and protect the anonymity of members whose names are included in the collected documents.

- The archivist is also responsible to report regularly to the area committee or, if it exists, the area archives committee, about new material received and to give updates about ongoing projects at the archives.

### *Training*

It is helpful and desirable for the archivist to have some familiarity with archival procedures or the willingness to learn the basics of such procedures. Depending on the location of the archives, the local college, major library or historical society might offer basic courses in handling historical records.

### *Who Should Be Selected as Archivist?*

Archivists are selected in different ways throughout the areas. Some are elected by the area assembly, some are appointed by the area committee or the area's archives committee. It is the shared experience not to rotate frequently since it takes a considerable length of time to get familiar with the material.

Archivists are usually A.A. members, and areas may differ in sobriety requirements, the right to vote in assemblies and the length of time before rotation.

## **Role of the Archives Committee**

It is a decades-old axiom in our Fellowship that “you can't keep it unless you give it away.” When we first enter A.A., we learn the soundness of this statement as we stay sober and find our own sobriety strengthened as we try to “pass it on” to a newcomer. Many A.A.s active at the general service or intergroup/central office level, who carry the A.A. message through corrections or public information work, or volunteer for telephone answering service, experience a similar awakening by “giving it away.”

A.A. archivists and committee members, too, describe a heightened and enriched sobriety by participating in their type of Twelfth Step work. Archives provide an opportunity for A.A. members to actively share in our history.

Local needs and practices will guide you regarding whether you work primarily through the area and district or through the local central office or intergroup.

The archives committee is responsible for establishing policies, budgets, and procedures. It undertakes and maintains final responsibility and authority for the use of the archives, and exercises its group conscience in regard to matters of general policy. In all of its actions, the archives committee needs to be mindful of and guided by A.A.'s primary purpose. Thus, if non-A.A. friends are asked to serve on the committee, which is possible because of interest, special knowledge and/or expertise, they ought to be people who are thoroughly familiar with our primary purpose, as well as all of our A.A. Traditions.

One of the most important functions of the archives committee is to establish creative parameters for the selection of material to be collected. These parameters will guide the archivist in gathering material of historical significance and will reduce the time and space of preserving random bits and pieces of dubious value.

It is helpful for the committee to meet on a regular basis to aid the archivist and to become familiar with the maintenance of the collection.

Rotation is handled in different ways, with some committees rotating at the same time as area officers while other committees have a staggered rotation so that there is continuity of members with background. If the archivist does not rotate every two years, it seems to work best to have some of the committee members rotate.

## **Tools and Suggested Activities For Archives Committees**

The A.A. Guidelines on Archives and other materials found in this Workbook are helpful resources for Archives Committees. The primary purpose of those involved in archives work is to collect and preserve the message of Alcoholics Anonymous. However, Archives service is more than mere custodial activity; it involves sharing A.A.'s rich and meaningful heritage. Like any other A.A. service, it takes a few dedicated A.A. members willing to launch these efforts. This list provides suggestions for archives committees to commence their work. It is compiled from the experience of A.A. members involved in archives committee work in the various service areas.

- Study Archives Workbook and related materials.
- Show the DVD *Markings on the Journey* in Archives workshops, or other A.A. related events, to inspire interest in A.A.'s history.
- Create presentations about archives committee activities, including photos of your own repository and exhibit area.
- Create portable exhibits that are easily conveyable to various events, such as state or regional A.A. conventions, area assemblies and district or central office meetings.
- Organize oldtimers meetings and invite a number of A.A. members with long time sobriety in your area to share their stories.
- Initiate projects and assign one task per committee member. For example, digitizing analog recordings to digital media, conducting inventories, creating finding-aids, scanning, filing and other archives-related tasks.
- Host an annual Archives Open House and invite other service committees to display their work.
- Host Archives Workshops and include hands-on activities and tours of your archives repository.
- Communicate with other local Archives Committees and archivists to share your own experience and glean suggestions from others involved in archives service work.
- Develop forms, policies or guidelines, as practical, for local needs. These may include, for example: Collection Scope; Deed of Gift Form; Group History Questionnaire; Guidelines for Collecting Oral Histories; Oral History Release Form; Photocopying Policy; and Research and Access Policy.
- Produce an archives newsletter, or contribute to a section in your area's newsletter, highlighting your work or a new and exciting find.

- Distribute flyers at local A.A. events and include contact information for your area or district archives.
- Distribute Group History forms at local gatherings to inspire interest in conducting histories of groups in your area.
- Produce a history book detailing the history of A.A. in your area.
- Begin your archives committee report at area or district business meetings with a trivia game to spark interest and enthusiasm.
- Send sharing on local Archives workshops and events to G.S.O.

In all of its actions, the Archives committee needs to be guided by A.A.'s primary purpose and Traditions. The committee is also responsible for ensuring the protection of the anonymity of members, and the confidentiality of all A.A. records. For further experience, or for information on contacting area or district archives committees, please contact the G.S.O. Archives at archives@aa.org or 212-870-3400.

### **Archives Committee Activities: Shared Experiences**

Just as each A.A. group is autonomous, so is each area and intergroup or central office. The needs, experiences, and conscience of your own area, large or small, urban or rural, will affect your archives committee's initial plans as well as its growth and development. Below, several archives committees share some of their experiences, ranging from generating local interest to maintaining a large and complex collection in trust for all A.A.s in the area.

This section will be updated from time to time, to reflect new sharing and experience from different areas and districts. If your area or district has a wonderful story to share, please send it to the G.S.O. Archives anytime.

*New Brunswick/Prince Edward Island, Canada (Area 81): Area 81 covers a large geographical section of Eastern Canada, total population is about 900,000, with 175 registered groups. We went through several years of being unable to recruit a member to take over the Archivist position, due to the large quantity of material and the difficulty in storage (because we have no central office or other storage space other than members' homes). Another problem was the need to transport the material and display it at events in different locations four times a year.*

*This motivated a decision in 2006 to digitize 90% of the material (everything except bound items like Big Books, etc., and three dimensional items). Under a special project of the area, we suggested that members, groups and district might consider donating to the project, to buy the gear needed and also establish a fund for future maintenance and upgrades. In a few months we had the funds to go ahead.*

*The hardware includes a multi-page scanner, laptop, digital projector. We started with an open-source digital library software, used by many university libraries. Unfortunately open-source almost always means frequent tweaks and fixes, so after some time we scrapped the idea, and built an easy to use MS Access*



database, and scanned most of the material. The project is taking longer than first estimated, due mostly to having to write metadata (keywords) for each file, thus making the database as searchable as reasonably possible. What was very important to us was to keep the whole operation fairly simple, that way it should be easier in the future to recruit members to fill the role of Archivist.

If anyone wishes to share their experience with digitization, or hear ours, you can contact us via the Area 81 Web site: <http://www.area81aa.ca/>

Southeast Michigan (Area 33): Over the last five years the Area 33 Archives Committee has been involved in an exhaustive effort to locate and expose Detroit's A.A. story, from Archie T., of fragile whisperings of a solution at his flat on Kirby in downtown Detroit, his unlikely association with a fiesty nonalcoholic benefactor named Sarah Klein, through the explosion of interest fostered by a 15-minute radio show about alcoholics in recovery called "The Glass Crutch", and beyond. During this effort, through trial and error, the Archives Committee has developed a vision for where we'd like to be, which includes professionally framed and mounted displays (with frames and matting color-coordinated to the palette of the archival piece), in accordance with archival methods and materials. We've been able to generate 15-20 new pieces each year for the last three years, and the research for every completed project seems to yield the inspiration for several more.

This effort relies mainly on local resources, including libraries and museums, and has involved slogging through endless amounts of microfiche of newspapers, journals, diaries, and actual (decaying) newspaper clippings. We're blessed to be able to have unfettered access to the Burton Historical Library Archives, which is essentially several city blocks of underground storage, housing artifacts that go back to the early 1700s. We have also gotten involved with the Michigan Archives Association, which is both a source of knowledge regarding archival methods and processes.

Our vision for display is to provide a museum-grade experience, and we've enjoyed tremendous success when our displays have been set up as walking tours, using covered displays and a tour guide, who explains each Detroit History display. We hold three major events per year, at the three largest conventions, with the 'crown jewel' being the March Roundup, held at the Dearborn Hyatt for more than 2,500 A.A.'s. In addition to those events, our policy is to present three other Detroit A.A. History workshops per year. Our last event was attended by 75 people, and our experience has been that they are universally well-received, and have generated lots of interest in people getting involved with their Group Histories.

As a result of these efforts, we've generated tremendous interest and many leads, as well as requests for more District and Group presentations. The core of that interest and attraction has been our focus on local Detroit history. Once again, lots of buzz and talk equals interest in assembling Group histories.

The emphasis on local Detroit history has generated so much material and so much interest, that Area 33 has doubled our budget and quadrupled our office space. We now have a professional looking office that gives us the space and the opportunity to work on projects, store all displays and artifacts safely and securely, and attract further interest from those curious about joining our committee.



*South Carolina (Area 62): The archives started in the most basic way in South Carolina. Early members from the 1940s and 1950s thought enough of A.A. to keep many of the notes and records they possessed. The earliest known archives activity in South Carolina was from a member from Mount Pleasant, who was the area secretary at the time. She began collecting area minutes and anything else she could regarding the groups in South Carolina. In January 1968 she was influential in getting the Area to begin compiling a history of A.A. groups in South Carolina. In March 1970 she went to G.S.O. and was helped by Nell Wing (nonalcoholic), A.A.'s first archivist, to gather existing materials regarding South Carolina A.A. Sadly, there were few letters pertaining to the Group's beginnings in South Carolina.*

*In March 1980, Area 62 created the Archives Committee, which is made up of the Area Archives chairperson and representatives from each of the 22 districts. By June 7, 1980 it was thought that a permanent safe place for the keeping of archive material was needed. The archives continued to travel around until October 7, 1984, when the Area Assembly voted and accepted that two rooms would be rented in Columbia, a central location in the state.*

*In October 1993 the Area Assembly voted to create an A.A. history book of South Carolina. The push was on to collect group, district and area history information. However, the project fizzled out and was revitalized in 2010. The No. 1, 2002 issue of Markings, Your Archives Interchange printed an article "Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina — A Brief History," written by a past delegate.*

*In 2005 the archives moved into a single room, but it was too small for the existing materials, for research, sorting, preservation, and storage. So in 2009 the archive stayed in the same location but added a second room. In June 2006 the Area Assembly made the Area Archivist a permanent position in the Area's Structures and Procedures with the Archivist being a nonvoting member of the Archives Committee.*

*The Area Archives is open during every assembly weekend and by appointment; it is fully funded by the Area and all needs are covered by the Area's budget. Recently the Area purchased for the Archive a new computer, an all-in-one scanner-copier-printer and two four drawer fireproof filing cabinets. New traveling display panels have been developed and can be loaned to or purchased by groups and districts in Area 62. All books and Grapevines have been cleaned and preserved and all Area minutes have been digitized and preserved. Oral history tapes and South Carolina speaker tapes are being converted to a digital format. An Area 62 Archives Workbook has been completed and is meant to be passed on from one Archives representative to the next. Regular written contributions are submitted to the Area and sometimes Intergroup newsletters to keep the Fellowship as a whole informed about archives activities. The Area Archives Committee is very active, alive and well.*

