

**A STUDY BOOK FOR RECOVERY
AND
A HISTORY OF EARLY A.A. IN SOUTHWEST**

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INCLUDES

“The Story of Bill W’s Sponsor Recovery”

By Ebby T.’s Sponsor

By Searcy W.

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“Over 44 Years of Alcoholism Recovery”
PLUS
“A History of A.A. in the Southwest”
“RECOVERY THROUGH DISCUSSION”

...52 Topics for discussion
 ...32 Completely discussed
 ...20 Suggestions for your in-put

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 by Ebby T’s Sponsor

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OUR FRIENDS WHO GAVE MUCH TO A.A.



John D. Rockefeller Jr.



E.M. Jelinek, Sc.D

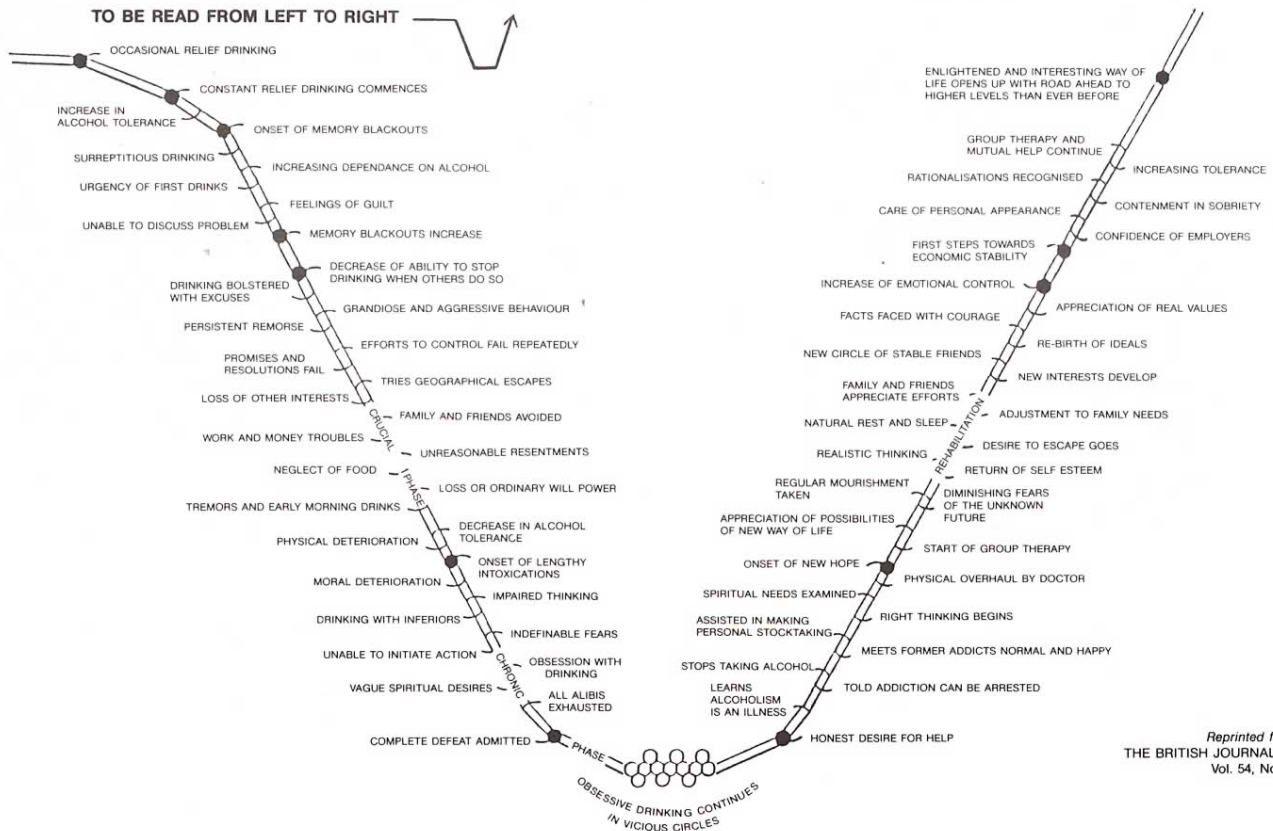


The Rev. Mr. Walter Tunks



The Rev. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick

A CHART OF ALCOHOL ADDICTION AND RECOVERY



Down memory road

- 1934, December 11 Bill W.'s spiritual experience.
- 1935, May 12 Mother's Day, Bill meets Dr. Bob in Akron, Ohio.
- 1935, June 10 Dr. Bob has his last drink, Alcoholics Anonymous founded.
- 1937, November Dr. Bob and Bill, meeting in Akron, count results. Forty cases sober. First realization of certain success.
- 1938, May The Alcoholic Foundation established as a trusteeship.
- 1938, May Beginning of writing of the book, ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS.
- 1938, December Twelve Steps written.
- 1939 Membership reaches 100.
- 1939, April The book ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS published.
- 1939, August Dr. Bob and Sister Ignatia start work at St. Thomas Hospital, Akron, Ohio.
- 1944, June The A.A. GRAPEVINE established.

- 1946 The Twelve Traditions of A.A. first formulated and published.
- 1950, June First International Conference of A.A. held in Cleveland, Ohio. Traditions adopted.
- 1950, November 16 Dr. Bob passes away.
- 1952, January 9 Al-Anonn first headquarters established in New York City, N.Y.
- 1953, June The book TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS published.
- 1954, May Akron Inter-Group Office opens at: 41 South High St. Akron, Ohio 44308
- 1971, January 24 Bill W. passes away.

It is quite evident that Anne Smith and Lois Wilson, wives of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous in those early days planted the ideas which have flowered into thousands of Al-Anon groups and an important factor in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Bill W., co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous says: "Any family, wife and children, who have had to live with an alcoholic a number of years are bound to be rather neurotic and distorted themselves. They can't help it."

Lest we forget . . .

Bill and Lois. Having nursed and supported Bill for so many desperate years, Lois willingly turned all of her energies into helping him work with other alcoholics. For three years, their Clinton Street home in Brooklyn was filled "from cellar to garret with alcoholics of every



Bill



Lois

description." She continued to work tirelessly both with and for the families of alcoholics, too; and it was in 1955 that Sister Ignatia started the first Cleveland Al-Anon group as a result of long talks with Lois. Al-Anon's slogan, "Let it begin with me," is a creed by which the wife of A.A.'s First Miracle has lived.

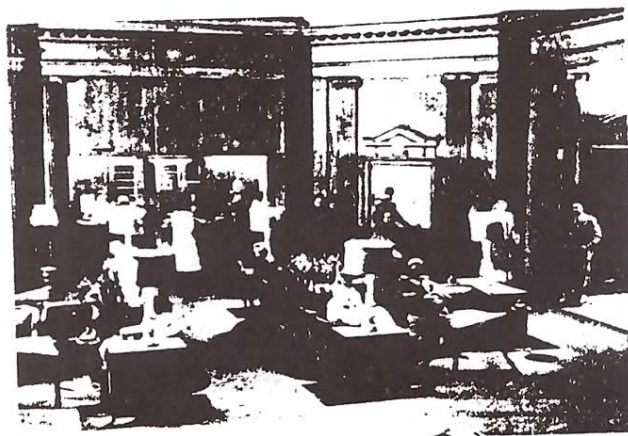
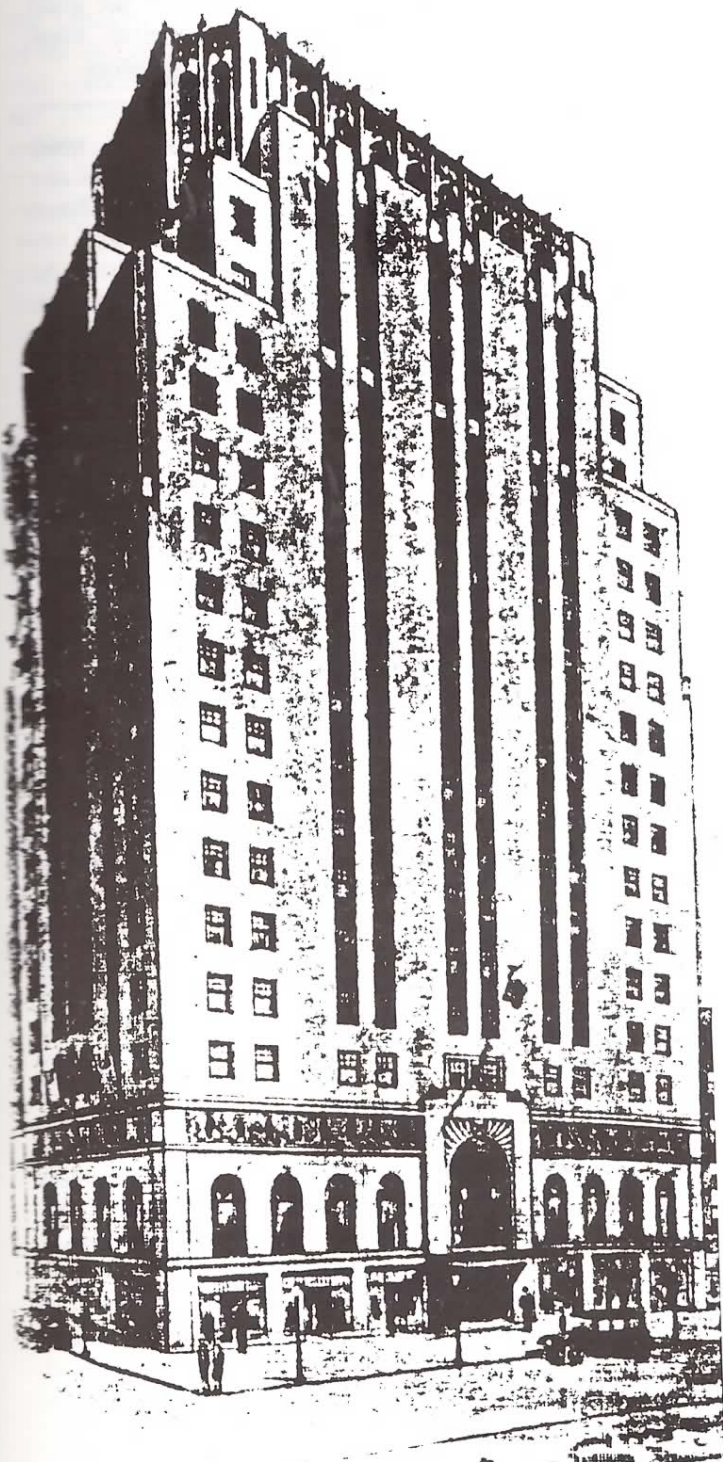


Dr. Bob and Anne

Dr. Bob and Anne. Her love and faith sustained him through the difficult first years of his sobriety. Her deep compassion made a home in her living room for the first A.A. meetings; she poured the first A.A. coffee . . . and, with Lois, laid the groundwork for what was to become the Al-Anon Family Groups. Akron's early timers remember Anne sitting near her fireplace reading from her Bible the admonition, "faith without works is dead." Anne passed away about a month after this picture was taken in 1949. Both she and Dr. Bob are buried in Mt. Peace Cemetery in Akron.