*Alberta/NWT (Area 78): I took over the position of archivist two years ago, at the time we were preparing to move our archive collection from Edmonton to Calgary and into a climate controlled storage site. Unfortunately all the work my predecessor did in cataloguing and inventorying the collection in his catalog*

*book went missing. So it has been my journey into the history of Area 78 to go through boxes and boxes (325) of material and recatalog them.*

*As I open each box of material a new part of Area 78's history opens up for me. Because we are the largest area in North America the repository consists of items from North West Territories, Yukon, Alberta and South and North Eastern parts of British Columbia.*

*Currently we have in place an archive newsletter detailing activities of the committee, and what we have discovered in our repository. We have found that more and more districts in our area want to create a small archive repository outlining their district. As archivist, I get to share my experience and expertise with all of A.A. in our Area. I attend our General Assembly twice a year and catch up and get to talk to the committee.*

*We have started digitizing all our documents and material and putting them into a free software called Greenstone for digital libraries. We digitize at 300 Megapixels and the Greenstone program allows us to incorporate as much meta-data into each document as needed. By doing this our items in the repository stay secure and if anything happens to the original document or material we can make as close to an exact duplicate if necessary. This also allows us to put our archives on a laptop and can be shown to members at round ups, assemblies, etc., which keeps our original documents safe because they are not being used constantly.*

*There is a lot of interest in the last two years on group histories in the area. Many of our groups are using the Archive Workbook as a means of doing oral histories of our oldtimers and digitizing even the group histories of their area. As the histories slowly come in I am currently working on a history report for Area 78 archives.*

*As I work my way through the repository and finish recataloguing everything I feel sometimes like Bill and Dr. Bob are sitting there beside me. I was not blessed to meet them in person, but through the area archives I have met them through persons and archives given to us for posterity.*

*As our Area Archives continues to unfold and grow I look forward to one day meeting each and every of A.A. through our combined archives.*

**Arizona (Area 3):** *The duties of the Arizona Area 03 Archivist are two-fold: Our legal responsibility to maintain all signed copies of our minutes and treasury reports; the maintenance of the historic, archival, and memorabilia items that are entrusted to our care.*

*Arizona's archives had been stored in boxes in the archivists' homes. At one time the archives used to be housed in the bottom drawer of a filing cabinet in the Intergroup office. The area paid them \$3 a month. We soon outgrew the drawer. It took a lot of perseverance on the part of the archivist to persuade the Area that our archives would be much safer in a secured facility. Now the archives are kept in a 3 x 5 air-conditioned storage room. We maintain an acid-free box in which to keep the current Area documents. The remainder is comprised of our display case items we take to events.*

*An archives committee was formed in 1994. In 1996, our archivist asked me to attend the first Archives Seminar, held in Akron. It was an event that evolved*

*in response to a need. The Akron archivist, and two A.A. members from Arkansas, had gotten together and discussed the dilemma of Area archivists. Most of us were untrained, but willing to learn. There wasn't much in the way of information about the "how-tos." That event has now become a three-day sharing session on the how-to, when to, and whether to keep and preserve those items entrusted to the archivists. It also involves the wonderful sharing of pictures, documents, and items between the Areas.*

*AZ is a wonderful place to retire, we have accumulated many archival or historical items from across the country. Part of the sorting includes: Historical, Memorabilia, Archival and "other." Those items which belong to "other" areas are returned to their respective archives committees.*

*Arizona Area's archives is comprised of three separate, but equally important committees: a) sorting; b) taping and transcribing; and c) displays. Because of the National A.A. Archives Workshop, I am able to hold workshops on cleaning, deacidifying, repairing and preserving documents. Our archives are kept spiritual in nature — as everything we have has been donated. We are not authorized to be a buyer or seller of our history. We also do not advocate that collectors become the area archivist. It is too hard to separate "mine from theirs."*

*One of my favorite memories of this incredible position is the time when an alternate delegate came running up to me with a Jack Daniels case (cardboard box) in his arms saying I have something for you. I told him politely that I had given that up some time ago. After the good laugh, he told me that this box had been left on the doorstep of the clubhouse in Willcox, AZ. There was a first edition, first printing Twelve and Twelve; a 2nd edition of the Big Book; many flyers of events from the '70s and many personal pictures and letters. The Jack Daniels box is still in the archives.*

*I have found that many people are interested in archives, but not everyone is interested in the "behind the scenes" work. Those dedicated few who are are our precious resources. The Arizona Area does not yet have a repository. The conservation work is slow. But it is going on.*

**BC Yukon (Area 79):** *The BC Yukon Area 79 Panel 61 Archives Committee has been working hard to fulfill the purpose and mission of Alcoholics Anonymous, which is to preserve our past. While I am sharing my experience on this journey I would like to recognize the many members before me who have contributed so much to the Area 79 Archives success. I have been privileged to be part of this success for the last nine months as the Area 79 Archives chairperson. I would also like to recognize the enthusiastic Archives committee who provide a constant stream of fresh new ideas and suggestions.*

*This exciting journey into the realm of the Archives began on the night of November 11, 2010 after receiving a phone call from the newly elected chairperson for the Area offering me the opportunity to be the Archives chairperson. That night I felt like I had won the lottery, and I had an overwhelming feeling of excitement. However, fear crept in a few days later. When I walked into the Archives room for the first time I was awestruck and humbled by the sheer magnitude of the history of Alcoholics Anonymous in Area 79. I could sense the love and*

*passion of the members who came before and who kept Alcoholics Anonymous vibrant in our area. The responsibility and trust was truly a humbling experience. I had so many ideas, as well as concerns, as to what I could accomplish in the short two-year term, and then it struck me that I was not alone: "we can do together what I cannot do alone." The Archives committee and the Fellowship would guide me through this process.*

*Over the past nine months, with the support of the G.S.O., the Area 79 General Service Committee, Archives Committee and the Fellowship, we have completed an Archives expansion, from a 12'x12' room to a room of 30'x28'. We took precautions before the move by thoroughly researching what would be needed to ensure a safe environment for the Archives. We put protective film on the windows to filter heat and sunlight, purchased proper supplies for preserving the archives materials; we have replaced wooden shelving with metal shelving because wood deteriorates over time and can release gases which can damage the documents. We also added a proper working space and a reading area. We have started scanning old photographs onto the computer, which also has a backup system.*

*We are looking into ways of preserving the reel-to-reel film and "the empty booze bottle" handed down through the years. With the information we have collected so far we understand that this is a process that will take time.*

*We are also responsible for an Archives presentation available at various A.A. events around our area and we prepare kits that can be taken to the event by a committee member. I have been privileged to go on some of these travel assignments and I have always been met with curiosity, warmth and enthusiasm wherever I go.*

*I network with the Area 79 Archives Committee and other area archivists through e-mail. I am responsible for providing a monthly report to the Area 79 Archives Committee and General Service Committee. Staying in contact with district and group archivists within our area is also important.*

*It was my privilege to write an article on the Area 79 Archives expansion used in the Area 79 newsletter Grassroots. It is also exciting to share this experience with the General Service Office.*

*This experience has been truly amazing and educational for me. It is my hope that our experience will assist others in preserving their A.A. history. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be of service to Alcoholics Anonymous in this capacity.*

*Central New York (Area 47): Our Archives had always been stored in boxes in someone's basement and I offered to sit on an adhoc committee to figure what to do with it. It had been flooded several times and our Area committee really didn't have real guidelines regarding what to do with the 32 boxes. All we did is not throw anything away, it might be important some day. I had just rotated off the Rochester NY Intergroup Archives Committee and having worked along side a real Archivist. I had learned many tools, techniques and methods to use in Archives. So my love of A.A. history led me to the adhoc committee, which was charged with many tasks, one being what to do with the collection. We met monthly for a year and at the end of our assignment we handed over some suggestions to the Archives committee. The first being to take a full inventory of ev-*



*everything. The current archives chair picked up all the boxes from that basement, took them to her home and began the task of listing everything in the boxes. The second thing we suggested was to split up everything into Titles or Subject.*

*We moved all the boxes to a barn and in one afternoon we separated everything in to "Like" titles. Past delegates, past chairs, D.C.M.s, anyone with a love of A.A. history joined us. We set up tables and placed empty boxes on them. We then took one box full of stuff and went through it. For example, C.P.C. material went into the C.P.C. box, and so forth. With eight people, we went through 32 boxes in a four hour period and ended up with 28 new Subject titles and boxes. This time these new boxes contained like materials.*

*Our new area chair was asked to inventory the contents of each new box. These new titles were to become our "index" or "finding aid." We index our new archive according to our service structure of the Central New York Area 47 assembly. For example: each title represented a committee for service responsibility as it pertained to CNY47 structure.*

*We had never elected an archivist, a keeper of all this material. The area Archives Committee was over-burdened for many years and we knew an archivist could help. We elected a willing person who stepped up and when all the dust settled we found he had some hidden skills — he was a informational technologist.*

*A storage location was found (not in a basement) which offered access to members. We set up a paper trail using the forms from the Workbook and adapted them to our specific use: deed of gifts; temporary custody forms; research requests form; where things originated; who donated what.*

*The minutes of the Area business has become the heart of the Archives. All minutes are in one file now and can be scanned into a data base. This data base is searchable and copies were made of the originals and put in booklets, grouping years together. We began to build a traveling archives. We have gone from a pile of wet old boxes to a working archives. The before and after pictures really show how to correctly store an archives. We now send our area chair to other areas and towns and explain how we did it. Questions are asked all the time: "How did you guys do all this?" and we answer "Team work, lots of team work."*

### ***Sharing On Digital Archives***

An increasing number of archives and libraries are using digital repositories and experimenting with technology. Creating a digital repository can be a challenge, partly because it involves a variety of divergent subjects and issues. The methodology behind creating digital repositories, an awareness of the costs involved, and the ability to make decisions on what to digitize are all areas you might need to address when thinking about building a digital library.

You may contact G.S.O.'s Archives for a copy of their Paper "Digitizing Archival Material Guidelines."

**Western Washington (Area 72):** *Our Archives policy is based on standards established by the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA), which recommends that all analog recordings be reformatted to digital using the Broadcast Wave Format (BWF). The difference between BWF and basic Wave is in*

*the capacity of storing metadata in the file. Metadata is the description of the file itself (who, what, where, when, how, size, format, etc.). In the Area 72 Archives, information that meets our needs is kept in the separate inventory file, so the capacity of the metadata is irrelevant and the basic Wave format is acceptable.*

*Reformatting of the cassettes are made in the Wave format and stored on a 2 terabyte external hard drive at the repository. Any MP3 files that archives receives will be reformatted to Wave before being stored on the external drive. Using "file syncing" software, a duplicate of this drive will be made on another external drive of the same size and be stored offsite. This duplication will occur whenever new files are added to the repository drive.*

*Every two years, when a new archivist or archives chair is appointed, each drive will be subjected to a Microsoft utility "ChkDsk," which examines the condition of the storage platters and moves the file to a new area if a problem is found. It also identifies any files that have become damaged. Those files can then be replaced from either the backup or the cassette tapes. At the same time the committee will determine if there are any new formats available that have made the Wave format obsolete. If IASA has changed it's recommendation to a new standard, the committee will start the process of reformatting to the new standards.*

*In addition, each audio file will be reformatted to MP3 and stored on the computer's hard drive. This is for access and distribution purpose only and not preservation. The order of importance for preservation and storage of audio:*

- 1. Area Assemblies*
- 2. Area Committee Meetings*
- 3. Area Standing Committee Meetings*
- 4. Audio containing area history including speaker's and oldtimer's meetings*
- 5. Any other audio concerning Area history*
- 6. National Archives Workshop*
- 7. PRAASA*
- 8. Pacific NW Conference*
- 9. Regional Forums*

*Regarding the use of the high speed digitizer and software by others, the Area Archives may loan out the equipment and software to districts or intergroups within this area or to other archives. Districts and intergroups within this area shall have first use. A contract containing the limits of liability, how transported, date of return must be entered into by the borrowing district, intergroup, or area before the equipment is loaned. The equipment will not be loaned out until the area has digitized all of its own audio that requires reformatting and preserving.*

*Michigan (Western), (Area 34): First and foremost, with digital collections you have to be able to manage and find them, whether the items are in audio or document format. I have found keeping it simple and not overcomplicating the system is best. On document digital preservation I scan the original and then save it to a file simply named, such as Group Histories (for the District collection), and District X for the Area. For flyers and events, that's the file for the District and again the District X flyers and events.*

*For the District, audio files are saved by year, with sub-folders for the groups where the audio files were obtained. It makes it easy to print out a list of the audio files if someone is looking for a particular individual and to locate the file. Some of the older audio (oldtimers talks from the district, the founders available audio and district history interviews) are also preserved as a historical audio file.*

*At the Area level the decision was made to let the districts manage their audio files with guidance from myself and the committee. As an Area we collect and preserve from our State Conventions: main speaker recordings, panel talks, and special event recordings. I am able to provide the event and Convention audio by making the purchase of the audio at the events, then contributing the material to the Area after I have done whatever for personal use (usually saving on my personal computer). All audio is reviewed by myself and the committee and then it is decided which preservation method to be used. All original or audio copies are stored at the respective repository after being converted to the digital format. I use the Nero 10 software program to "play in" audio cassette tapes, and reel-to-reel audio. Both the district and area did not feel it prudent to purchase real time digital converting equipment, so it can be a very tedious process.*

*Finally, electronic preservation is not entirely foolproof. Computers crash, offices or homes burn down, flood or other disasters occurs, and man-made equipment breaks. Multiple backups are necessary with offsite storage. For District 4 and Area 34 I have two external hard drives. One is a 1TB (I have found that with audio files a 1TB external is filled quite quickly) and the other is a 2TB. Monthly I backup the computer to the external hard drives replacing or deleting older backups (I try to always have the last three months of full backups) and then, once a quarter I do full backups (two copies) to the DVD format for offsite storage, keeping one copy of each at the two repositories (district's and area's).*

*North Florida (Area 14): There are two purposes for digitizing. One is preservation (which the archivist of North Florida will discuss) and the other is for display purposes which I will discuss.*

*As Archives Service Coordinator, my service position is to carry the archives displays to various events and to the North Florida Area assembly meeting. We have a copy of the Saturday Evening Post, March 1, 1941 issue, and I always wondered what was inside. While the Jack Alexander article is available as a pamphlet, what else was going on in the culture of the time? So using gloves and a camera I took photos of every page and enlarged pictures found inside. I was excited to see photos that accompanied the Jack Alexander article. While not named, I saw Bill W. in a group photo and another version of a photo of A.A.s helping a man in a hospital bed. First I made a slide show presentation of "Inside the Saturday Evening Post." However, slide show presentations are hard to display without a computer. At assemblies we have access to DVD player and TV but not a computer and projector. So I used a DVD maker to convert the slide show into a DVD movie and play the slides of "Inside the Saturday Evening Post." This is also a convenient format for service workshops as the DVD also works on a portable DVD player with screen.*

*I believe this procedure of making playable DVDs would be useful in informing*

*our members what is in other "classic" magazines and books that are protected behind glass and few members get to read or open. I have also used this procedure to make a DVD that combines the audio of a Bill W. talk, with the text of the talk to play on DVD. Having the text displayed makes it easier to understand the audio.*

*Another example of using a slide show to display archives comes from the archivist of Volusia County Intergroup. She does have a projector for her computer and brings it to local events like Founders Day. She made a slide show of the History of A.A. in Volusia County, with facts and pictures of founders of that area and pictures of the buildings where early groups met. I think pictures of buildings are an often forgotten part of our history. Many long-timers got excited by the archives display of their old meeting locations. These photos should be collected or they will be lost as buildings do get demolished.*

*Another method to display photos, besides making DVD movies, would be to store them on a USB memory stick and display them on a Digital photo frame.*

*As the Archivist for North Florida, Area 14, the first thing I ran across in our collection was boxes and boxes of cassette and reel-to-reel speaker tapes. With the help of a G.S.R., who had knowledge and equipment, we started transferring and upgrading the audio cassette tapes to CD and hard drive storage. The project eventually stalled for a couple of reasons. First, it was difficult to justify the expense and time to transfer these audio tapes when so many of the speakers can be heard and found across the Internet. Then there was the question of how we would be able to share them with the body? The North Florida Area is not in the speaker tape business. The second reason is the person who was doing the tape transfers and had the equipment and knowledge moved out of state. Perhaps we will be able to revisit this project in the future if the need for the Area exists.*

*Next, my predecessor, our first archivist, started the task of scanning the Area's minutes. While the North Florida Area 14 was established in February 1951 for the purpose of electing a delegate to the Conference, it was not until February of 1966 that we had our first Area conference or assembly. That being said, finding all the past minutes, particularly from the '60s and '70s, has not been easy. I am pleased to report that after scanning all the minutes we have in Archives to PDF format, we were able to have our Web Master start to put the past minutes on a password protected area of our website. This is an ongoing project. As for anonymity issues, the past minutes being put up on our website must be scrubbed for last names and addresses. This has taken quite a while since in the past, oldtimers liked to use last names in their meeting minutes.*

*There have been many other items of historical significance that I have been able to obtain through my associations with other Archivists from around the state and country. I have been able to keep many of these on my computer's hard drive, thus giving me the ability to share and reference with other Archivists. This has also been a great resource for creating historical slide show presentations. I have been able to do workshops throughout my area with the presentations I have created from these materials.*

*Digital files and Digital media make it much easier to preserve the past in a way that we can easily share it with the present, while protecting it for the future.*



Massachusetts (Western) (Area 31): *This year we have just started converting older media (cassette, reel-to-reel tape) recordings of our area oldtimers. This has been taken up by our past chair, and another committee member. This is rather challenging, as we have hundreds of recordings. (One tape at a time!) Our area is currently in the process of bringing online a website representing our General Service Committee, independent of our Area intergroup site. One of the visions for the future pertaining to the Archives page of this site is to have access to these recordings available at a click of a mouse.*

*Going forward, some of the concerns we have talked about and will need to continue to talk about before this can happen are, first and foremost, Anonymity. Each recording would need to be carefully reviewed and edited before it could be made available on the Internet. Another concern that has been discussed, and needs to be further discussed, is ownership rights of the recordings, and the consideration that many of these people who offered these recordings to the Area may never have imagined the Internet, or the possibility that these could be used in such a broad communication link. The opportunities ahead of us seem boundless and exciting! I personally feel that as with other new ventures in A.A., we need to be patient and prudent in our ventures. I am grateful that G.S.O. is working to gather a shared experience from the Fellowship, and that that experience will help to guide us in our future endeavors. I wait with anticipation as to what that experience will be.*

Utah (Area 69): *I have found that technology in the archives is iffy at best and unreliable. In the past we had reel-to-reel, cassette tapes, then the floppy drives, now CDs, flash drives, etc. Technology is progressing so fast that the archives cannot keep up. We are fortunate that we have a reel-to-reel player and a cassette player in our archives to access those items. I have a computer with a CD drive, etc. No one knows what the future technology is going to hold, but in all probability the technology we are using today will not work in the future, same as today I cannot access the floppy drives of the past. I lost some archival formats when I purchase my new computer because the old computer programs are gone and the new programs cannot access old program information.*

*Therefore, I do very little in digital format with the archives. When information is emailed to me, I save it to a CD, and I am also learning how to use a flash drive to save information. The archives repository does not have a way to use the computer with a scanner that was donated about 10 years ago. I could set it up in my home, but then it would be necessary to move all the documents back and forth. When information is passed to the archives on a CD or emailed, I print a hardcopy, because that can be protected; it will last for hundreds of years; and will always be accessible. I have been told that CDs are only good for 10 to 25 years, in impeccable conditions. Because technology is changing so rapidly, our archives are not able to keep up the new knowledge. I do use a digital camera, and save the pictures to CDs, but I always make a print for storage.*

*When we were putting together our Area History Book on the final check before being sent to the printer, an electrical storm crashed the computer. If it had not been for the hard copies (proofs), all would have been lost. The history book*

*did have to be completely retyped. We learned a hard lesson that day — always make multiple backups.*

*I am not against using the technology we have access to in order to assist us with archival work, but I feel we can't rely on it exclusively to preserve our history. An external hard drive or internet storage might be a great idea and resource, but I feel we should always have a hard copy and preserve that in case the technology fails us.*

*Alberta/N.W.T. (Area 78): The programs available for digital archiving ran from the money extreme to the too simplified for an exhaustive archive. We needed something reasonable, but with the adaptability to work with the abundant diversity of our repository.*

*Thanks to New York G.S.O. they got me in contact with the archivist from New Brunswick, who was busy digitizing their archives so they could take it on the road to assemblies and roundups. They were currently using a program called Greenstone, a free open source software for use in creating digital libraries. They were having great success with it, so I decided to try and adapt it to Area 78's Digital Repository problems. It worked seamlessly, as it still does today.*

*Another nice feature of the Greenstone Program was its ability to incorporate a search feature into the collection in all formats, which would allow researchers and us to access the individual items and find what we were searching for. It also allows you to incorporate parts or the total Digital Library onto a CD or DVD for viewing.*

*The first issue I had when adapting it was Canadian Copyright Law in relation to digitizing speaker tapes donated to our area. Many of our speaker tapes did not have a deed of gift, so how could we go about digitizing them without the author's permission. The Canadian Copyright Law was different than our American counterparts. Fortunate for me I have a sponsor that is a well-known writer. He got me in touch with his lawyers and I soon discovered that in Canada you are permitted to make one digital copy of any tape within your holdings as a backup copy or to listen to.*

*From there it was on to the next problem of what format to use in digitizing audio tapes. Converting them to MP3 would condense the amount of space for each audio transmission and allow for smaller storage space needed. Unfortunately, it also compresses and changes the audio file enough to cause problems with the stereo and or mono sound. At that time we elected to use plain old Wav files. The files were bigger, but they would not be compressed, and the audio stereo or mono would also remain untouched, leaving the digitized sound as close to the original as possible.*

*Now, how would we store the file for perpetuity? At first we thought of Digital Achievable CDs and DVDs, but the life expectancy on them is only seven to ten years, which would mean we would have to transfer the files over and over again, which might lead to audio degradation. We finally came upon a solution of using portable USB hard drives. As the files would be quite large using this type of storage medium it would allow us greater freedom and less storage area than the DVD counterpart. At the same time we were starting to digitize our photographs and our written and typed minutes.*

*We found using the same storage technique as above gave us greater freedom and ability to move and show the archives and not have to possibly damage the original items, but how would we go about digitizing them and what file format to use. We finally, after much discussion, settled on the following:*