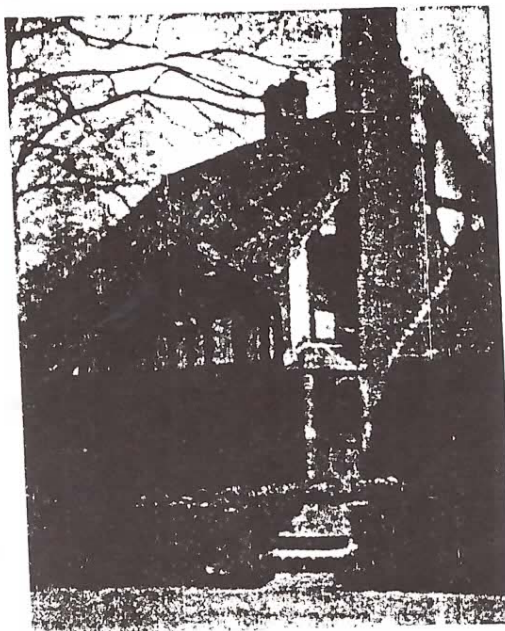
The Mayflower Hotel

On a Saturday in May, 1935, Bill found himself in Akron, Ohio; alone, discouraged and with only ten dollars in his pocket. He was a long way from home, and the familiar sounds from the bar off the lobby of the hotel were enticing.



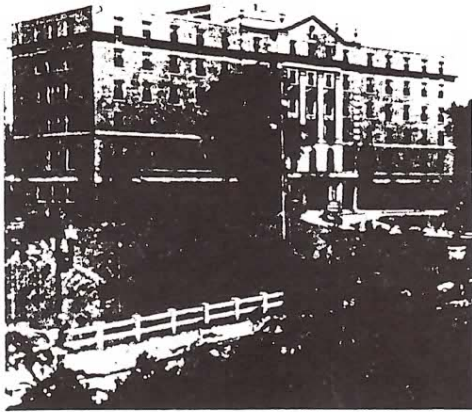
The lobby

The lobby of the Mayflower probably looked much like this as Bill paced between the bar at one end and the church directory at the other. His sudden conviction that he needed to talk to another alcoholic in order to stay sober himself started a chain of events that resulted in his meeting, the next day, with Dr. Bob. Here, the first A.A. phone call was made. What followed was eventually to change the lives of thousands of still-suffering alcoholics.



The Gatehouse

Stan Hywet, 425 North Portage Path, Akron, Ohio. Bill's desperate phone call put him in touch with Henrietta Seiberling. Although she was not an alcoholic, her understanding and compassion prompted her to arrange that first meeting between Bill and Dr. Bob. At five o'clock on Mother's Day, May 12, 1935, Bill stood at The Gatehouse to greet the man who was to be his "partner and founder of Akron's Group Number One."*



St. Thomas Hospital

August, 1939.

The first institution of its kind to receive prospective members of A.A. for treatment of alcoholism on a regular basis.

With the help of the incomparable Sister Ignatia, Dr. Bob bootlegged A.A.'s first jittery candidate into the hospital Flower Room where a cot had been placed. In the time when A.A. was still very young, Dr. Bob and the good sister were to care for 5,000 cases of alcoholism. Many remained sober, to return to the hospital as visitors.

Mr. Searcy W.
3520 Fairmount
Dallas, Texas

July 7, 1954

My dear Searcy,

Memories of my recent visit to Texas are still green. I'm so glad that I got a chance to see a little bit of you and your place. This presents me with another opportunity of thanking you from the bottom of my heart for all that you did and are doing for Ebby. I do hope his progress continues and that some arrangement has been made about the garbage can business.

My recent trip to Texas was one of the happiest I have ever made. There is no better A.A. anywhere nor are any hearts warmer or more generous.

Devotedly yours,
Bill

P. S. By separate cover I am sending you another picture.

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY GREETINGS
St. Louis, July 1-3, 1955
From Lois and Bill

Dear Friends:

We are gathered here to thank God that in twenty years He has delivered so many of us out of our bondage. We have come here to tell of our appreciation for A.A.'s great friends whose giving of themselves has helped to make this miracle possible. And, here in St. Louis, we are to take the momentous decision that our Fellowship has come of age, may assume full responsibility for its future growth and function, and can confidently take destiny by the hand.

Lois and I send each of you our greetings and our everlasting gratitude for what your constant affection and your demonstration, under God's Grace, will always mean to us both.

In devotion,
Lois & Bill

Dearest Searcy: January 14, 1966

For some time now, I have been fussing around in the mental health area of schizophrenia - no doubt a subject you know a lot about.

The enclosed material is a presentation to A.A. physicians. Newly developed tests for the condition have revealed its high incidence among alcoholics - about one in three hospital admissions.

Happily these low-key cases can be readily cleared up by the use of massive vitamin B-3 therapy.

This tract also covers a lot of other uses which may also interest you.

Up here, we have got a lot of people on the material. People who appear to have simple depression, anxiety, tension, fatigue, mild paranoia and so forth. They appear to be ordinary neurotic cases. Nearly all of us have received marked benefits, emotionally and physically. But one-third of us who are on the material have had spectacular results. Probably these are cases who have always suffered a certain amount of schizophrenia poisoning. This latter may sound strange. But it will not after you have read the tract.

Of course our old friend the psychiatrist does not warm up rapidly to the idea that schizophrenia is, as Freud contended, an organic disease, probably genetic in character.

Anyhow, will you take a look at this stuff enclosed and give me a few reactions? If you feel so disposed, you can hand out a few pills yourself; they are absolutely harmless. Probably anyone over 40 ought to be taking some of the material. Admittedly this report is rather fantastic - the claims for "swamp root" were never so good as these!

It will be great to hear from you. May 1966 be your finest.

In affection, Bill

P.S. If you want to get some of the material - 500 mg. size - just write to the Long Island wholesaler named in the back of the brochure. He will send you a bottle of 500 tablets of either niacin or nicotinamide - as you wish, after reading the directions. Niacin is preferable, but it flushes people. And so scares some off. Mention my name and they will send you a bill for the cost of your bottle, plus postage - it all might add up to the huge sum of \$9.00.

Devotedly yours, Bill

SCATTER SHOOTING THE EARLY DAYS OF A.A. IN TEXAS AND THE SOUTHWEST

BY: SEARCY W. DD - MAY 10, 1946

I was born March 30th, 1910, on a farm in Jones County Texas, the sixth of seven children, and was raised on this farm by the most Christian father and mother. My father, a deacon in the Baptist Church, my mother, a teacher in the Church, and we were required and accepted by all of the family that we were to be in church every Sunday, and sometimes during the week to fully participate in the events of the church. I sang in the choir and in quartets for many years and enjoyed it very much. That was all there was to do, except chop cotton, cut wood, or other chores all of which I did not enjoy doing. I went to grade school in the country, then to high school part time in the city, and finished high school in Stamford Texas and upon finishing, I had a job, along with a berth on the baseball team of the Midland Bushers, a semi-pro team in the old west Texas League. We won some games, lost some, but I learned to drink home brew after the games on Sunday.

I was provided a job with a Motor Company, distributors of Dodge and Plymouth cars and trucks, and did very well with it and climbed the success ladder very well. Then the depression of the late '20's and early 30's, but I still had a good job, and plenty of drinking money, which I had never had on the farm. The depression lasted on and on, so did the excessive drinking. Then in 1934 I married a charming young lady Margaret B. who would occasionally drink with me, but not excessively and we partied and partied, as it was socially the thing to do. I drank more heavily through the years and then discovered that possibly I was running with the wrong crowd. So I took the geographical cure from drinking, moved to Corpus Christi, Texas, drinking more, losing job after job, then a visit to the jail, another move to Dallas, in the service in World War II for a stint, out of the service, another good job, more drinking excessively. Completely out of control, another lost job, and then another good job with excellent possibilities, and while traveling with one of my Distributors Salesman, and making every effort to not get back into the hospital or two or three weeks unable to work at all. In the city of Odessa, Texas, I ran into an old drinking buddy of long years, name; Bob Schermerhorn. I asked him, lets go to the room and do some drinking, and he for the first time ever declined the drink, insisted that I have one and then told me about his long bout with the bottle, that he and some others had found a way to not drink, and that he had been sober 10 months, in a group called Alcoholics Anonymous.

He sent me the Big Book, and the Washingtonian

pamphlet, which was all of the literature available in August 1945. He sent it to my hotel for the next weeks stay. I thumbed through it but decided it was not for me, maybe sometime, thus it was laid to rest in my dresser drawer, however my wife read it, put it back in place, and it was there until much later.

In April, the latter part, without employment, and unemployable I suddenly remembered what Bob had told me in August 1945, that when you go as far as you can on your own, and want to quit drinking, then you come to Dallas, and I'll try and help you stop - I boarded a plane for Dallas, called Bob, he was out of the city, but would be back the latter part of the week.

On Saturday morning approximately the 5th day of May 1946, Bob Schermerhorn and Charley Frost, both members of A.A. came to the White Plaza Hotel, where I was registered, found me in a terrible state of being, unable to walk, hallucinating, unable to eat, drink or think. Unbeknown to me, they had already checked with the hotel, and found that I was in bad condition, and made a reservation for me at a drying out place, called Mrs. Pinks Place, where drunks could go and taper off, or dry out, and they took me to this establishment, Bob paid \$125.00 in advance for me to stay a week. I was put to bed and given about an ounce of booze to ease the hallucinations, which it did, and I slept for a few hours, and finally awakened early on Sunday morning with a call to breakfast of which I wanted no part of.

During the morning I met an inmate downstairs named Les Kelley, and I inquired as to how long he had been there sobering up, and he quickly replied 18 weeks, I quipped that there was no way I could stay any 18 weeks, as I was only paid for one week. Since we were given one ounce of whiskey every four hours Les said; don't take the next drink, and the next and you will be able to get out of here, that's the only way. I turned down the next one and the second day I was doing better, able to eat a little, and seemed not to really need a drink. The burden of compulsion had stopped.

The next morning I received a call from Charley Frost and Bob to get ready for a trip to Paris, Texas, and when we arrived at the Catholic Hospital we went to the room of an alcoholic with delirium tremens, the nursing Sisters were in deep concern that his condition might get worse, even to death, the man later died with acute alcoholism. On our way back to Dallas, I asked why they chose to take me to see this man in such bad condition,

and they replied; so we can all get a picture of ourselves, and what can happen to all of us.

The next day Les Kelley had recovered to the extent that he invited me to go with him to a place downtown where recovering alcoholics met, and we went to 912-1/2 Main St., and over a liquor store we walked some of the longest steps I have ever taken to arrive at the Club, which was the only A.A. Group-Club in the city of Dallas where we were greeted with "Come on in you are at home". I met a man named Burl McNernay, a recovering alcoholic who visited with me for some time to find out my drinking pattern, and if I were sincere about sobriety. I assured him I was sincere. Then he marched me over to the wall and I faced the big chart on the wall which read "THE TWELVE STEPS" he pointed out that this is A. A., this is the Program and these are twelve steps to recover. And if you will do these to the best of your ability you never need to take another drink, also, this club is not A. A. these people in here are not A. A. we all embrace these twelve steps in our own way and most of us stay sober.