*For scanning of documents and photographs we would scan them at 600 dpi. 300 dpi is the government and legal acceptable scan to reproduce a document, but the 600 dpi gives us a true and exacting picture of the document. We then save them as a tiff file with no compression. When you compress a digital document you change its character and originality. We also save the file as a PDF/A document. PDFs have come a long way and are open sourced and widely used now. Plus converting the document to a PDF/A allows it to be readable and searchable using a search index.*

## **What to Collect?**

An archival collection takes form through a natural process that helps to capture the rich texture of our history. We build historic collections that are unique in many ways, through the contributions that the archives receives and through collecting material that is unique to a particular area or district. However, before you begin building a collection, it is recommended that you write an effective collection policy. A collection policy is a plan which explains what material your archives will attempt to collect and how the acquisition and maintenance of the material will be pursued. Typically, a collection policy will include a section on a collection scope, which states the type of material your repository will focus on collecting. This may include the subjects, people, timeframes, and regions of your focus. Other sections will outline how the archives will attempt to acquire, store, and dispose of material, what material will not be collected, and any other information dealing with the administration of collections. These are the common elements outlined for all collection policies but the key to an effective policy is that it takes into account your own area or district's unique purpose and context. Your collection policy may change over time to reflect changes in your organization. It may be helpful to contact other repositories for advice, whether they are within A.A. or are outside institutions. The G.S.O. Archives can provide you with a sample collection policy template to assist you in formulating a plan. There are many items that you will find of interest as you develop your collection. However, before accepting materials, you must first assess them to make sure they really belong in your repository. This review process is called "appraisal." The term "appraisal," in this context, does not refer to placing monetary value on records. Rather, archivists assess materials for their enduring value (historic, intrinsic, administrative, legal) and their relationships with other records in the repository. Archivists should never profit from the records under their care and should avoid commenting on the possible financial value of items in the collection.

The following is a suggested list of materials that you might consider collecting:

- Books/pamphlets about A.A.;
- Documents developed locally to support Twelfth Step work;
- Photographs;
- Directories;

- Meeting lists;
- Newsletters (particularly those published by your area/district);
- Audio recordings;
- News clippings;
- Magazine articles;
- Correspondence;
- Minutes of service committees.

Try to solicit, acquire and accumulate historical material and information about the Fellowship since its inception from early members. Do not forget about nonalcoholics who were helpful in the early years of your area. Reach out for material from past delegates and past area committee members. Many archivists report that they got started by putting a notice in the local A.A. newsletter that they were seeking such material. Also, it may be helpful to set up a team of archives assistants or volunteer helpers to record oral histories from oldtimers.

## **Setting Up a Repository**

Experience indicates that the archives should be housed in rented space rather than in a private home. It is particularly advantageous if the space adjoins a central office or intergroup. It seems important that access be available to all A.A. members and researchers during regular hours. This avoids the appearance of being a private collection. Contributors have been shown to be far more generous when the archives are open.

*List of Equipment Needed* — This is a basic supply list. For more specific information feel free to contact the G.S.O. Archives.

- One or more good general reference material on the preservation of historical documents (see “Reference Information and Resources” section);
- Supplies for preservation and repair—for example: Mylar sleeves, acid-free tape to repair tears, nondamaging adhesives;
- Acid-free storage boxes for letters, papers, pamphlets and magazine articles and/or archival scrapbooks for newspaper articles (available from archival catalogs);
- Shelves to hold material;
- Fireproof file cabinets for vertical files;
- Work table, chairs, desk;
- Display cabinets to hold books and/or memorabilia;
- Framed photos (with acid-free mattes and backing) of events, places and nonalcoholic friends who have been helpful to the group (keep our Tradition on Anonymity in mind!);
- Cabinet for audio recordings and portable recording device.

At the beginning only a few items are necessary, and as your collection grows you might add additional equipment, such as a computer, printer, and/or scanner that can handle various media.

## *Security*

One of the most essential steps is to ensure the safety of the material placed in the archives. The archivist is responsible for the physical integrity of the material. You may consider special security locks on the front door or, at a minimum, on the file cabinets. It is important to remember that most of our collections are virtually irreplaceable.

## *Financing the Archives*

The operational budget for equipment, office supplies, duplicating services, taping and other needs should be part of the area/district overall budget. This way the archival service enjoys the support of the full membership and keeps the perspective as a valued part of Twelfth Step activity.

## **Preservation Work in Archives**

As a general rule, any action on a document or item that is not reversible should never be performed.

The main steps in preservation are cleaning, repairing (if necessary), disinfecting and placing the documents in a clean (dust- and mold-free) and acid-free environment.

Procedures, such as using a deacidifying spray or interfiling acid-free tissue papers between the document sheets, establish the appropriate environment at the document level. The properly preserved documents are then placed into acid-free containers: Mylar sheets and envelopes, acid-free folders and boxes that are easily available from all major archival supply distributors.

Be aware that chemically balanced storage boxes have been developed for all media types besides paper, and special cases are available for audiocassettes, reel-to-reel tapes, CD-ROMs, etc.

It is necessary as well to establish a clean and stable environment in the storage facility. Under ideal circumstances, the various record types are kept under special climate requirements in terms of storage temperature and humidity. Based on practical experience and the fact that archival collections typically house a great variety of material, a standard measure has been adopted by the profession that is acceptable to all media types: about 70°F and 45% humidity. Be aware that exposure to natural light represents a danger to archival documents.

The historical development of storage media used for recorded information has evolved from paper through various magnetic and micro formats to our current era of electronic records. Each of these needs to be specially addressed if included in your collection. Keep in mind, however, that electronic media is the least stable format of all. Make sure that the electronic records remain compatible with existing technology. *Modern paper is still considered the most stable medium from a preservation point of view.*

For Guidelines on Preservation and Digitization, please see our website: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), or contact us.



### *Establishing a Preservation Program — or — You Can Make Miracles, But It Takes Time!*

There may be limitations on your efforts to preserve your collection based on the availability of finances and personnel, however, it is important to establish an ongoing preservation schedule for your collection. While it may not be possible to take care of all documents in all media types in a single calendar year, you can develop an ongoing program that includes planning for finances, personnel and available work areas for archival processing.

Based on the size of your collection, preservation might seem like an uphill battle, and there is a fundamental conflict between protecting the documents and providing access to them. In some cases, it may be necessary to regulate access to your most precious historical records, recognizing that establishing appropriate research conditions is part of the preservation program!

Does this seem overwhelming? There is plenty of help out there! Join a local historical society or archivist's round table. Functions such as these usually charge a minimal yearly fee (many of them under \$20). You can also get in touch with fellow A.A. archivists. And remember that it is in the Fellowship's collective interest to maintain the historical records of Alcoholics Anonymous to the best of our capabilities. Whatever you do at your local level, you do for all of A.A.

Although preservation is one of the most visible and best known aspects of the archivist's work, it is only one of the many steps we need to perform in maintaining and organizing our historic records.

## **Research in Archives**

While we can assume that most A.A. members will be mindful of the confidentiality of A.A. records, as will most serious nonalcoholic researchers, the archivist should nonetheless maintain strict rules about accessibility and ensure that researchers adhere to them.

A.A.'s Twelfth Tradition states that anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Fellowship—in spirit as well as letter. All archives committees should be protective of the anonymity of living people, and even those who have passed on. Those administering the archives must also be scrupulous about anonymity breaks. This responsibility falls essentially to the archivist. Therefore, emphasis should be placed on permanent housing and a rotating archives committee to grant access requests and to establish overall policies.

Screening of applicants: To relieve the archivist from sole responsibility, the archives committee might consider each request to use the archives individually to determine the seriousness and appropriateness of the inquiry, and to grant or refuse permission. The applicant, if possible, should always be familiar with A.A.'s Tradition of Anonymity and how it is applied to writing A.A. history.

The researcher should fill out an application form listing the date of application, how long he/she intends to spend on the project at the archives and the material being used. See "Research Forms" for sample forms, which is also available online.

The researcher should also be given all the information needed to clearly understand

procedures and policies concerning the use of archives, for example: a statement of policy, information about the categories of classification, and a catalog of archival contents.

All of A.A.'s archival materials, both published and unpublished, are subject to copyright regulations. The archives may own the physical property, but often the copyright is held by someone else, and this can potentially lead to complications.

The archivist and assistant(s) ought to be familiar with the current interpretations of copyright regulations pertaining to fair use and privacy, and so should members of the archives committee. Perhaps one of the committee members could be a lawyer or a professional person in the academic field (here is an instance where a non-A.A. might be a useful committee member). Since the copyright laws are constantly being updated it is important to keep abreast with the changes in the law. See the Copyright section for more information.

## Ownership of Material

The trustees' Archives Committee adopted the following suggested guidelines for local archivists regarding archives property on January 27, 1994.

**Problem:** On occasion, there is confusion as to the ownership of archives materials maintained in local area archives. Such difficulties sometimes arise when an archivist or other service person—who is in possession or has custody of such materials actually belonging to the area—rotates or, even more problematic, is deceased or otherwise incapable of managing his or her affairs. Family members, for example, may not be clear regarding which items were the personal property of the deceased or incapacitated person, but are in actuality, owned by the area committee.

**Suggestions:** The following are suggestions which might help to avoid such confusion in the future:

1. All archives material that is the property of the area should be recorded in a written inventory.
2. The archivist should prepare and sign a statement, to be appended to the inventory list, which clearly indicates that ownership of the property listed in the annexed inventory resides in the area, and that such property is not the personal property of the archivist.
3. In addition to the property owned by the area, if there is any archival property that is, in fact, owned by the archivist, but which has been made available to or is “on loan” to the local archives, that property should also be listed, together with an attached, signed statement describing who the rightful owner is.
4. Copies of such statements, with original signatures, should be maintained in the area files, in the archives files and with the archivist's personal papers.
5. If, upon his/her death or incapacitation, the archivist or other custodian wishes to donate to the area those materials which had been on loan to the archives, then such a donation will usually have to be made as a bequest provided for in a valid will, or other document appropriate for effecting a transfer of ownership.



## Deed of Gift (Sample) Deed of Gift

A deed of gift is a formal and legal agreement between the donor and the archival repository that transfers ownership of and legal rights to the donated materials. Please note that some states may have additional legal requirements to complete a valid Deed of Gift. Note also that the Deed of Gift does not transfer copyright. For more information on transferring copyright ownership, please contact the G.S.O. Archives.

<b>General Service Office Archives</b> 475 Riverside Drive, Floor 11, New York, NY 10015 • (212) 870-3400 • Email: archives@aa.org
<b>— DEED OF GIFT —</b>
I, the undersigned Donor, donate and convey the following material to Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., a New York non-profit corporation, for the use by the General Service Office Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous ("G.S.O. Archives"):
<b>Description of Donated Material:</b> _____ _____ _____
This Donated Material, and any future additions I may make to it, shall be preserved, organized and made available for research and related uses in accordance with the G.S.O. Archives access and use policies.
The G.S.O. Archives may display any Donated Material in its onsite exhibit room with or without attribution, as may be appropriate, in the sole discretion of the G.S.O. The G.S.O. Archives staff may use the Donated Material, and/or digital surrogates, for presentations or offsite exhibitions at events held within Alcoholics Anonymous. The G.S.O. also may convert the Donated Material into a new medium, for example, a hand written letter may be scanned and converted into a digital file and used in the new format.
G.S.O. Archives, in its sole discretion, is authorized to dispose of the Donated Material outside of its Collection Scope and/or material deemed to be not of enduring historic value, in accordance with the Archives Deaccession Policy.
I transfer, convey and assign any literary and copyright rights, title and interest that I possess to the contents of the above described Donated Material (including future additions I may make to it) to G.S.O. Archives within the limits, if any, stated below.
<b>Additional Terms and Conditions:</b> _____ _____ _____
I affirm that I have the authority to donate this Donated Material and agree to all terms and conditions of this Deed of Gift.
<b>DONOR INFORMATION</b>
Name: _____ Address: _____
Signature: _____ Email: _____ Date: _____
Receipt of the material listed above by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., a New York non-profit corporation, for the use by the G.S.O. Archives is hereby acknowledged and accepted.
Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.
By: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____
<b>Deed of Gift Addendum for collections with electronic records</b>
The Donor acknowledges that the G.S.O. Archives acquires the Donated Material with the intent of making it available for an indefinite period of time. The G.S.O. Archives may need to transfer some or all the Donated Material from the original media donated to new forms of media to ensure its ongoing availability and preservation. The Donor grants the G.S.O. Archives rights to make preservation and access copies of Donated Material in the collection and to make those copies available for use, in accordance with G.S.O. Archives policies.
The G.S.O. Archives may need to digitize or migrate Donated Material provided in electronic content or transfer such content from original storage media as donated to another storage device (e.g., hard drive, CD, DVD, USB). In the process of undertaking the above tasks, deleted files or file fragments, passwords, encrypted and personal information may be discovered. The G.S.O. Archives will not retain, preserve or provide access to any data or personal information discovered as a result of the above described processes.
<b>Material Not Retained by the G.S.O. Archives</b>
The G.S.O. Archives reserves the right to reject data transfers at any stage of processing. In the event that the Archives locates duplicative content within the collection or content that is not of enduring historical value, the Archives may remove, discard and/or destroy said material. The Archives will not knowingly accept any content deemed unsafe or dangerous (i.e., various types of computer viruses or malware) and reserves the right to destroy Donated Material containing such.
Please indicate if donated media carriers for born digital content should be returned.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, return to Donor.
<input type="checkbox"/> No, the G.S.O. Archives may destroy media after content has been migrated to new storage media.
I, _____, understand and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in this Deed of Gift Addendum.

*Thank-you letter (Sample)*

This sample thank-you letter and form may be adapted for local use when materials are donated to the archives.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you for your generous donation to the Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous. Donations such as yours have made it possible for us to continue building a comprehensive history of our Fellowship.

Please know that we are most grateful for your contribution and we will handle it with professional care. We are sure you understand that this is a permanent contribution and we hope you are confident that we will make the best possible use of it.

We encourage you to visit the Archives anytime. Please fill out and sign the attached form and return it to the Archives.

Sincerely,  
Jane S., Archives  
jane@gmail.com  
(123) 123-4567

## A Note about Copyright

It is important for all archivists to realize that most of the materials in archives collections are protected by copyright, and often the archives do not own those copyrights. You may own the physical property, but this does not mean you own the copyrights as well. Copyright laws can limit the way archivists can legally use the materials in their collections.

Copyright law is complex and difficult to navigate. These sections may serve as a basic introduction to the fundamentals of copyright regulations, but we highly recommend that you do some research to learn more about these issues, and consult an attorney whenever embarking on a project that might involve copyright issues.

Please be aware that copyright laws vary significantly from country to country. The specific regulations referenced in this document generally apply to U.S. federal law only. We recommend consulting your country's specific laws where applicable.

### *What is Copyright?*

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of federal, state, and local governments to the authors of any “original works of authorship”—so, these laws generally apply to works such as books, pamphlets, letters and e-mails, memos, newspaper and magazine articles, photographs, sound recordings, web pages, artwork, and more—even doodles and scribbles are protected by copyright. This protection is available to both published and unpublished works.

Today, one does not have to register a work's copyright, nor print a © symbol on the work, to receive copyright protection. Protection automatically extends to any qualifying work, whether published or not, and whether created in the U.S. or in almost any country of the world. Generally, you should always assume that a work is copyrighted.

### *Rights of Copyright Owners*

Copyright laws generally give the copyright owner the exclusive right to do (or to authorize others to do) the following:

- Copy or scan;
- Prepare derivative works (for example, translate into another language, create a musical version of the work, create an abridged version, etc.);
- Distribute copies of the work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership;
- Public performance (for example, showing a movie at a public event, performing a play or song, etc.);
- Public display.

It is illegal for anyone to violate any of the rights belonging to the owner of copyright. Some possible violations include photocopying/scanning; uploading to Web sites; copying software; sharing or selling audio/video files; putting on public film exhibitions; etc. In most of these cases you must have the written permission of the copyright owner before you can legally do these kinds of activities.

### *Who Owns Copyrights?*

Ordinarily, the author or creator of a work is the copyright owner. Sometimes it is easy to determine who owns the copyright—for example, if you have a letter in your collection, the author of the letter owns the copyright. In the case of a photograph, the photographer is the copyright owner.

Sometimes it is more complex. In the case of a taped talk, many people may be considered “authors” and all of them would have some right to the work: the speechwriter, the speaker, and the person taping the event.

There are exceptions to this, however. For example, if an employee creates something in the course of his/her employment, generally the employer is then the copyright owner of that work.

Also, an author can transfer copyright ownership to your archives, but this requires a signed, written document, and a certain amount of legal formality.

### *Copyright Protection Lasts Many Years*

Most copyrights today last through the life of the author, plus 70 years. When a copyright owner dies, the copyright continues as part of his/her estate.

Most works that have remained unpublished (manuscripts, letters, etc.) are subject to the basic protection of “life plus 70 years.” Works published before 1978 can have copyright protection for a maximum term of 95 years, though some have shorter copyright periods, and, for some, copyright restrictions that existed earlier may have already expired.

Eventually, a copyright will expire and the formerly protected work will fall into the “public domain,” where it can be used without restriction. But for materials relating to Alcoholics Anonymous, in many cases, works will remain copyrighted for many years.

### *Can You Use Copyrighted Works without Infringement?*

The rights given to copyright owners are not unlimited. The laws include numerous exceptions to the rights of copyright owners, and many allow certain uses for education and research.

The best known exception is the doctrine of “fair use,” which permits works to be copied for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, or research. Fair use may be described as the privilege to use copyrighted material in a reasonable manner without the owner’s consent. Examples of activities that may be excused as fair use include: distributing copies of a section of an article in class for educational purposes; using an excerpt of a film in a film review; or creating a parody of a song. However, there are no hard and fast rules about which kinds of use are “fair” and which uses may be “infringing,” so relying on fair use as a justification for copyright infringement can be risky.

Other exemptions permit libraries and archives to copy some works for their customers on a limited basis, and for the purpose of preservation. There are many other exceptions as well.

*For More Information*

*Note: These sites have been listed for reference only. It does not imply endorsement or approval of the A.A. General Service Office Archives.*

**U.S. Copyright Office**

Website: [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov)

**Canadian Copyright Office**

Website: <https://www.canada.ca/en/services/business/ip/copyright.html>

**Other helpful resources:**

Cornell University Library Copyright Information Center

Website: <http://www.copyright.cornell.edu>

Stanford University Libraries

Website: <http://fairuse.stanford.edu>

## Guidelines for Collecting Oral Histories

### Introduction

In order to assist local efforts in collecting oral histories we have summarized some suggestions that were shared with us, as well as presenting practical aspects of collecting audio recordings. We hope this material will be of help. If you need more information, the G.S.O. Archives can send you a complete Oral Histories Kit, which provides more tips, technical information, forms and questionnaires, and a source list for more information. See “Reference Information and Resources” for G.S.O. Archives contact information.

### Bill W.’s suggestions on collecting oral histories

In a letter dated January 23, 1955, Bill W. gave an excellent description of the purpose and method of collecting such recordings. This letter can serve as the basis for oral history collecting, even today:

*I would like to have you make a tape recording about your recollections of the old days. There isn't any rush about this as the preparation of a history will have to be done carefully, and gradually over the next two or three years. I have, though, made a couple of trips to Akron and Cleveland and have already interviewed quite a lot of the old folks so as to be sure and get the record straight.*

*...You can get a good running start at the history by retelling your own personal story, how A.A. came to your attention, what your first impressions were, and how it developed in the first few years in Cleveland. I hope you can dwell at length on the difficulties, as well as the humor of those years, relating as many anecdotes as possible. You can say anything you like, being assured that nothing will be published without your consent.*

*...The preliminary investigation shows that it isn't hard to prepare a fact sheet of what happened—that is, dates when people came in, groups started and so forth. The hard thing to lay hold of is the atmosphere of the whole proceedings and anecdotal material that will make the early experience live.*

*When I first set out to gather material I ran into a little resistance. But I pointed out to them that if the oldtimers in Akron and Cleveland wouldn't go on record as to what happened, how in God's name could I, or anyone else, tell an accurate story for the future record. I lived through the experience here at the New York end and can tell about it at length. But if the western end of the story is going to have the importance it deserves, it simply has to be told by those who lived through the experience.*

## Getting started

In making the initial contact with a prospective interviewee, be certain to make a clear presentation of the purpose and nature of the interview. One need not give lengthy explanations but should inform the interviewee of the time investment involved, of the general areas to be covered, how the interview will be conducted, what will be done with the tape/transcript, and how it will be used and for what purposes. Being explicit and direct with the prospective interviewee inspires confidence in the oral history endeavor.

The interviewer may wish to do background reading and research before the interview, consulting the Grapevine Digital Archive, old Conference and assembly reports, area or district newsletters, directories, etc. Without any background the interviewer cannot ask the types of questions that will elicit the most pertinent information possessed by the interviewee.

Before the interview, you may wish to give the interviewee a list of topics you might cover, in addition to a biographical sketch for the interviewee to fill out. These materials, given a week or so in advance of the actual interview will stimulate an interviewee's memories.

## Oral history release form

A local archives committee (area, district) collecting oral histories should obtain a release from the interviewee granting the committee the rights to use the material obtained during the course of the interview and make it available for research. While G.S.O. can provide a sample release form, consultation with legal counsel in your area may prove to be a wise investment in order to protect both the interviewee and the local committee. A release form might include:

1. Name of the interviewee.
2. Name of the committee under whose auspices the history is being obtained.
3. Date or other significant information about the recording.
4. A brief explanation of the intended uses of the recording.
5. An affirmation that the committee will protect the anonymity of the interviewee (and any other A.A. members mentioned on the recording) against misuse at the public level.
6. Transfer of rights to the committee.
7. Statement of limitations, if any.
8. Signature of interviewee, including date signed.

## Tips for interviewing

- You will want to use a tape recorder, mini-disc recorder, or portable CD recorder to record an oral history interview. There are a number of recorders available, and each has its benefits and drawbacks. A local library or historical society may loan this kind of equipment.
- Run a test on the equipment before you begin the actual interview and make sure it is working properly.
- Always begin the recording by identifying yourself, the interviewee, and note the date and place of recording.