We returned to Mrs. Pinks Place, where Burl followed along to be sure we didn't stop at a liquor store, and he continued for another hour telling me about the workings of A.A. as they related to him. I have never taken another drink of Booze since that day of May 10, 1946.

The next day I called my dear wife of 12 years and broke the good news to her that I had found a solution to my drinking problem. However she seemed to have heard this story before, but I assured her that I truly believed that this was it. I, at this time, did not know that she had read the big book Bob had sent me in Amarillo. She too had read it, but didn't believe that I would embrace a program such as that. I had many visitors in the next days before returning home to Lubbock Texas. Among them were: Olie Lancaster, Bugs Moore, Eva Boyd, Bob Schermerhorn, Charley Frost, Bill and Mary Coit, Verne Galbraith, Esther Elezardi, Bill Perkins, and at the end of the week before returning home, I was given the name of all of the members of A.A. between Ft. Worth Texas and Phoenix Arizona. A total of four (4), Macon Freeman Coleman, Tx. Bob Doris, Clovis N.M., Truman Meinecke, Plainview, Tx., Loran McDowell of Big Spring Texas, and they told me to get in touch with any or all of them any time I wished. that they would help me over the rough spots of wanting a drink. However, I was free from the want of a drink, the whole desire, or obsession to drink had left me. However I held on to these names and at one time or another called each of them.

Since I was bankrupt physically, morally, spiritually, and financially, I would catch the Bus once each month, come to Dallas and attend a meeting, then my first open meeting to attend was at the Power & Light company

auditorium where Horace Fort and Esther Elezardi spoke. I soaked in all of this A.A. I could and it was really good, in that it had hope. Then I would return to Lubbock, talk with anyone who would listen about this wonderful program of recovery I had found. Mainly to John Halsey, a Druggist whom I had known for several years and knew that I had a drinking problem, he would listen, and I would pour out my soul. I also had some information from Horace Fort as to how to start a group of A.A. such as they had in Dallas. but I for some time could not find anyone who would join me in a group. Then I received a telephone call from George Haugen, who had gone into A.A. in Kansas City, Missouri, and had been sober about the same period I had. So we had a meeting at his office, just the two of us. Then in a few weeks he called me that he had found some other A.A.'s who had gotten sober in Ft. Worth, one being Bill West, his sobriety date May 14th. 1946, just four days after I had taken my last drink. So we called a meeting for the few of them with Bill would join us, and the first meeting was in September at Tate Sanders Tire Store, and there were 12 members present; Searcy W., Bill West, Tate Sanders, Jim Wallace, Bill Grundy, Stew Bailey, Johnny Powers, George Haugen. The names of others I cannot recall, but this was the first organized meeting of the Lubbock Group of A.A.

In early 1947 word had spread around that we had a group in Lubbock and that people were staying sober in the program, thus we got calls very often to come and help start a group, and since we had the guidance of Horace Fort in setting up a group, we were in demand to do such chores.

MIDLAND TEXAS called for help to set up a group, and have a meeting for that purpose, so Bill West and myself went to Midland for the first meeting and present were; Henry Wolcott, Jimmy Hoover, Cotton Clover, from Odessa, Harry Denton, who had gotten sober in Dallas, and there were four or five additional prospective members present, but the group was started. Next was a call from PLAINVIEW TEXAS a meeting was set up for there, and present were; Fred Hancock, Louis McMurray, Charlie Malone, myself and Bill West. So the Plainview group was started, then a call from AMARILLO from Doc Ingram, a Dental Surgeon, a meeting held at the district court room with about 10 or 12 present, they later had meetings in various places to get started. Next was a call from ODESSA, TEXAS from Cotton Clover, to come and help start a group, and they were started up. This was about all of the groups started in 1947, however several loners were around in different places trying to get a pair or three to start a group.

In 1948 Dr. Andy Toomb, who had a hospital in Seminole Texas, where drunks could go to dry out, and of course it full to the limit with people sobering up since there was no other place in the country. Andy had

sobered up in Ft. Worth, and back to Seminole. Then from LAMESA TEXAS came R.C. Lott to the hospital and he sobered up, went back to Lamesa, later talked Robert Koger into going to get sober, then Bowers Purcell, then Evelyn K. and many others, to start a group, which included Pete Parker, then Bob Simpson.

In early 1947. the first open meeting of A.A. was held in LUBBOCK in a Sunday School room of the 1st Baptist Church. The speakers of course were Horace Fort, and Dr. Andy Toomb. It was attended by Dr. Toomb, Horace Fort, Searcy W., Bill West, Bill Grundy, Fred Hancock, Louis McMurray, Charlie Malone, Stew Bailey, J.N. Porter, Jim Milam, and some others, and all of our Auxiliary. and loved ones, about 25 persons in attendance.

A call from SAN ANGELO TEXAS for an open meeting by Dan Weldon, and along with Massey West, Pinkey Barnes, Ralph Jones from Ozona, Bill Hall, a D.A. came in later, but a group had been formed and was going good.

In April 1948, I prevailed upon Bill Wilson to come to Texas for a conference in Lubbock, I met him in Amarillo, where he and Lois arrived, and I along with Freda Jones from Dallas got on another plane and went to Lubbock for the conference. On the trip to Lubbock, Bill pulled out of his coat pocket some handwritten notes; "here read these and tell me what you think of them". I read them over, and told Bill "We don't need these down here' we just get along fine, there is nothing but love, I can see where you would need such up north, but not us - They were the 12 Traditions - and how terribly wrong I was - Bill even then could see that we would need the second legacy.

After the conference in Lubbock, at which about 150 persons attended, we journeyed to Dallas, where Bill would talk to several hundred people at the Fair Park auditorium, and people from Ft. Worth, East Texas, and all over attended, this was Bill's first trip to Texas, and he was impressed with the quality and growth of A.A. here. but was anxious to get across the need for the 12 traditions. Which he did very well.

We started having conventions all over the state by this time, and the beginning of the Top 0 Texas in Amarillo. the Texas State convention was well along the way with the first being held at Austin. St. Edwards University twice, then Waco, then it was to be in San Angelo. But the outbreak of Polio caused it to be moved to Temple, and there the first meeting and election of a Texas State Convention Committee was formed. However, not much came from it until Joe C. of Midland put it together.

Scanning over Texas and the Southwest over the next few years, the active members who come to mind, some are listed here:

DALLAS: Al Badger, Horace Fort, Bill Perkins, Bert Pennington. Olin Lancaster, Bob Schermerhorn, Charlie Frost, Burl McInernay, Esther Elezardi, Marty Carruthers, Bob Hesser, Joe McIlroy, Dick Breen, Searcy W, Ruth Breen, Icky Sheridan, Bill Finch, Ed Allison, Maurice Whaley, Eva Boyd, Bill P., Audrey Lynch, Mavis M., David A., Bill Finch, Freida Jones, Charles Milton, Adelyn R.M., Ethel Reynolds, Eric Smith.

FORT WORTH: Charley Kahn, Max Bourne, Jack Walker, George McQueen, Allen Connell, Blanche Connell.

AMARILLO: Albert Randall, Doc Ingram, Arthur & Margaret Ware, Ken Nelson, Allen Beville, Jim Weymouth, Bob Foster.

EL PASO: Eldridge Flournoy, Cecil Menasco.

LUBBOCK: Bill West, Searcy W., Stew Bailey, J.N. Porter, K.K. K., Pee Wee M., Jim Wallace, Bill Grundy, Buck Harbison. Nita Harbison, Don Bourne, Cotton James, Dallas Whaley, Carl Hensley, Johnny Powers, Fletcher Powers, Pat Garrett, Dotty S., Grimes Pearson, Marvin Armstrong, Chester Gann, Les Blann.

SAN ANGELO: Dan Weldon, Bill Hall, Pinkey Barnes, Massey West, Ethel Bryant, Gaylord Hankins, Amon McMillan, Mitch Ott.

WICHITA FALLS: Lem Taylor, Jack Elliott, Frank King.

TYLER, TEXAS: Morris McFarland, Frank King.

LAMESA: R.C. Lott, Bob Koger, Bowers Purcell, Evelyn K.

LOVIS: N.M.: Bob Doris. Pete Anderson.

SNYDER: Earnest Taylor. Snuffy Harrell.

ODESSA: Cotton Clover, Ray Paulette.

KILGORE: Burton Crawford

AUSTIN: Cecil Caviness, Roy German

SAN ANTONIO: Dorothy Hay, Kate Reynolds, Doc Biles, Joe Moran, Col. Quinn, Earl Abels, Joe Moran.

COLEMAN: Macon Freeman.

MIDLAND: Jimmy Hoover, Henry Wolcott, Charley Palmer, Harry Denton.

PLAINVIEW: Fred Hancock, Louis McMurray, Charlie Malone, Hugh Etter.

HOUSTON: Ed. H., Hox Nelms, Jimmy Meeks, Mildred Gary. Joyce Sanders, Maurice Hooper.

BROWNWOOD: John Carleton. Bill O'N., Lance Whaley, Nelda McL.

OZONA: Ralph Jones.

MONAHANS: Murray Howze.

MC ALLEN: John Hay, J. Moore.

EL PASO: Eldridge Flournoy, John Clifford.

ABILENE: Moon M.

KERMIT: Clayton F.

GAINESVILLE: Reece Haggarty.

PARTIAL LIST OF OLD TIMERS WHO BLAZED THE EARLY DAYS TRAILS *Deceased

* Eldridge Flournoy, El Paso, Tx.	'47	* Ethel Bryant, San Angelo, Tx.	'49	* Don Bourne, Lubbock, Tx.	'46
* Searcy W., Lubbock, Dallas	'46	* Bill Houston, Seminole, Tx.	'49	* Stew Bailey, Lubbock, Tx.	'47
* Charley Kahn, Fort Worth, Tx	'47	* Andy Toomb, Seminole, Tx.	'46	* George McQueen, Ft. Worth, Tx.	'45
* Macon Freeman, Coleman, Tx.	'45	* Earnest Taylor, Snyder, Tx.	'48	* Jack Walker, Ft. Worth, Tx.	'45
* Burton Crawford, Kilgore, Tx.	'46	* Snuffy Harrell, Snyder, Tx.	'50	* Max Bourne, Ft. Worth, Tx.	'45
* Bob Koger, Lamesa, Tx.	'48	* Jack Elliott, Wichita Falls, Tx.	'47	* Allen Connell, Ft. Worth, Tx.	'46
* Jim Weymouth, Amarillo Tx.	'49	* Lem Taylor, Wichita Falls, Tx.	'48	* J.N. Porter, Lubbock, Tx.	'47
* Ken Nelson, Amarillo, Tx.	'50	* Morris McFarland, Tyler, Tx.	'48	* R.C. Lott, Lamesa, Tx.	'48
Ed H., Hunt, Tx.	'46	* Roy German, Austin, Tx.	'47	* Bob Schermerhorn, Dallas, Tx.	'45
* C.B. Titus, Dumas, Borger, Tx.	'47	* Cecil Caviness, Austin, Tx.	'48	* Bert Pennington, Dallas, Tx.	'44
* Sis Hamilton, Brownfield, Tx	'49	* Albert Randall, Amarillo, Tx.	'47	* Jim Wallace, Lubbock, Tx.	'47
* Pat Garrett, Brownfield, Tx.	'50	* Arthur & Margaret Ware, Amarillo, Tx.	'49	* Cotton James, Lubbock, Tx.	'49
* Kelley Chamberlain, Clarendon, Tx.	'48	* Amon McMillan, San Angelo, Tx.	'49	* Pee Wee Menefee, Lubbock, Tx.	'49
Lewis Chamberlain, Pampa, Tx.	'49	* Dick Breen, Dallas, Midland-Lmesa, Tx.	'42	* Bill West, Lubbock, Tx.	'46
W.O. B., Dallas, Tx. (orig)	'49	* Icky Sheridan, Houston, Dallas, Tx.	'46	* K.K. Kimbro, Lubbock, Tx.	'48
* Esther Elezardi, Dallas, Tx.	'43	* Evelyn K., Lamesa, Tx.	'51	* Buck Harbison, Lubbock, Tx.	'48
* Marty Carruthers, Dallas, Tx.	'48	* Ken Nelson, Amarillo, Tx.	'50	* Nita Harbison, Lubbock, Tx.	'48
* Olin Lancaster, Dallas, Tx.	'46	* Bob Simpson, Lamesa, Tx.	'48	* Dallas, Whaley, Lubbock, Tx.	'46
* Otto Biles, San Antonio, Tx.	'48	* Mildred Gary Simpson, Houston, Dal.	'50	* John Carleton, Brownwood, Tx.	'48
* Joe Moran, San Antonio, Tx.	'48	* Murray Howze, Monahans, Tx.	'50	* John Witt, Tahoka, Tx.	'48
* Col. Quinn, San Antonio, Tx.	'47	* Al Badger, Dallas, Tx.	'45	* Bill Prothro, Dallas, Tx.	'48
* Maurice Whaley, Dallas, Tx.	'47	* Russel Wimberly, Longview, Tx.	'45	* Jimmy Hoover, Midland, Tx.	'47
* Pete A.W. Anderson, Clovis, N.M.	'48	* Pinkey Barnes, San Angelo, Tx.	'46	* Henry Wolcott, Midland, Tx.	'47
* O.B. Johnson, Roswell, N.M.	'48	* Massey West, San Angelo, Tx.	'46	* Bob D., Clovis, N.M. (Cal)	'45
* Joyce Sanders, Houston, Tx.	'49	* Dan Weldon, San Angelo, Tx.	'46	* Annie Dixon, Colorado City, Tx.	'48
* Maurice Hooper, Houston, Tx.	'47	* Bill Hall, San Angelo, Tx.	'48	* Doc Black, Palestine, Tx.	'45
* Harry Denton, Midland, Odessa, Tx.	'47	* Jimmy Meeks, Houston, Dallas.	'46	* Ralph Jones, Ozona, Tx.	'46
* Cotton Clover, Odessa, Tx.	'47	* Bill Perkins, Dallas, Tx.	'45	* Tom Botts, Dallas, Tx.	'48
* Ray Paulette, Odessa, Tx.	'48	* George Ingram, Amarillo, Tx.	'45	* John Clifford, El Paso, Tx.	'48
* Bill Heatley, Paducah, Tx.	'49	* Johnny Beville, Amarillo, Tx.	'56	* Pearl Hankins, San Angelo, Tx.	'50
* Joe Jefferson, Pampa, Tx.	'49	* Horace Nelms, Houston, Tx.	'46	* Nelda McL., Brownwood, Tx.	'49
* Louis McMurray, Plainview, Tx.	'47	* Ed Allison, Dallas, Tx.	'46	* George D., Lubbock, Tx.	'47
* Fred Hancock, Plainview, Tx.	'47	* Dan A., Chapel Creek, Tx.	'53	* Frank K., Tyler, Tx.	'48
* Charley Malone, Plainview, Tx.	'47	* Carl Hensley, Lubbock, Seabrook	'48	* John Hay, McAllen, Tx.	'48
* Mitch Ott, San Angelo, Tx.	'46	* Burl McClernay, Dallas, Tx.	'45	* Bowers P., Lamesa, Tx.	'49
* Dan Weldon, San Angelo, Tx.	'46	* Joe McIlroy, Dallas, Tx.	'46	* Burton Crawford, Kilgore, Tx.	'47
Gaylord Hankins, San Angelo, Tx.	'49				

We regret any who have been left off. Please give them to us.

IN MEMORIAM TO THOSE WHO GAVE MUCH OF THEMSELVES IN THE EARLY DAYS OF A.A. IN LUBBOCK, TEXAS

ABBOT, TED	CLARK, RAY	GARRETT, PAT	HOTALING, EDNA	LIVELY, D.N.L.	PATTERSON, DOUG	SCOLLAY, JOHN	THORN, HENRY
ACRES, CHARLES	CLIFFORD, PAUL	GARRETT, ROY	HOTALING, CLIFF	LIVELY, ED	PATTERSON, DUDLEY	SCOTT, DODIE	TOOMBS, MURRAY
ALLEN, A.A.	CLIFT, DINK	GIBBONS, JERRY	HOTALING, FRANK	LOYD, DAVE	PATTERSON, HORACE	SCOTT, DORIS	TOUCHTON, RUDOLPH
AMOS, BUDDY	COBB, FRANK	GOODJOHN, GEORGE	HUCKABEE, JOHN	LYNN, HACK	PATTERSON, JESS	SCOTT, SCOTTIE	TRENT, DON
ANTHONY, LLOYD	COCHRAN, ESTHER	GRAVES, CHARLIE	HUMPHRIES, DUB	MCAFEE, COTTON	PATTERSON, LEE	SEALE, TOMMY	TURNER, GEORGE
ARNOLD, BRENDA	COCHRAN, MARION	GRAY, DEWITT	HUMPHRIES, ESTON	MCCANLESS, SAM	PATTERSON, PAT	SENTER, SISSY	VAUGH, BOB
ARNOLD, NEIL	COFFMAN, EBB	GREGORY, SHORTY	HUNT, HOWARD	MCCARTY, MACK	PATTERSON, ROY	SHAEPER, CONRAD	VERNON, COWAN
AVERY, BILL	COURTNEY, BLACKIE	GREGORY, BILLY	INGRAM, W.L.	MCDANIEL, RED	PAYNE, DOC	SHAW, DOC	VIVAL, GUS
BAILEY, STEW	COX, DOROTHY	GREGSON, JAMES	JACKSON, HELEN	MCDUFFY, DICK	PAYNE, LLOYD	SHEAN, J.C.	WALDEN, J.C.
BAKER, LEIGHTON	CRUMP, RUEL	GRIFFIN, RUEL	JACKSON, OTTO	MCELROY, CLARENCE	PENN, HELLEN	SHOUSE, BOB	WALKER, A.A.
BANKS, LAWRENCE	CRUMP, J.C.	HAGAIN, JEFF	JAMES, COTTON	MCGUAGHEY, BOB	PERKINS, RUEBEN	SHUMAN, KARL	WALLACE, JIM
BARTON, ALTON	CRUMP, J.C.	HALE, ROSCOE	JAMES, JOLINE	MCKELVEY, HUGH	PEARSON, RUTH	SIMPSON, BOB	WATSON, LOUIS
BECK, JEFF	DAVIDSON, LEROY	HALEY, JOE	JEFFERSON, JOE	MCQUEARY, JACK	PICKETT, BILL	SMITH, EDDIE	WATSON, TOM
BELL, JEANETTE	DAVIS, IKE	HALL, HARLAN	JOHNSON, RAY	MAKER, FRANK	PORTER, J.N.	SMITH, HUGH	WATTS, R.W.
BELL, PETE	DEARDORF, ANNE	HALLISELL, HARRY	JONES, AMOLEE	MAHONEY, JOE	PRIDMORE, JOE	SMITH, SWAT	WEBB, BASIL
BEVERS, PAUL	DICKSON, W.H.	HALSEY, GAIL	JONES, BILLY	MANNING, JOE	PURDOM, TOM	SMITH, TOL	WEBB, ROGER
BIBB, BUSTER	DODD, TOM	HAMILTON, BILLY	JONES, MELVIN	MARSH, HARRY	QUINLAND, PETE	SMOAT, BILL	WEBB, THOMAS
BIBB, LONNIE	DUMAN, JIM	HAMPTON, VIRGIL	JONES, RED	MATHEWS, GENE	RALEY, BEDFORD	SOLBEE, ARMAL	WELCH, GLEN
BLAIR, DINK	EDWARDS, NOEL	HANSON, LEE	JONES, VIRGIL	MECKS, BILLY	RANSFORD, FLORENCE	SOLLEY, ARTHUR	WEST, BILL
BLANN, LES	ELLIOTT, HERB	HARRISON, BUCK	JONES, WIMPY	MILLER, LOWELL	RANES, SHORTY	SPARLIN, DALLAS	WIESE, FRED
BLAZI, CHARLIE	ENGLISH, LUKE	HARDEN, CLIFF	KENNEDY, FRANK	MILLER, MARY	RATHERS, LOUIE	STAFFORD, BOB	WHALEY, DALLAS
BOONE, CHARLES	ERPS, ELBERT	HARPER, AMOS	KENTON, JOHN	MILLER, LAWELL	RATLIFF, POE	STAFFORD, ETHEL	WILLIAMS, TROY
BOWEN, DOODLE	FAGO, CHARLES	HARTSFIELD, DENT	KETCHUM, JOHN	MILLER, MARY	REECE, CHARLIE	STANLEY, DEWEY	WILLIS, JEAN
BOYD, HOUSTON	FARLEY, BILL	HAYNES, DALE	KILPATRICK, ART	MINER, CHARLES	REED, JOHN	STANLEY, EDDIE	WILPITZ, FRED
BRATCHER, FLOYD	FARLEY, J.D.	HAYNES, JOAN	KIMBRO, KIM	MINER, RUTH	RICHARDS, BUCK	STANSELL, N.B.	WIMBERLY
BRAZIL, GLEN	FIELD, ADRON	HAYNES, CARL	KINDLE, CHESSIE	MORGAN, JANE	RICKLAND, GEORGE	STEELE, JOHN	WILSON, CARL
BREEN, DICK	FITZGIBBON, FITZ	HENSON, JACK	KING, BLACKIE	MORGAN, KENNETH	RICKETTS, LOYD	STEELE, SAM	WILSON, EARL
BROWN, FRANK	FLOWERS, BELLE	HERBST, R.J.	KIRK, BILL	MORRIS, CHARLIE	RILEY, SHIRLEY	STEPHENS, HOPE	WILSON, MARVIN
BURKE, GEORGE	FOWLER, MARK	HIATT, ERNIE	KNOTT, CECIL	MOUSE, HERSHEL	ROBERTS, BEN	STERMAN, JACK	WILSON, RAY
BURNS, BILL	FRANKLIN, EDNA	HIBBETS, JIMMY	KOGER, ROBERT	MURDOCK, JAY	ROCHESTER, M.M.	STEWART, BOOTS	WITT, ERNIE
BURNS, JESS	FRANKLIN, ERSHEL	HINES, LARRY	LAMB, JUANITA	NEAL, FRED	ROGERS, LYNN	STOUT, BILL	WOOD, HARRISON
BURRIS, LEE	FRAZIER, BLACKIE	HOBBS, DAVID	LANSFORD, BILL	NELSON, EVERETT	ROYAL, DORENE	SUMERLIN, BILL	WOOD, WOODY
BURRIS, STERLING	FREEMAN, RUSTY	HODGES, TOM	LAW, JOE	NORTON, RUTH	SAMSON, ARMY	SUMMERS, ELLEN	WOOLER, SHIRLEY
CARPENTER, BEDFORD	GULLINGHAM, BUNCH	HOFFMAN, C.C. JR.	LEACH, HAROLD	OLDHAM, BRUCE	SANDERS, SANDY	TAYLOR, ERNIE	WRIGHT, CHARLIE
CARR, CONNIE	GAGLER, DENNIS	HOGGY, KATHLEEN	LEE, BOB	OLGHSBY, BRUCE	SANDERS, TATE	TAYLOR, GUY	WRIGHT, JACK
CHANEY, GEORGIA	GANN, CHESTER	HOOPER, JUDGE	LIBBY, CHARLES	PALMER, M.G.	SCALES, SAM	TAYLOR, WILLIS	YOUNG, DUSTY
CHERRY, BOBBIE	GARNER, DEE	HOOPER, ALICE	LINDSEY, RALPH	PARKER, CLIFF	SCHAALWA, DOC	TEDDLIE, JACK	YOUNG, GARY
CLARK, HENRY		HOPPER, JOE	LINDSEY, CHUNKY	PARKER, DOUG	SCOGGIN, EL	THOMAS, LEROY	YOUNG, WES