- Ask evocative questions, rather than questions with easy yes or no answers.
- Ask the interviewee to focus on events he/she *directly witnessed or participated in*. Ask the interviewee to begin with his/her own story of recovery and continue with impressions about A.A., comments on the recovery process and the way things were, and any anecdotal memories that come to mind.
- Allow the interviewee to talk freely on whatever topics he/she wishes to. Use the questions listed on the following page only as a general guideline to keep the flow of discussion focused. The interviewee might touch on subjects of interest that you never thought to ask about.
- In some cases it is also advisable to interview a group of long-timers together—a sponsor and sponsee, a group of men who started a group together or got sober together, friends who have been in the same group for decades, etc. These kinds of interviews can be fun and very informative.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the interviewee. Schedule your sessions at a convenient time. Older people may tire easily—cut the interview off at the first sign of fatigue. Each interview should be a pleasant and rewarding experience for all parties involved.
- If possible, prepare some sort of written report for the group, district, or area as a tangible result of their participation. Remember to save all of your tapes, notes and any other documentation that you have accumulated. *Label everything with names, dates and places*. Ideally, all tapes should be indexed and transcribed. You will be more conscientious about documentation if you place yourself in the position of the A.A. member who, many decades in the future, will be using your project as a source of inspiration and recovery.

### **Sample Interview Questions**

This list of questions is based on sample questions shared generously by Area 10, Colorado, and Area 20, Northern Illinois. It is intended to guide you in conducting your long-timer interview. Feel free to add questions of your own, allow the interview to take on a life of its own and, most importantly, have fun! If you would like a more complete list of questions, contact the G.S.O. Archives and request the Oral Histories Kit.

#### *Before A.A.*

- Please tell me a little about your life before you found A.A.
- How and when did you start drinking?
- When and how did your drinking get out of control?
- When did you know you had hit bottom?

#### *Recovery*

- When did you first hear of A.A., and from what source?
- How and when did you get started in A.A.? When and where did you sober up? Where did you go to your first meeting? What did you think of it?
- Can you tell me about your early sobriety, your Step work, and problems you had in those first days of learning the A.A. way?



- What was A.A.'s "reputation" in the community? How was it different from what you encountered through your initial introduction?
- What was your perception of A.A.'s success in the general population when you were first introduced to us? How has that perception changed over time?
- Did you have a sponsor when you first came in? What type of sponsorship did you have?
- How many groups or meetings were in existence?
- Can you recall the formats used at some of these early meetings? How were they run?
- When was A.A. started in your town or area? How often were meetings held? Who were some of the people playing important roles in the formation of new groups? What else do you know about the growth of A.A. during that period of time?
- Which individuals were especially prominent in your sobriety?
- How were new members contacted? What kinds of Twelfth Step work were going on? Are there any Twelfth Step anecdotes that stick out in your mind you'd care to share?
- Would you tell me about your experiences sponsoring others? Who are some of your favorite sponsees?

*Unity—Group issues and community perception of A.A.*

- Today, Conference-approved literature is available to help A.A. members deal with a wide variety of challenging questions. Back in the early days all you had was the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, common sense and your compassion. What did you think of the Big Book, and how often did you use it? How did early A.A.s treat newcomers? How did your group(s) treat constant slippers? Thirteenth steppers? How were people wishing to talk about multiple addictions during your meetings addressed? How about nonalcoholic drug addicts walking in off the street for their first meeting?
- We say sometimes that all that's needed to form an A.A. meeting is two drunks, a resentment and a coffeepot. Can you talk at all about the differences—or similarities—that led to new groups being formed in your area?
- In *A.A. Comes of Age* Bill W. writes about numerous issues over which anger and contention arose and threatened the undoing of our Fellowship. The groups nationwide, for example, did not immediately accept the spiritual principles we know today as the Twelve Traditions. What controversies over issues addressed in the Traditions can you recall people wrestling with? (How were meeting spaces acquired? Was rent or other funding obtained by gambling sessions? Bingo games? How did the membership resolve these affairs?)
- Today, A.A. is well known to, and supported by, police officers, judges and corrections officials. What kind of relationship did A.A. in your area have with local authorities? How has that changed since you sobered up?
- Treatment facilities in this millennium frequently host A.A. and other Twelve Step meetings. Did treatment centers exist in your area when you sobered up? Did any of them use a Twelve Step format or incorporate meetings into their structure?
- Did you seek the cooperation of other local community or professional agencies?
- Today, radio and television public service announcements for A.A., as well as Internet Web sites, are becoming commonplace. When you first got sober, how did

A.A.s interact with the media? Have you had any profound experiences sharing your relationship with alcohol with the public? What cautions might you have for young A.A.s today regarding media exposure?

- Do you think your group(s) has had an influence in your community? If so, how?

### *Service*

- How and why did you get into service work?
- What contributions did you, yourself, make to the growth of the Fellowship?
- What do you remember of early conferences, assemblies, and conventions? Can you recall opening intergroup or central offices?
- What were your first impressions of A.A.'s Three Legacies: Recovery, Unity, and Service?
- What was your first impression of A.A. servants, G.S.O. staff, delegates? Describe your first encounters.
- Describe your committee activities over your years of service.
- Is there anything you regret? Any mistakes you believe you made? Any plans that failed that you wish had been successful?
- Do you see any particular changes in the A.A. Fellowship and its service processes, since your start in service?
- Are there any strong similarities in the A.A. Fellowship and its history of service, from your own service time through today?

### **Providing access to oral histories**

The policies for accessing oral history recordings are guided by the local archives' research and access policies. Through the Oral History Release form, the interviewee should describe what limitations, if any, he or she places on the recording and its accessibility. For example, he or she may request that the recording not be made available for a certain period of time, or until after his/her death. The wishes of the interviewee should always be respected.

### **Preserving oral histories**

Audio recordings in archives collection are often extremely fragile. Tapes on cassette, reel-to-reel recordings, and all other magnetic tapes degrade quickly. It is essential to develop a plan for preserving these significant recordings. Generally, you should identify the most at-risk recordings in your collection and devise a long-term plan for transferring the recordings to a digital format. Usually, it is best to have a professional digitization company perform the transfer, although there are pieces of equipment you can buy, fairly inexpensively, if you wish to do it yourself. Be sure to label and identify each digital file accurately and completely.

Finally, it is important to save your digital recordings on redundant systems. Don't just leave them on your hard drive, but burn them to CDs (or DVDs), and/or use a USB flash drive or another storage device. When burning to CD, be sure to use archival-quality CDs, which are made with much more stable components than regular CD-ROMs. Archival-quality CDs and DVDs are not that much more expensive, and are estimated to survive at least twice as long as the average office-supply store CD.

## **Archives of the General Service Office, New York, NY**

The G.S.O. Archives are concerned with three classes of material: that which is literary, that which is historical, and that which is archival in the literal sense—i.e., administrative, legal and financial. The Archives also contain memorabilia or artifactual items, which include material having a display value, but not necessarily historical value, as well as items significant to the development of A.A. (photographs, awards, citations, displays, art works, sculpture, maps, etc.).

### *Scope and Purpose*

The scope of the G.S.O. Archives is to provide a sense of A.A.'s past to the Fellowship and to create a context for understanding and valuing A.A.'s historical milestones and Traditions. The Archives will continue to serve the interested communities among sociologists, historians and other professionals interested in exploring A.A.'s roots and growth throughout the world.

The main purpose of the Archives, consistent with A.A.'s primary purpose, is to keep the record straight so that myth does not predominate over fact as to the history of the Fellowship.

The purpose of the trustees' Archives Committee is to make recommendations to the General Service Board regarding what should be done and what limitations, if any, should be set regarding access and accommodation of material.

The Archives of the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous is a repository for official and unofficial records that document A.A.'s history in the U.S. and Canada. These include personal collections, manuscripts, correspondence, publications, photographs and memorabilia related to the origin and development of the A.A. Fellowship.

Many local A.A. groups, districts, and areas have vibrant archives collections of their own; for this reason the Archives of the General Service Office generally does not seek to acquire collections with a focus on local groups, districts, or areas, as these may be more significant to archives in those areas.

The Archives' acquisition priorities include, but are not limited to:

- Publications released by A.A.W.S., including books, directories, annual reports, Conference Reports, surveys, booklets, pamphlets, magazines, newsletters, service pieces, public service announcements, press releases and other media relations material, and more.

- The Grapevine magazine, and other material produced by the A.A. Grapevine, Inc.
- Material published outside A.A.W.S. that describe the program of A.A., the problem of alcoholism generally, or that otherwise have significance to the organization, such as books, articles, speeches, reviews, television and media programming, and more.
- Audiovisual collections including: photographs, videos, and sound recordings significant to A.A.; recordings of General Service Conferences, International Conventions, and World Service Meetings as well as other significant events; speeches and talks by early A.A. pioneers, A.A.W.S. trustees and directors, and other individuals; and more.
- Minutes and other documentation of A.A.W.S. Board meetings, committee meetings, Conferences and Conventions.
- Workpapers, subject files, correspondence, reports, and speeches of General Service Office staff and general managers.
- Personal papers of A.A.W.S. trustees, directors, and other significant figures, both alcoholic and nonalcoholic, including early A.A. pioneers—these may include correspondence, journals, diaries, scrapbooks, photographs, manuscripts, speeches, obituaries, awards and artifacts.
- Oral histories and stories of figures significant to the national and international operations of A.A.
- Group and area histories, and selected reports and newsletters of groups and areas.

### *G.S.O. Archives Ownership of Material*

Materials donated to the G.S.O. Archives become part of its repository. Most items are subject to the access and reproduction policies of the G.S.O. Archives. These policies are reviewed regularly by the trustees' Archives Committee. Generally, donated items are free of access restrictions unless the contributor stipulates limited access to certain sensitive materials. It is the G.S.O. Archives' policy to protect the personal privacy of the contributor.

Typically, the G.S.O. Archives does not accept items on loan. Also, we generally do not loan any original records. It is the G.S.O. Archives' policy to verify, where appropriate and necessary, rightful ownership of materials being offered to the collection, and to seek title to the donated property. The G.S.O. Archives conforms to professional ethics established by professional archives associations.

For the full Collection Policy of the G.S.O. Archives, please see our website: [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), or contact us.

## **Access Policies at the General Service Office Archives**

Adopted by the trustees' Archives Committee  
October 29, 2006

### *Materials Use Policy*

The materials in the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office Archives are available to all A.A. members and other serious researchers who have an interest in the legacy of Alcoholics Anonymous. However, access is controlled, which is necessary to ensure the anonymity of all persons mentioned in archival materials, in accordance with A.A. traditions. Access also must be controlled in order to protect the materials themselves from loss or physical damage.

The following policies and rules have been established by the trustees' Archives Committee of the General Service Board of A.A. in cooperation with the G.S.O. Archivist. These policies attempt to balance the needs of users, the exclusive rights of copyright holders, and the Archives' own responsibilities toward its collections.

### *Getting Answers*

Visitors and all interested parties are invited to make requests for information about any aspect of A.A. history. Normally the Archives staff will conduct the research, find the answers you seek, and deliver them via mail or e-mail. We get thousands of requests from members and friends of A.A. each year.