time. As usual the Al-Anons got the best room. They met upstairs with the slot machines. It is said that my aunt, Irene Beville, had to be pried away from the slot machines to get her into a meeting. They, the family group, continued to meet with slot machines until about 1950 or 1951 when the mortgage was paid and the slots removed.

Early in 1950 the group began discussing incorporation. The name was selected and they incorporated under the name of **Old Coral Club, Inc.** effective 8 PM on March 6, 1950. They then became two separate entities, the Old Coral Club and the Top of Texas AA Group of Amarillo at 2024 Washington

At my first meeting on July 25, 1956, birthday night, there was a large crowd. There must have been 50 or 55 present. Fred Patton, with, I believe seven (7) years; Dr. Dave M. had 2 years and Guy W. from Tucumcari, NM, had 1 year. At that time and from the very start there had been four (4) meetings a week - Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8 PM and Sunday at 11 AM. Monday and Friday and Sunday were closed and Wednesday open. Saturday was family night with Bingo at 8 PM and covered dish supper at 6:30 before Bingo. A good sober time was had by all.

Always present on Sunday morning was Vaughn Gouldy who was an inspiration to all of us. Vaughn could say more in ten (10) minutes than any three (3) convention speakers I have heard could say in an hour. The closed meetings were generally small varying from about 8 to 10 people on Sunday morning to around 20 on Monday and Friday nights. The open meetings on Wednesday night usually had about 30 to 35 present. The auxiliary (Al-Anon) meeting on Friday night was usually attended by 7 or 8 women. It was years before there were any men in attendance in Al-Anon. Some of the first were John H., Doyce G. and Touch T.

In early 1957 the property at 2024 Washington, the Old Coral Club, was sold to the Gulf Oil company. The money was used to purchase the old Christian Science Church at 1301 Taylor St. in Amarillo. Work was begun to remodel the building in May of 1957 and the Top of Texas Group moved in June of that year.

It should be mentioned here that at the time of these transactions, Bob Bacon was President of the Old Coral Club.

Bob contributed many hours of his time to the remodeling and the move. I have personal knowledge of the hundreds of dollars that he contributed to that remodeling project and the move. We had run out of funds and very few people knew of this. Bob was never repaid nor did he ask to be. He did it out of love for AA and the Club.

When the building at 1301 Taylor was remodeled, the club had Golden Light Coffee Company design the kitchen. Dick M. and his wife opened a cafe there serving breakfast, lunch and afternoon snack. However, with such limited membership Dick lost money and had to close up shop.

It is hard to talk about AA in Amarillo without mention of the Top of Texas Round Up. In late 1948 Albert Randall brought up the fact that Amarillo AA needed a regional meeting. Information was mailed out to nearby groups and in October of 1948 the first called TriState Conference was held at the Old Coral Club. They were still at 2024 Washington at the time. Speakers were called from the floor. The hat was passed to help defray the cost. Of course, as is generally the case, we came up short and Albert made up the difference. This soon became the "Round Up" and was guided by Albert through 1954. At that time Albert requested that a committee be formed and since 1955 the Top of Texas Round Up is run by that committee which was made up of members of the Top of Texas Group.

From 1957 to 1960 times were hard for the Old Coral Club and also for the Top of Texas AA Group but each time just before the club would have had to be closed pocket books opened and we would see daylight. Lewis Williams was president of the Old Coral Club during that time and it was due to his hard work and able management that we were able to survive.

On Friday, 13 March 1970, fire destroyed the rear of the Old Coral Club building and the front suffered considerable smoke damage. We were fortunate to have Blue Morrow as president of the Old Coral Club at that time. He was a good businessman, and with the insurance money we were able to rebuild the Club to its present condition. While the Club was being rebuilt, we met in an old church building at 1200 Wolflin at Hayden. The Old Coral Club is now one of the finest AA facilities in the country.

Through the years many groups in Amarillo today and in the past have had their roots in the Top 'O Texas Group. One of the first of these was started by Bill Bartlett and was called the Twelfth Step Group. That group met first at 3110 West 6th in a building furnished by a member, Dub Walsh. They later moved to 10th and Lincoln, then the Canyon Highway and to 3rd and Florida and then to 316 B. N. McMasters. Finally they moved to 507½ East 4th where they continued to meet until the group closed in the mid-sixties.

The next spin off was the Suburban Group at 518 West 10th. They later moved to 1304 Van Buren and remained there until they closed in 1979. Some of the early organizers of that group were Pete Burnett, Doris King, George Turnley, Madeline T. and Dallas C.

HISTORY OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS . . .

IN AMARILLO

In 1945 Dr. George G. Ingham of Amarillo was back east on business and became acquainted with Alcoholics Anonymous. He returned to Amarillo, sober, bringing with him several Big Books. He remained sober until he passed away in late 1956.

In early March of 1946 George Turnley, ex-Olds-Cadillac dealer and now a Real Estate Broker, was committed to St. Anthony's Hospital for the third or fourth time by his wife, Lucille. George Turnley had heard that George Ingham was staying sober and asked his wife, Lucille, to get in touch with him and ask that he stop by the hospital to see him.

George I. was at the hospital to see George T. the very next day and brought him a Big Book. George T. read the entire book through with out stopping. George I. came back to the hospital the next day and George T. asked "Why don't we start an AA group in Amarillo?" George I. said he had just been waiting to find someone who was interested enough to help him do just that. He suggested that when George T. got out of the hospital he come by his, George I.'s, office and they'd discuss it.

Not many days later the two Georges got together in Dr. George's office and made plans for Amarillo's first AA group. They ran a small article in the newspaper and also made direct contact with several drunks who they thought might be interested.

In late March of that year - 1946 - the first AA meeting in Amarillo was held in Dr. George's office in the Amarillo Building at 3rd & Polk Street. At that first meeting there were three Georges - Dr. George I., George T. and a George whose last name is not now known and Al Lane. Bill Bartlett has been asked to attend but couldn't get sober enough until the third meeting. At those first few meetings there were Bill Bartlett, Dr. George Ingham, George Turnley, Squab Phillips, Bill (Old Scratch) Kirk, Monty Montgomery, Allen Beville and Albert Randall, Al Lane and Searcy W. from Lubbock.

The group grew slowly. As they grew they had to seek larger quarters. They first moved to Judge Gee's 47th District Court room. Many objected to meeting in the court house at all and certainly in a court room. Then Bill Bartlett and Squab Phillips decided to rent a room each Tuesday night at the Amarillo Hotel. They only had money for one night a week and not by the month. This, of course, made it necessary for each member attending to stop by the desk and ask where the AA meeting was that night.

Bill later said that it never occurred to them to rent the room in one of their own names so that members could ask only "Which room is Bill Bartlett in tonight?" So that only lasted for a few meetings and they moved back to Judge Gee's court room for a while and then to the old Amarillo City Auditorium Amarillo College was then in the Auditorium and the group met in one of their classrooms. As they grew and slowly became a little more affluent they rented an office in the old Johnson Building at 606 Taylor. They met there for quite some time and tried to keep it open during the day serving coffee. During this time they began to discuss getting a permanent meeting place. Some of them had by now attended meetings in the Dallas-Ft. Worth area and had heard about "AA Club".

It was in March of 1947 that they began to raise money for the purpose of buying a permanent place. The money was raised from within the group as well as in the community. Very shortly they had enough money for a down payment on the old Dr. Wolflin home at 2024 Washington. One member had brought in two (2) checks for \$5,000. each from people in the community - not members of the group. The Dr. Wolflin home was a two story frame building with a half basement. Albert Randall, AA member and local building contractor, remodeled the building and they moved into it in April 1947.

After lengthy discussions concerning how to pay the mortgage, they decided to open a De-tox unit (drying out place) upstairs. Albert Randall had an in-law who was a nurse and she was to oversee the "clinic". There were four (4) beds for men and two (2) for women. Some of the wives complained-one even going so far as to say that nothing went on up there "except one big orgy". So needless to say that didn't work too well at all - particularly after the rumor went around that they had taken in two good looking women in the clinic and two of the AA members had then gone out and got drunk so that they could get into it.

It was then decided to put a battery of slot machines upstairs. The slot machines paid off the mortgage even though one member, George Turnley, complained bitterly about "any kind of gambling" in the club building. Years later I asked George if it was true that he played the slots more than anyone else even though he objected to them. He said "You're damn right I did. I wanted to get that building paid for and get those things out of there.

At about this time the Family Group or Auxiliary came in to being in Amarillo. There was no Al-Anon at that

In 1974 the Moss Lane Group was formed at 3512 Moss Lane where they remain an active group today with several meetings each day. Some of the early organizers of Moss Lane were Johnny B., Helen G., Blue M., Barbara H., Don B., George G., Jo H., and George S.

Then in 1981 Hobbs Plaza was organized mostly from Moss Lane members. Hobbs started at 2803 Hobbs but quickly outgrew that building and moved to 3215 Commerce where they are now located and still growing.

I have made meetings from Hawaii to Florida and visited clubs in between and have not found a city any where near the size of Amarillo that has three (3) large clubs serving the needs of AA and Al-Anon and open all day every day of the week from 7 AM to 10 PM.

The history of AA in Amarillo would not be complete without mentioning the famous Potter County Jail "Ten Day Hold" program. Sometime around 1948 or 1949 several Amarillo AA members met with then Potter County Sheriff, Paul Gaither, to work out a solution to the problem of the alcoholic who could not sober up on his own and also to relieve the "drunk" jail problem. Sheriff Gaither came up with a solution: that was, An AA member could commit an alcoholic to Potter County Jail for 10 days, The alcoholic would not be booked or charged and it would not appear on his record. However, he could not get out until the full ten days had been served and until the AA member who had committed him came to get him out. He would be released to no other person - not his wife, mother, attorney, a judge, no one. This program later came to be known as an AA Hold. And it worked very well until it had to be changed in 1956 when Whistle F. committed Ira W. Whistle left for Arizona before the ten days were up on business and was gone for six weeks. Ira called the club on the 11th day to ask "Where's Whistle? He was supposed to pick me up yesterday." Sheriff Gaither said Whistle put him in so Whistle had to get him out. After six weeks Whistle finally returned to retrieve poor Ira. There is a moral to that story: Ira is still sober thirty years later. Sheriff Gaither remained Amarillo AA's best and truest friend until his death in the mid-seventies.

When I went into AA in 1956 over 50% of the sober members of the Top of Texas Group were alumni of the "Potter County Jail AA Ten Day Hold." In my opinion it was the most effective and successful alcoholic treatment plan ever in Amarillo.

And that's the way it was in the past in AA in Amarillo, TX.

*All persons listed by full name are now deceased.

JOHNNY B.

IN DALLAS

From an article written by Frank P. O'Donnell published in the Daily Commercial Record, Dallas, Texas, October 2, 1969, we obtained the following.

"...that upstairs room at 912-1/2 Main Street was the home of the earliest group of Alcoholics Anonymous in the City of Dallas in the year of 1945. There had been meetings in members' homes, but this was open to the public. The building which carried the street address of 912-1/2 Main Street is imbedded very deeply in the minds of many prominent persons, both men and women. To a great many of these people this stairway which went up only one flight was the longest walk they had ever made. Doctors, lawyers, ministers, salesmen, bums, business men, con artists, housewives, shady ladies, sincere people and many phonies went through that entrance. Tormented and tortured - hopeless and helpless - they went up each agonized step, most of them not having the least idea of what they were going to find. Many of them found the answer to their prayers at the top of those steps and are living examples of the modern day miracles being wrought through a faith in God."

"Many business, civic and social leaders found freedom from the disease of alcoholism in the AA fellowship and through the suggested 12 steps found a sobriety that they still possess. Many have passed on . . . and now 912-1/2 Main Street is gone. This address spawned groups which are now located in every neighborhood in the city."

"The old man that was telling me about this location chuckled when he said, 'Most of us had been called about everything, but we couldn't stand the name alcoholic - the AA meeting place was right up over a liquor store - we would act like we were going in the liquor store and then duck into the doorway at 912-1/2 Main. It would have hurt our reputation to be seen trying to get sober.'"

When the group here was five months old, a plea came to help get "something going" in San Antonio. Down I went with two of the Dallas "babies," for three days and nights we did our A.A. bit with a burning zeal. We did all we could, left feeling very hopeful, but nothing "caught fire." In a few weeks we thought the trip had been in vain and that ole "I" trouble reared its ugly head. Maybe if I could have stayed on the spot to do there all the things I had done here, maybe I could have made it 90. A year and a half later another plea came from San Antonio, so I went, with the same burning zeal, but worked no harder and in one week rounded up four alxies, three females and one male. The male was a man we'd contacted on the previous trip. This time he happened to be ready to grab the torch out of my hand and so "evahthing" caught on fire. In just a year San

Antonio has a vital and growing group. I visited them for ten days a month later. All they've done since has been through their own efforts, not mine. "I" definitely wasn't needed on the spot. The gent's being ready to grab the torch was definitely not my doing.

The complete death, I hope, of the "I" trouble has come through my experience with a group in the United States Disciplinary Barracks at North Camp Hood, Texas. I've sponsored it solely through correspondence for a year and a half. "No females allowed" kept me away. Weekly I've written the two men who contacted me. They kept doggedly on until they had a group. Now the group, through its own efforts, with no help from the outside, has gained all the respect and notice it deserves. And this month a letter from none other than the Commandant of the Camp arrived, inviting this female to visit.

In the beginning of this article I said I'd found the key - that the results lie in the hands of this Power greater than I am and it is the one that fits. The key is not mine so I can't feel in any way responsible. The groups to me are as miraculous as my own sobriety. They are God's doing and both awe me in a wondrous way." . . . Esther E., Dallas, Texas.

April 9, 1942 - Margaret B., Sec'y. of New York Office, wrote to Kent W. sending him the names of persons inquiring about who to contact in Dallas or the names and addresses of persons wanting help in the area. Margaret said that Ruth Hock had gotten married in February '42 and now lived in Cleveland. (Kent W. did not reply to this note).

April 23, 1942 - Margaret B., Sec'y of New York Office, wrote again to Kent W. This was a request to fill out information to be listed on the new AA Bulletin of members and groups, and members to contact. Kent W. was still not heard from. It is supposed he moved from Dallas,

EIGHT MONTHS LATER . . . 12/17/42 A letter was received in New York from a man named Ralph B. in Dallas. He wrote, "I was sent here suddenly two months ago on war work and since that time have not been able to learn anything of AA activity here in Dallas. If there is no group here, possibly I may be able to help some one that needs a lifting hand if you hear of someone."

Dec. 21, 1942 - Letter from Margaret B., Secretary in New York, to Ralph B. in Dallas. "We certainly are glad to have an AA in Dallas. We had a Kent W. but he seems to have moved away. From time to time we have heard rumors of a group starting, but nothing came of them. We recently had a letter from our Fort Worth member. Get in touch with him if you go there . . . he is George McL, " . . . "Enclosed is Bill Wilson's message to the Groups and inasmuch as you are away from your home

group in Detroit, I thought you might like to have it."

THREE MONTHS LATER, sometime in March 1943, our Esther E. has moved to Dallas from Houston. Margaret B., Sec'y. wrote her from New York . . ."I do hope you are going to like Dallas. With you and Ralph B. both there now, we are assured of an AA group. We are expecting some national publicity in a few weeks which may bring some new prospects."

April 3, 1943 - Esther E. wrote New York, "The new Dallas Group met for their first time last night..three inactive alkies, one active one, and two non-alcoholics: Esther E., Ralph B., and Ruth T. - Ralph's wife Gladys and Esther's husband, Frank; and Art B. from Detroit, who had been on a protracted bender and wanting to get sober.

"The Rev. Brown (now the Bishop of West Texas) has written the Houston Group and invited them over (expenses paid for three) on the 15th of August to help get the Group going in San Antonio. Do hope they can go and light up just one alky to carry on there. Did you know Jack Disosway? Bishop Brown wrote me he died in London last May - he was with the Red Cross Field Service. Jack did so much for A.A. in the south."

Sept. 21 and 23, 1943 - letters to Esther from New York Secretary regarding a visit to Texas by Bill and Lois which was being planned for January '44. "Bill will visit Houston, too, and spend a least a good part of one day with Larry J. . . . they will try to stop in Tucson and also make a side trip to Oklahoma City." . . . "I still have to write to Little Rock of Bill's visit. Just finished a letter to Pat G. in Houston." "Bill will have one night with you members in Dallas, so hope you can gather the fold together . . . How about asking San Antonio to return your visit and come . . . and contact George McL. in Fort Worth."

October 1, 1943 - Group Information sheet furnished by Dallas Group - No. of Members - 12; Meetings Tues. & Fri. 8:00 p.m. - meetings held in the homes of members - Address: P.O.Box #1721.

Nov. 13, 1943 - letter to Esther from N.Y. - " . . . Wonder if you have heard from Roy Y. since he climbed up on his "ink pink cloud". He is riding higher than a kite and just loving everyone and everything. All because the C.O. or someone in charge has recognized his usefulness in the alkie field and he is to stay on attached to the Medical Division if all goes well. It will be wonderful for him and such a help to the alkies he can reach. . . Hank E. came in last week from Houston to talk over plans for Bill's visit. He spoke at the N.Y. A.A. meeting and the phone has been ringing ever since praising Hank.

Jan. 11, 1944 - Group Information Sheet - Group

Membership 25; Meetings held Friday at 8 p.m. at the YMCA. Esther E., Secretary

July 16, 1945 - Group Information Sheet - Group Membership 50; Meetings Monday and Thursday at 8:00 p.m. - meetings held in the Clubroom at 912-1/2 Main Street. Secretary, Vi B.

Jan. 24, 1946 - Group Information Sheet - Group Membership 75 - Meetings Monday and Thursday at 8:00 p.m. - Meetings held at the Clubroom, 912-1/2 Main Street, Dallas, Texas, Secretary, Mary C.

IN DEEP EAST TEXAS

There are so many precious memories - our personal first encounter with the Fellowship - the history of AA as a whole - and to us Texans, the beginnings of AA in our State. AA in Texas began in Houston, Texas in 1940, quickly spreading to Dallas, San Antonio and Fort Worth.

"Doc" Black from Palestine, Texas, passed away some years ago, but during his lifetime, his wife Nan wrote the following letter:

"Doc should have answered your appeal for historical facts of AA in Texas, but he is much too modest. I am proud of his devotion to A.A. and of his contribution to its beginning in East Texas. So, I'm attaching the information in brief, hoping it proves to be of additional interest to the history you have received already . . .

"In May of 1945 when Dallas A.A. held an open meeting to honor Esther E. and celebrate their 2nd Anniversary, Doc B. and Nan slipped into a back row seat for their first AA thrill. The real thrill began when Doc had his AA birthday on Labor Day that same year.

"In June 1945 Tommy T. was directed by his beloved Bishop Quinn to Houston for his introduction and immediate "take" to A.A. One of his sponsors was the wonderful Anna D.

"Tommy got Doc's name, wrote him, and they met in Nacogdoches in July 1945 for their own first A.A. fellowship, telephoning their respective A.A. sponsoring cities to come and help them with their meeting. Shortly thereafter several carloads of members from Houston and Dallas drove to Nacogdoches to spend a hilarious weekend teaching Doc and Tommy how to hold meetings and encouraging them to do so. They decided on the "Deep East Texas AA" name, each got another member or two, and they alternated meetings in Nacogdoches, Palestine, and later in Longview, Centerville, Lufkin, Center, Carthage, Marshall, Jacksonville and others were soon sending one or two babies to the three towns holding meetings each Thursday of the alternate weeks. What marvelous

fellowship with fundamental AA, shared by the Deep East Texas Group of A.A. (Enclosed is a precious copy of their newsletter "THE SCREWBALL", published by Tommy T. at Nacogdoches).

"In February 1947, three Palestine AAs, Doc included, went to Tyler to look up three men whose names had come from various groups as prospective members. They found one more man through "accident" who was also ready, and introduced the four to each other and planned to return the next week to help them hold a closed meeting. Meanwhile, Morris McF. phoned his Dallas sponsor about the AA Roundup, and in typical Al B. fashion promoted a "big open meeting" to start Tyler off; the Palestine Group attended. Palestine AAs returned to Tyler weekly to encourage their closed meetings and invited the Tyler group to join the Deep East Texas group. Tyler met often with the Deep East Texas AA group, but decided on a separate group name.

"As membership grew in the many little towns, the Deep East Texas group became just an annual celebration, but equal in numbers, interest and fellowship to our State AA conferences today . . . A great heritage for widespread AA in East Texas."
... Nan Black

There are a few prospects around here. It would be fine if you had two or three over there. I am going to wade into them here as soon as I get an opening. I need to do some work to help others for my own good. If there is anything I can do over there just drop me a note and I will run over. I plan to go back to Dallas, in a week or two. Will drop you a note and if you can make it, will come by for you.