Typical requests involve:

- Information about the events that led to the founding of A.A.;
- Biographical information of A.A.'s co-founders and early pioneers;
- Statements and opinions of Bill W. and Dr. Bob;
- The origins and growth of the A.A. Steps, Traditions, and guiding principles;
- Information about various editions and/or statements in the Big Book and other works;
- The uses of A.A. prayers, slogans and logos, as well as chips, tokens, and medallions;
- Historical group practices and meeting formats;
- Group and area histories, including international;
- Information about the history of A.A. among special populations, minorities, and women;
- Old issues of newsletters;

- Old versions of A.A. pamphlets and literature;
- Published photographs of A.A. founders, pioneers, and events;
- The growth of the service structure;
- Actions of boards, recorded in meeting minutes;
- Various actions of the General Service Conference since 1951.

We always welcome your questions! Please contact the archives anytime you are curious about an element of A.A.'s legacy.

### *Access*

All visitors are welcomed to the Archives center. There they can see selected materials and speak with the Archivist about our holdings, about archival activities in their areas and about how they might be able to take advantage of the G.S.O. Archives.

If a researcher would like to physically handle, read, and review a large quantity of archival material, he or she should contact the Archives staff ahead of time to make arrangements. In most cases the Archives staff can provide access to published information, such as books, newsletters, magazines, pamphlets, service pieces, and reports, in some cases dating to the earliest days of A.A.

However, if a researcher wishes to use any unpublished materials in the Archives (correspondence, meeting minutes, financial information, manuscripts, etc.), a written request for access must be made to the trustees' Archives Committee. The user must give full information about the subject, scope, and purpose of the research being undertaken. See section "Research Forms" for G.S.O. Archives application for on-site research. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis. As the committee meets three times each year, on the last weekends in January, July and October, research requests are considered three times a year. In special cases, consideration can be obtained at other times.

Trustees, directors and staff members may access archival materials (with the exception of restricted files) without having to make such requests, only if the requested material is to be used solely in the furtherance of their duties in their assigned roles. In the case of requests made out of personal interest, trustees, directors and staff must follow the above procedure and file a written request prior to being granted access.

### *Protecting Anonymity*

Because of the special nature of the materials in our collection, all researchers must learn and respect all A.A. Traditions that may bear on their research—in particular the preservation of anonymity of all A.A. members.

The permission to conduct research is granted conditional on your agreement to strictly maintain the anonymity of all A.A. members, alive and deceased, including A.A.'s co-founders. You are respectfully asked, if citing these materials, to quote only the first name and last initial, thus preserving A.A.'s Eleventh Tradition: the anonymity of its members at the level of the public media. No researcher is ever given permission to publish full names of individuals. Anyone who does so will be denied further access to the A.A. Archives.

### *Photoduplication (Scanning and Photocopying)*

Photocopies or scans of published materials, such as pamphlets, articles, and newsletters, will be made available if the physical condition of the materials will allow for



duplication. Original correspondence, unpublished manuscripts, and some other confidential materials will not be duplicated.

All photoduplication will be done by Archives staff. On-site researchers will not be permitted to use scanners, cameras, photocopiers, or other devices to make copies. Researchers may designate a limited number of pages (of published items only) to be photocopied or scanned by the archives staff. Depending on the quantity requested and the workload of the archives staff, the copies may have to be mailed or e-mailed to the researcher at a later date.

Please see the Archives' full Photocopying Policy for more information.

### *Copyright and Ownership*

The A.A. Archives have a large variety of materials, which may or may not be in the public domain. In some cases A.A. World Services (A.A.W.S.) does not hold copyright for the materials in its collections. The permission to access and research does not include or imply permission for the use of intellectual property or any right to intellectual property in the Archives' holdings. It is solely the responsibility of the researcher to obtain the permission of the copyright owner before publishing, reprinting, or making extensive use of any copyrighted material. Any agreement as to intellectual property—such as *publishing, reprinting, or quoting from* any archives material—must be separately requested in writing.

#### **WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be used for any purpose than private study, scholarship or research. If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement and/or subject to criminal prosecution.

### *Permission to Publish*

As stated above, permission to access our materials and have copies made *does not* signify that a researcher has been given permission to publish, distribute, or further copy the material. Researchers who wish to use the Archives' materials in a publication, performance, or broadcast must complete and submit a separate application.

Researchers who plan eventual publication of their work are urged to make early inquiries concerning publication rights as they begin their research.

We request that two free copies of all publications which rely on the Archives' holdings be donated to the Archives as soon as the work is published. In giving permission to publish a manuscript, the Archives does not surrender its own right thereafter to publish the manuscript or to grant permission to others to publish it; nor does the Archives assume any responsibility for infringement of copyright or of publication rights in the manuscript held by others.

### *Policies For On-Site Research*

The following procedures are designed to make the researcher's visit as useful as possible while preserving the archival materials for future generations.

**PLEASE NOTE:** If you wish to review any *unpublished* materials in the Archives (correspondence, meeting minutes, financial information, manuscripts, etc.), a written request for access must be made to the trustees' Archives Committee, and must receive Committee approval before access will be granted. G.S.O. Archives application for on-site research can be found in the section "Research Forms."

All researchers should notify staff of the day(s) they plan to visit. Planning the visit ahead of time will help ensure that the researcher's time is used efficiently. Researchers and archives staff should work together before the visit to identify all relevant materials, so that staff can locate and retrieve them. Some materials are stored off-site and these require advance notice to be retrieved. If we do not receive advance notice of a visit, we will be limited as to how we can assist with research.

1. Researchers must register upon arrival to the Archives. Our staff is available between the hours of 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.
2. Researchers must deposit coats, bags and backpacks, and other personal property not essential to their work with the archival staff.
3. Researchers are not admitted to the archives vault. All materials will be obtained from and returned to the archives vault by staff members.
4. Materials may only be used in the Archives offices, at the tables provided.
5. Researchers may use laptop computers to take notes, or use pencils only. To avoid possible permanent marks on materials, pens are prohibited. Post-It notes, paper clips, and other potentially damaging flags are also not permitted.
6. All photoduplication is carried out by Archives staff. Cameras and scanners are not permitted, and researchers are not permitted to make their own photocopies.
7. All material must be handled with extreme care to ensure its preservation for future generations. Always preserve the existing order and arrangement of all materials. Turn pages carefully, make no marks on the materials, and do not rest books or other objects on the surface of items. When handling certain items staff may request that researchers wear cotton gloves.
8. Eating and drinking are not permitted in the Archives.
9. Please return all materials to archives staff at least 15 minutes before the Archives closes.



## **Photocopying Policy at the General Service Office Archives**

Adopted by the trustees' Archives Committee

October 30, 2011

Revised January 27, 2019

The General Service Office Archives has been entrusted to safeguard the collection of historical, administrative and organizational records of the Fellowship, as well as other historical material that has been compiled since the early existence of the office.

The Archives' photocopying policy has been established to protect the physical and the intellectual integrity of the collection. In addition the policy's purpose is to protect the anonymity and privacy of our members, nonmembers, and to comply with the U.S. Copyright Law as it affects the collection.

Photocopies of copyright material and certain other materials authorized by the Archivist, will be provided at the discretion of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. (AAWS), within the minimum standards for fair use, for purposes of private study, scholarship or research, and not for further reproduction. Understandably, we would have to decline any request for photocopying that, we believe, would result in a violation of U.S. Copyright law. It is the responsibility of the person requesting copies to obtain use rights from the copyright holder. If a person makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that person may be liable for copyright infringement.

Original correspondence and unpublished manuscripts frequently cannot be reproduced because of:

1. Copyright law prohibitions or restrictions;
2. The need to preserve the anonymity of persons in accord with A.A.'s Traditions;
3. The parties' expectation of privacy; or
4. The physical condition.

Photocopies of early pamphlets and other miscellaneous publications will be made available only when the physical condition of the material allows for photocopying. The physical condition, the fragility of the item or the brittleness of the paper may prevent us from photocopying some of these items.

A.A.W.S. in its discretion may refuse to permit photocopying of certain sensitive material.

### **Policy and Procedure on Permission to Quote from A.A. Material**

Requests for permission to quote from A.A. material (books, booklets, pamphlets, audios, videos, etc.) copyrighted by A.A.W.S, Inc. and AA Grapevine, Inc., as well as from unpublished material in G.S.O. Archives, may be directed to the Intellectual Property Administrator of A.A.W.S., Inc.

## **Sound and Video Access Policies at the General Service Office Archives**

Adopted by the trustees' Archives Committee

January 28, 2007

### *Policy*

The G.S.O. Archives collection's sound and moving image recordings include productions by the G.S.O., individual A.A. members, and friends of A.A. The sound recordings include conferences, meetings, and other special events; speeches by Bill W. and other early A.A. pioneers; oral history interviews; and more. These recordings have great significance to the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, and help carry the message of the Fellowship of A.A.

For any researcher, we will endeavor to provide access to these historical materials. However, we are bound by several factors that may limit our ability to provide access or permitted copy of a recording when requested. In most cases the General Service Office does not hold copyright for the recordings. Many of the items are unique and in some cases the Archives retains the only known copy. In addition, many recordings reveal A.A. members' identities or contain other sensitive content. Because of the one-of-a-kind nature of these items and the G.S.O. Archives commitment to A.A.'s guiding principles, the following policies and restrictions apply to their duplication and use.

### *Procedures for Access*

Researchers wishing to learn about our holdings, or wishing to listen to specific sound recordings or view archival film recordings should first contact the archives by mail, phone, or email. Each request will be considered individually. Depending on the needs of the researcher and the types of materials requested, a researcher may have to establish approval with the trustees' Archives Committee before being given access to the materials. The trustees' Archives Committee meets to decide on these requests three times each year. In special cases, consideration can be obtained at other times. If the request requires this approval, the archivists will direct the user through the application process.

Archives staff may have to view and/or listen to recordings to determine subject content and/or suitability for outside distribution and duplication, paying particular attention to issues of anonymity. This service is simply a preliminary listening/viewing to determine content, and no transcription will result. If the user requires a transcription, this will be done by a professional transcription service and additional charges may apply.

Given our limited staff resources, we ask researchers to restrict their requests for duplication to a reasonable quantity of material. The G.S.O. Archives reserves the right to impose limits on the amount of material that can be requested at any given time and by any one individual. In most cases, due to staff resources and copyright restrictions, a limit of one copy per item per request will be imposed. Duplication requests will be filled in a timely manner based on staff responsibilities. If a separate vendor must be engaged to make a copy, the charge will be passed on to the researcher at cost. Note that certain formats cannot be duplicated because of a lack of compatible duplication equipment.

### *On-site access*

Assuming access is permitted, sound recordings or moving images are available for on-site listening or viewing. Researchers must make prior arrangements with the Archives so that proper playback and listening equipment can be made available.

### *Access copies and Restrictions*

The G.S.O. Archives reserves the right to restrict duplication due to concerns of copyright, anonymity, privacy, condition of the material, donor restrictions, and policy determinations recommended by Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc., its General Service Office, and the General Service Conference and adopted by the General Service Board through its committee process.

### *Copyright*

If the Archives staff has any reason to believe that duplicating a videotape or sound recording will violate U.S. Copyright Law, they will refuse the request.