Doc, think about me every day and pull for me; I will do the same for you. I know that these mental "contacts" will be helpful to both of us. And if you are ever over this way, drop in to see me. My office and residence phones are in the directory. Would be glad for you to meet my family, or we can just visit together downtown.
Sincerely, Tommy T.

Dear Dr. Black:

July 5, 1945

Received your letter this a.m. and it was a real thrill to me to hear from you. My sobriety since June 8 has been due in large measure to the contacts I have had by letter with A.A.s whom I have met since that date. Of course, the visits I made to Houston and Dallas gave me something solid to walk on, but those of us in isolated places can be helped tremendously by hearing from our pals.

I notice that you are ready to go up to Dallas with me next Monday night to attend meeting there. I doubt that I can make it next Monday as I will be out of town over the weekend and I will have to stick around the office

all day Monday. I can go the next Monday night, I am sure. Will advise you on this later.

In the meantime, I believe my wife and I can drive over here Tuesday night in response to your invitation to visit in your home. All you need to do is keep the coffee pot hot. You and I can probably visit awhile together and then join in with the wives. We'd like very much to come over as I haven't been there in quite awhile.

Incidentally, I have a friend here who is in our boat. If we have progressed enough by then I might bring him. Am sending you one copy each of some literature I just received from New York. You may have all this, but if so you might use these extra copies with some friend there. I know it will be highly beneficial to both of us if we can get one or two in our hometowns interested in following the A.A. Program. Then we could have "inter-city" meetings, as they call it in the Rotary Club.

Incidentally, I have asked both the Dallas and Houston clubs to publish on their blackboards my address so that any who travel through here will look me up. You may wish to do this also.

If nothing prevents will see you Tuesday night. In the meantime my only recommendation is that you try hard on the 24 hour basis. When I shave every morning I am reminded to read the pledge and take a day's "vow" because I have the 24-Hour pledge staring me in the face when I open the cabinet. Luck to you.

Sincerely, Tommy T.

IN FORT WORTH

The first AA Group in Fort Worth, Texas began when Ralph R., a suffering alcoholic, went to the home of George M. for help with his drinking problem . . . August 28, 1943.

Ralph was a railroad switchman and one-time deputy sheriff. He had fought a losing battle with the bottle for many years, although at the time he contacted George, he was only 32 years old. Ralph was desperate and so was his family. A sister-in-law in Kansas City had read an article about AA and had mailed it to Ralph's wife. The wife called the Fort Worth Star-Telegram and asked an executive there if he knew of an AA group in the City. The call was switched to someone who gave her George's telephone number. This was in the Spring of 1943, and Ralph phoned George, but did not follow through until August 28, 1943. Then, after a painful 12-day drunk, Ralph went to George's home.

The AA message clicked with Ralph on that date. He learned that George, a retired automobile distributor, had made his contact with AA in Ohio in the early 1940's and was staying sober by reading the limited AA

literature available at that time and by attempting to follow the AA program.

It must have been pretty tough at times for George - going it alone. But, when Ralph came to him in person, Fort Worth's first group took shape. The two men met at least once weekly and held AA meetings, following the program format observed generally today.

In November of 1943, Ann T., socially-prominent wife of a Fort Worth lawyer, contacted George and Ralph. She was Fort Worth's AA No. 3. The trio met for a while in a small area over a stable on Summit Avenue, once proud silk-stocking row of cattle barons who were Fort Worth pioneers. Just as the world-wide AA movement had had its genesis eight years earlier in Akron, Ohio, when Bill W. contacted Dr. Bob S., surely the Fort Worth beginning of A.A. was providential.

Late in 1943, Ralph went to a Fort Worth newspaper and while standing at the want-ad counter trying to compose a classified ad that would attract sick alcoholics wanting help, these words flowed from his pencil:

"If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop, that's our business."

Below the ad was a post office box number. Since then Ralph's terse but compelling phrases have been copied with great results by many AA groups. People wanting help began to write in response to that little ad. Before 1943 had ended the Group had outgrown the cramped quarters above the stable and began holding meetings in Ann's room at the Blackstone Hotel. By February of 1944 the hotel room was not large enough to accommodate the mushrooming group, and the AA's shifted meeting places to the YMCA. Twelve to 15 had met in the hotel. Soon, at the YMCA as many as 150 persons attended meetings. The group met there throughout 1944.

Early in 1945 even more space was needed and the group began meeting in the First Presbyterian Church Annex in downtown Fort Worth. In late 1945 the group rented an old two-story red brick building at 612 W. 4th Street, next to the First Methodist Church on the downtown business district's west edge.

A building fund already had been started, and one day, the group discovered it had \$14,000 on hand. Ralph, mindful as had been AA pioneers earlier, that money could be a problem to alcoholics and AA groups, traveled to New York to seek counsel of co-founder Bill W. At Bill's suggestion, the Fort Worth group organized a non-profit corporation with AA members as incorporators, but technically separate from the AA group, to handle the money and club affairs.

On March 11, 1946, George M., Fort Worth's AA No. 1,

died of cancer and he died sober.

On August 11, 1948, the group purchased an old mansion at 1008 Penn Street and refurbished it. In "AA Comes of Age", Bill W. must have had this facility in mind when in writing about AA Clubs in general, he said: "... some of those in Texas have to be seen to be believed."

In 1949 a lady named Lou G. came to AA in Fort Worth. Ralph was her sponsor. She was secretary of Group No. 1 for many years until she retired several years ago. Lou was an "angel of mercy" to hundreds of AA members.

In 1953 the First Presbyterian Church wanted a new and larger sanctuary, and purchased the AA club property. The Penn Street mansion had been bought by the non-profit, separate corporation for \$40,000 with most of that sum mortgaged. The church paid \$72,500 for the property, so the club came out of the deal with considerable cash. The Penn Street mansion had been home Group No. 1 from August 11, 1948 to December 16, 1953.

Property at 3000 West 5th Street on Fort Worth's near West Side was bought and a modernistic, two-story, air-conditioned clubhouse was erected. It is called the Harbor Club just as the Penn Street and 4th Street locations had been called. A contest had been staged to find a good name for the Club when it was on 4th Street and Joe C., an advertising man who joined AA in the early days of the movement came up with the Harbor Club and won.

(Editorial Note) Lou G. was the editor's first sponsor. When we lived in Fort Worth, Lou was secretary at the 4th Street location - where I first met her. She was very kind to me even though I was having slips periodically (1950-1953). However, I had almost two years sober during that time and attended many meetings and listened to every word that Lou and Ralph said. Thank God they were there.

During those years, a newsletter was being published every week at the Penn Street location called "The Arid Pilgrim." I really enjoyed reading it and the idea stuck with me that some day . . . I wanted to do that. Below is a copy of the top portion of the only one I saved, dated Sept. 1, 1951.

IN BRADY

Wayne S., Voca, Texas, a member of the Brady AA Group gave us the following:

"The Brady AA Group had its first meeting on the evening of August 12, 1947. Previous to this time Doc C., a dentist, had been to Dallas for his introduction to

AA. He had been taken to Olin L.'s home. Olin sobered him up, told him about AA, introduced him to other members of that group, and took him to meetings. Doc C. has written:

"Looking back, I can recall many who played leading parts in impressing on me the wonderful things that AA was doing. There was Dan W. from San Angelo, Macon F. of Coleman, and the incomparable Al B. of Dallas. There was also a swell fellow from Austin, Ed H., who came by several times.

"As you know, we had Al B. at one open meeting and another with Olin L. and some with Macon F. as speakers. I'll never forget the first big open meeting with Al B. as speaker, held in the basement of the First Christian Church. I think almost every leading citizen of Brady was there, and what a wonderful feeling that gave us.

"I think one of the most humorous things that happened when we were forming our group was the time a certain stranger dropped into our new club room. Our club room was the office next door to mine where Dr. Lockhard, an M.D., had his office just prior to his death a short time before.

"This stranger came in - I think Broady and I were there alone. He said he had a problem, and, of course, we thought it was alcoholism. The stranger asked if I were the "Doc" and I said, 'yes'. I whispered to Broady to get in touch with some of the other members on the phone. However, another member dropped in just then and we sat down to talk with the stranger. He acted quite embarrassed, but finally said he was about to be married, but had to find out something first. We three AA's were all set to be of the greatest assistance possible to him, until he told us he had had v.d. and wanted an examination to find out if he had been completely cured. I then had to explain that I was not a medical doctor, and he was one man with a problem whom we could not hope to help.

Wayne S. now takes up the story: "Doc C. came home from Dallas with a real enthusiasm for AA. He immediately rented a building and furnished it. Within the first week, the Brady Group had two members; Roy C., a farmer, had been referred to Doc by the group in San Angelo. Another local dentist, Dr. Harry L., made the third member. These three were the Brady Group when the first meeting was held.

"Moral support and encouragement were given by the presence of AAs from Coleman, Menard, and members from San Angelo Group. Among them were Macon F. and the grand old Doc W. from Coleman, who was neither a dentist nor an M.D. At the second meeting there were four from Coleman, and the same three from Brady.

Before the third meeting, Mark M., a hard-drinking farmer from nearby Rochelle, whom Doc C. and Roy C. had corralled among the hangers and runways of Curtis Field, was brought into the Fellowship. And I, a stock farmer from Voca, Texas, became the Group's fifth member. Having written a letter to Fort Worth after hearing a radio program, I had a visitor on the third day thereafter in the person of Doc C. That night I made my first meeting, which was the Brady Group's fourth meeting. Although the newest member of the group that night, I was the oldest in days of sobriety, having sweated out about five terrifyingly dry weeks along, following an especially harrassing 36 hours with the police in San Angelo and Ballinger.

"Among the members from neighboring groups who gave support by their frequent presence at these early meetings were: Macon F., J.B.P., Jr., Fred P., R.A.C., Bill G., H.M. (Doc) W., Wallace H., and Dick B. of Coleman; J.H.M., Jr. and Burt D. of Austin, Texas; Dan W., E.J.C., Vernon S., Pinkie B., George B., and Mitch O. of San Angelo; and Al B. and Olin L. of Dallas on two or three very special occasions - open meetings when estimated attendance topped the 200 mark.

"The group grew and was well-attended for about two years, until attendance slacked off and there were only three regulars left. During these two years, however, many wonderful people found their way back from alcoholic slavery to a new freedom and a new way of life. Many, once free, were able to work again, and most moved on to greener fields.

"The group's first woman member, Dale B., now of New Orleans, Louisiana, whom Doc W. called our 'Queen', did not seek A.A. She was visited "cold turkey" and came out of curiosity. But she stayed. She made a wonderful recovery. The last I heard of her she had more than a dozen years of sobriety.