The person requesting the reproduction assumes all responsibility for infringement of copyright, or any use that exceeds fair use provisions. Any commercial application, publication or distribution by rental, lease, or lending of copyrighted materials is not fair use and always requires the consent of the copyright holder. This includes but is not limited to distributing CD or DVD copies, streaming, uploading or posting on the Internet. Permission to reproduce does not constitute permission to publish — see below for publication restrictions. For further information about copyright, consult the U.S. Copyright Office: [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

### *Anonymity*

In keeping with A.A.'s 11th and 12th Traditions on anonymity, users are restricted from revealing the name of any A.A. member(s), living or deceased. A.A. members' anonymity, including the co-founders, must be maintained at the level of the public media, including works published in print and on the Internet. In each situation, the final decision to reveal the A.A. membership of a deceased member rests with the family. G.S.O.'s Public Information Policy on the Co-Founders' Posthumous Anonymity serves as guidance in Public Information activity surrounding A.A.'s co-founders. A copy of this Policy may be furnished upon request. If applicable, the Archives will require users to commit in writing to preserving A.A. members' identities from disclosure.

### *Condition*

Sound and video recording media (VHS tapes, cassettes, etc.) are typically fragile, and degrade quickly. Frequent use quickens this deterioration. The Archives Department will always act to ensure the survival of its audio recordings, and may deny any request that could not be granted without damaging the original recording.

### *Donor Restrictions*

Some donors of audio or video material may have imposed restrictions on access as a condition of the donor agreement. These will always be respected.

#### General Service Conference Audio Recording Policy

Access to audio recordings of A.A.'s annual General Service Conference is in accordance with a 2015 General Service Conference Advisory Action:

Audio recordings of General Service Conference presentations published in the General Service Conference Final Report and audio recordings of the trustees' farewell talks given at the closing brunch be made available in accordance with Archives' Policies. Access to all other General Service Conference sessions will continue to be prohibited.

Audio recordings of the General Service Conference, as specified in the Advisory Action above, are accessible for either on-site listening, or an access copy may be created for the user.

### *Distribution and Publication Restrictions*

Permission to access our materials and have copies made does not signify that a researcher has been given permission to publish or further copy the material. Users will not be permitted to create duplicate copies of sound recordings or videos for the purpose of selling, re-licensing or widespread distribution. Users are not permitted to duplicate footage of any moving image material via digital devices, cameras, screen capturing, or any other media.

It is the users' responsibility to secure all necessary permissions from the copyright owner before making commercial, broadcast, or other use of this material. Refer to section on "Copyright" above.

G.S.O. Archives restricts use of its recordings in television, video, motion picture, and all other media productions, including posting on the Internet. For use in these media, when we own the copyright, separate permission must be obtained from A.A.W.S. The archivist can assist you in making your request to the right staff. Any reproduction of the material shall be solely for the use described in the submitted application and may not be reused in subsequent works without obtaining express written consent from the copyright owner. Furthermore, a researcher may not alter the recordings in any manner.

It is solely the responsibility of the researcher to obtain all necessary permissions from the copyright owner which may own or claim any proprietary rights whatsoever under statutory or common law before publishing any previously unpublished material. In many cases neither A.A.W.S. nor the General Service Board holds copyright for the audiovisual materials in its collections. Permission to publish sound recordings or moving images from the collection must be obtained from the copyright owner.

In order to access audio or film materials from the G.S.O. Archives Collection, researchers must complete the Application for Limited Use of Sound or Film Recording and read and agree to the Terms and Conditions.

## **WARNING CONCERNING COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS**

The copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be used for any purpose than private study, scholarship or research. If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use", that user may be liable for copyright infringement and/or subject to criminal prosecution.

## Classification of Archival Material at the Archives of the General Service Office

- A. Open to all
- B. Open to A.A. members
- C. Open with approval
- D. Closed (at this time)

### A. *Open to all*

#### 1. Material published outside A.A.

- On A.A. specifically
- Magazine articles on A.A.
- Newspaper articles, TV/video recordings
- Material on alcoholism in general (reprints, talks, newsletters, etc.)

#### 2. Published within the Fellowship (available to the public)

- A.A. books and pamphlets
- Annual reports to the public
- Surveys
- International Conventions and publicity
- Obituaries
- Awards
- Pictures of nonalcoholics, friends of the Fellowship, background
- Access to scrapbook and obit books
- Co-founders' biographical information
- Historical material, background data on A.A.

### B. *Open to A.A. members*

#### G.S.O. published material (in addition to items in #A above)

- Bulletins, newsletters
- World Directories or listings from them
- Conference reports
- Group history records
- Photos: A.A. events
- Selected tapes or cassettes

C. *Open with approval—access requires review and approval of the trustees' Archives Committee*

- Financial matters pertaining to G.S.O.
- Financial matters pertaining to the co-founders
- Correspondence between members and G.S.O.
- Correspondence of co-founders, members, groups, friends of A.A.
- G.S.O. administrative papers; minutes, General Service Board matters, discussions
- Oral history tapes, transcripts
- General Service Conference tapes and transcripts—opening and closing sessions only
- International Convention tapes
- World Service Meeting records

D. *Closed at this time—not available to anyone because of sensitivity or contributor's request.*

*A.A. Archives —  
INFORMATION REQUEST LOG*

This form is a handy way to keep track of the requests for information you receive in your archives. By keeping a log of past information requests, an archivist can more easily respond to questions already received and researched before.

Date received: \_\_\_\_\_

Date answered: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of requester: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Request received via:

Telephone     E-mail     Mail     In-Person

Question or subject: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Note information found and source used: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Researched by: \_\_\_\_\_



*ARCHIVES OF THE  
A.A. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE*

I hereby apply for permission to consult the following archival recording, for the following stated purpose(s).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ (PLEASE PRINT)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Items requested: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Subject of research: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose or expected use of moving images or audio recordings (book, article, thesis, dissertation, film, area/local archives use, personal/family research, other):

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ARCHIVES OF THE  
A.A. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE

AGREEMENT

By signing below, I signify that I have read and understood the “**SOUND AND MOVING IMAGE ACCESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**” I understand that if I do not adhere to these policies, my privileges as a user of the G.S.O. Archives may be revoked.

I acknowledge that I will be receiving one copy of the following recording, in digital format, on CD/DVD:

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Due to copyright restrictions, as specified in the “**SOUND AND MOVING IMAGE ACCESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES,**” I agree that the recording I receive will not be published in any medium, nor posted on the Internet, nor otherwise distributed or copied further.

I acknowledge and agree that an essential condition of the permission granted to me is that I will abide by the anonymity policy. I will not identify any member of A.A., including its co-founders, other than by the first name and first initial of the last name. I agree that any publication of full names at the level of press and media is a breach of this agreement.

THE RESEARCHER WILL DEFEND, INDEMNIFY, AND HOLD HARMLESS THE G.S.O. ARCHIVES, THE A.A. GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE, A.A. WORLD SERVICES, INC., AND ITS OFFICERS, EMPLOYEES, AND AGENTS AGAINST ALL CLAIMS, DEMANDS, COSTS, AND EXPENSES INCLUDING ATTORNEYS’ FEES INCURRED BY ANY COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT OR ANY OTHER LEGAL OR REGULATORY CAUSE OF ACTION ARISING FROM THE USE OF G.S.O. ARCHIVES MATERIALS.

I HAVE READ AND AGREED TO ABIDE BY THE ABOVE TERMS AND CONDITIONS AND THE “**SOUND AND MOVING IMAGE ACCESS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.**”

Name of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ (PLEASE PRINT)

Signature of applicant: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

General Service Office Archives of Alcoholics Anonymous  
475 Riverside Drive  
New York, New York, 10115  
Phone: 212-870-3400; email: archives@aa.org  
Website: www.aa.org

Revised and approved by trustees’ Archives Committee 10/2016

**Calendar of Holdings  
Archives of the  
A.A. General Service Office**

*Bill W. (1895-1971)* — personal correspondence; writings, talks, articles; photographs; audio material; Lois W. material.

*Dr. Bob S. (1879-1950)* — personal correspondence; writings, talks, articles; photographs; audio material; Anne S. material.

*Alcoholics Anonymous* — correspondence; industry; institutions; court programs; medical profession; religion.

*Alcoholic Foundation* — correspondence; reports.

*Early Groups* — correspondence (historical only); U.S. groups by areas; Canadian groups; foreign groups (historic only).

*General Service Board* — reports; minutes.

*General Service Conferences* — reports; manuals.

*General Service Headquarters (1945-1968)* — correspondence.

*Grapevine, The A.A.* — correspondence (historical); magazine issues, 1944 to present.

*International Conventions* — programs; clippings.

*Nonalcoholic friends of the Fellowship* — correspondence; photographs; Alexander, Jack; Dowling, Rev. Edward S.J.; Ford, Rev. John C., S.J.; Ignatia, Sister Mary; Jung, Carl, M.D.; Maxwell, Milton, Ph.D.; Norris, John, M.D.; Rockefeller, John D., Jr.; Shoemaker, Rev. Samuel; Silkworth, William D., M.D.; Sinclair, Upton; Smith, Bernard B.; Tiebout, Harry, M.D.

*Oral history* — co-founders; early members; Conferences; Conventions.

*Oxford Group* — historical material.

*Publications* — books; drafts; booklets; pamphlets; directories; other.

*Regional Forums* — reports.

*Scrapbooks* — 1939 – 1961.

*Trustees (Class A and B)* — correspondence; reports; talks.

*Washingtonians* — historical material.

*Works Publishing* — correspondence; memos.

*World Service Meetings* — correspondence; reports.

## Reference Information and Resources

You are encouraged to consult archival resources regularly. They are readily available both at the national level and at your local level, and you can greatly benefit from both.

For additional information contact the A.A. General Service Office Archives, 475 Riverside Dr., New York, NY 10115, (212) 870-3400, fax (212) 870-3003, [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org), e-mail: [archives@aa.org](mailto:archives@aa.org).

Some archivists benefit from attendance at the National A.A. Archives Workshop focusing on A.A. Archives. Date and location of this event are determined on an annual basis contact N.A.A.A.W. at: <http://aanationalarchivesworkshop.com>.

The Society of American Archivists maintains a very informative and comprehensive website. National and local archivist organizations and professional resources are listed and regularly updated. Workshops and training seminars are regularly offered both by the national and local organizations. Take advantage of them!

The Society of American Archivists, 17 N. State St., Suite 1425, Chicago, IL 60602-4061, 312-606-0722, toll-free 866-722-7858, fax 312-606-0728, [www.archivists.org](http://www.archivists.org).

For Canada: Association of Canadian Archivists, P.O. Box 2596, Station D, Ottawa, ON K1P 5W6, (613) 234-6977, [www.archivists.ca](http://www.archivists.ca).

### Historical A.A. reading:

*Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*

*Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*

*“Pass It On” The Story of Bill Wilson and How*

*the A.A. Message Reached the World*

*Experience, Strength and Hope*

*The Language of the Heart*

### Resources from G.S.O. Archives:

Oral Histories Kit

A.A. Guidelines on Archives

Archives Preservation Guidelines

Digitizing Archival Material Guidelines

Researching A.A. Group History service piece

## Closing

We hope this workbook will help you in your daily efforts of collecting and organizing historical documents, and will assist A.A. members who would like to learn more about the history of our Fellowship.

The archival discipline is a growing field, and this brief guide cannot replace the need for continuous reading and updates.

We would like to invite you to get in touch with the General Service Office Archives if you have any questions regarding any aspects of the material at hand.

Keep in mind:

“Whenever a society or civilization perishes  
there is always one condition present;  
they forgot where they came from.”  
— Carl Sandburg