"Between February 8, 1952 and June 7, 1958, there was only one meeting in Brady - an open meeting held October 5, 1953. This was interesting and in a sense a historic one. Matt K. and Jim B. of San Saba were there. From Brownwood there was Homer T., George W., Charles K., Lance W., Madalyn J., and the irrepressible Joe S. The group from Coleman included Charles H., Tode H., J.B.P., Jr., Doc W., Fred P. and Macon F. This was the first meeting for Jimmy and Dorothy F. of Brady. Doc C. and Wayne S. were the only other members from Brady. During the dormant period of this group, the older members attended meetings in San Angelo, Brownwood and San Saba. During the latter days of this dormant period, Elvy R., Carl D., Mendel K., and Wayne S. decided to have a try at re-activating the Brady Group. Consequently, on June 7, 1958, the reactivated Brady Group held its first formal meeting at 407 West 6th Street in Brady, where it still meets each Saturday

evening at 8:00 p.m.

"In the person and in the enthusiasm of Elvy R., this new Brady Group has found a great deal of strength and stability. That, and the loyalty and faithfulness of Jim B. and Nelson S. of San Saba, has made a continuing growth and quality-wise prosperity possible. Many have round sobriety and freedom, and God as we understand Him through this group. Numerically, the group has remained small. Economic conditions often force the newer members, once sober and able to work, to move away to find jobs.

"AA is respected in Brady. Doctors, ministers and other influential members of the community are aware of its existence and often refer alcoholics seeking help to some member of the group. AA's future in Brady seems bright. And we who are its members now sincerely trust that its light will continue to shine as a beacon to those who walk in darkness of alcoholism."

... Doc. C. and Wayne S.

IN EL PASO

The first meeting of the El Paso Group was on September 11, 1945. There were four present - one intoxicated. Gene Hatfield, who had moved to El Paso from Indianapolis, had found a man lately of St. Louis who had moved to Fabens and another man who had come here from Cincinnati. These three plus the anonymous drunk attended the first meeting.

Due to a series of newspaper articles in the El Paso Times, Gene answered inquiries from 150 miles around. By November 7, the group had 4 men and 1 lady in regular attendance. They were occasionally joined by a man from Las Cruces who had originally gotten sober in Little Rock. The group entered a subscription for a year for the Grapevine and ordered three Big Books.

By January of 1945, the group was up to 10 members and in February had acquired stationery with a group letterhead.

In August the group listed 12 members. Another group name was listed, but showed only the name of the secretary and no number of members. Perhaps this was El Paso's first experience with AA's traditional manner of growth - a resentment and a coffee pot.

February 1947 showed listings for 3 groups. #1 still listed 12 members, #2 still showed only a secretary and #3 showed 6 members. Also the first listing of the Club at 2905 Alamogordo Street appeared.

By August 1947 listings were back to two groups: Group #1 showed 32 members, Groups 2 and 3 were gone, and the Gateway Group showed 4 members.

In February 1948 an invitation to Bill W. was extended, but was declined due to scheduling problems. In August 1948 group listings were up to four with Group #1 showing 45 members, Gateway Group showing 8 members, Alamo Group showing 12 members, and, at long last, a Spanish group called the Aztec Group, listing 6 members. Within the year Billie Lynn, who died in 1986 with 41 years sobriety, had moved to El Paso and was running the Alamogordo Street Club. By the Spring of 1950 Group #1 shows no member count, but the Alamo-5 Points Group shows 80 members.

The listings remain much the same through the 1950's. In 1952 a group called Crow Flat Group started in Dell City.

As is always true in AA, throughout the first 15 years, groups and meetings formed, met for a few weeks or months and dissolved again. The people in these groups were for the most part drawn from established groups and melded back into the general AA population when the meetings ceased.

The early 60's showed 4 groups and a new club on Pershing. 1965 showed 8 groups plus a new Area Intergroup listing.

By 1970 there were 17 groups listed. In 1971 the Alamo Club showed up (Bozo and later Otis M. got it going and healthy), and in 1973 we opened Central Office. LaVelle Clifford (deceased) former Delegate and Class B Trustee, and Roy Y. were the moving force in this project. In 1979 there were 29 groups listed along with a Spanish Club. Today Central Office lists 50 groups and 37 meetings holding approximately 165 meetings a week. In El Paso you can literally get to a meeting morning, noon or night.

LaVelle Clifford got sober in 1962. She was serving as Southwest Regional Trustee when she died in 1980. Cecil Manasco (deceased) began attending meetings in 1948. He died in 1987 with 14 years of sobriety. John Clifford (deceased) got sober in 1950. He died in 1981. He used to say, "Cecil was at everybody's first meeting." (submitted by Jan W., El Paso)

IN BELLVILLE

"It was in the summer of 1972 that a nice looking couple came into the cafe where I was drinking coffee. I introduced myself to them, little realizing what a profound effect they were to have on the little town of Bellville. Anyway, they looked our little city over and decided to become residents. It developed that each of them was a well-known member of Houston AA groups and with the help of the Episcopal minister, the Rev. Marshall Mason, decided to organize the Bellville AA Group. This was accomplished March 2, 1974, and

Saturday night was selected as the time of weekly meetings, Saturday being the general night that many of us celebrated by drinking too much.

"The group has flourished and attendance now runs from 15 to 50, each last Saturday being selected as 'open' meeting night. Great help came and continues to come from members of the groups in Brenham, Columbus, LaGrange, and several other organized groups.

"Subsequent to the organization of the Bellville Group, the groups at Hempstead, Sealy, Fulshear were formed and groups at the homes of two AA members."

Franz Z., Bellville Group

IN TAYLOR

Don S., Taylor, Texas, related the following:

"I was hospitalized in Galveston for drinking. The Psychiatrist told me that I was one of those who cannot drink. Not being convinced, I went out and got a bottle one night just to see. In the hospital they took away everything in my pockets that was sharp and put me to bed, looking in on me every 15 minutes. My father came to see me in the hospital and told me that someone had sent him some literature on alcoholism. I went home and after a while, Horace Fort made a talk at the Kiwanis Club in 1945 in Austin, Texas, and he was asked to talk to me. Horace sent me my Big Book. Nonetheless, I continued to run the gamut of drinking, hospitals and jails. After a particularly frightening loss of memory while drinking, I made up my mind to try AA, attended my first meeting in Austin, and have not had a drink since June 1946." Then, Don went on to form the AA Group in Taylor which, for years, met in the old Blazilmar Hotel upstairs.

IN PALACIOS

Information given Pat H. by Carl DeWitt before he died in August 1987 with 11 years sobriety, on the original Palacios Group not previously given in the story of the Palacios Group in Unity Forum (Victoria) printed in April of 1986. Information also confirmed by Charlie W. of Palacios. Written by Pat H. June 2, 1986

The first Palacios AA Group was started in 1951 or 1952. by the late "Pop" Raplee with three members. His wife, Pat, who ran a secretarial office, is believed to have had a big part in its origins as she served as secretary-treasurer of the group. She was a non-alcoholic. Carl DeW., then of Palacios, joined in 1952, and of his own admission, lasted 5 years before trying more research. The first group was beginning to go downhill and he did not return. In the intervening time until the new group was started in 1976 he had some lengthy periods of sobriety "on his own" and survived to settle down in July

of 1976. Charlie W. came to A.A. after Carl DeW. and was Carl's "pigeon." Charlie had continuous sobriety after that. Arthur W. also joined. The Episcopal Hall, where the group now meets, was the eventual meeting place of the first group after using homes of the members in the beginning. There was no Alanon, and the ladies attended open AA meetings and cooked suppers.

The members went to meetings once a week in Palacios and traveled to Bay City, El Campo, and Edna for other meetings. The first Palacios Group lasted 8 or 9 years, then folded, due to people moving away or dying. The late "A.V." or "Pop" Raplee used to be frequently quoted in the Palacios area as stating "If you want potatoes, you have to use a hoe."

SECOND A.A. GROUP - New Beginnings

The Palacios AA and Alanon groups were started on the last Sunday of April in 1976 by Pat and the late John Howarth. Pat had 10 years sobriety in her former home in Reading, Mass. They had retired to settle permanently in Palacios September, 1975. Pat found out from her real estate agent that Palacios had no AA group. Pat said she could not live in a place that had no AA, to which the agent answered, "start one, we need it." Since John was an Alanon, the Alanon group was started also.

Pat found out from an old-timer, Charlie W., who was no longer active, that there had once been an AA group in Palacios, which had met at the Episcopal Hall. The young rector was approached, and agreed to speak to the Church Board. Approval was granted. The young rector commented, "what better place than the Episcopal Church, as we are known to enjoy our drinks." It was the same hall the earlier group had used in the 1950's and the same refrigerator was there in 1976, replaced finally in 1985.

When the announcement of the initial meeting for the new group was made, a man who had spent several years of "research and white knuckle sobriety" joined up - he had one more brief slip and his official sobriety date is July 1976. Carl DeWitt died August 1987 with 11 years sobriety.

Pat H. met Midge of the General Service Office in New York at the Conference in early 1976. Midge had formerly been with the Boston Office. Pat told Midge about starting the group in Palacios. There is a letter somewhere from Midge to Pat congratulating the Group on its beginning in Palacios. Midge stated in her letter that during World War II she and her husband were stationed at Camp Hulen in Palacios and at that time with her drinking problem beginning to be evident, perhaps a group in Palacios would have gotten her going in the A.A. life sooner.

It soon got around Palacios that these groups had been started by Pat and John. The people of Palacios were very proud that Pat and John had started AA and Alanon in Palacios and some, when introducing them to others, would always state this fact. They were very much surprised at this attitude - not a bit like the New England one toward A.A. Pat and John were so overcome by this great attitude that they didn't want to tell the church people, Justice of the Peace, Real Estate lady, etc., that this wasn't done as a rule. Pat and John have said "it never hurt us, and may have helped somebody. Besides, some were never sure which one of us was the alcoholic."

The Palacios AA & Alanon Group will be 12 years old April 24, 1988.

(Written by Pat Howarth for permanent Archives, June 1986)

IN WICHITA FALLS

"Back in the year 1944, an elderly Doctor, now deceased, who was not an alcoholic, but was the City Physician for the City of Wichita Falls and interested in the problem of alcoholism from a public-health standpoint, had heard or read about Alcoholics Anonymous and its rapid spread across the country. He immediately recognized the worth of the AA program, and got in touch with Bill R. and Barney B., both 'alkys' he knew personally. They held a meeting or two and possibly attracted two or three others who also had the same problem.

All went well for three or four meetings, until, on a meeting night, they decided that a 'little beer' would be all right. They tried it - and lost. The group forthwith disbanded. Ten years later Bill came back into Group One and had a reasonable period of sobriety. I don't know what became of Barney - but Bill is now Nothing further came from the good Doctor's efforts.

"In 1945, there were two guys from Wichita Falls who had gone down to Fort Worth and attended several meetings independent of each other. Also, Willis K. and 'Bud' S. had called on them, along with Max B. and Van H. Van gave Walter F. a Big Book and Frank K. had bought one. In the same year the Fort Worth group told Frank about Walter. The latter having been Frank's legal counsel on several occasions, the two were acquainted. As a result, the two began regular Wednesday night attendance at the meetings of old Group One in Fort Worth (Cowtown). Up to that time (February 22, 1946), Walter F. had 'slipped' around - and Frank K. had his last and final slip in the Fall of 1947. Both have been dry since those dates.

"Both of these two fellows looked for other persons with

like problems who wanted help. The first was Bill P., a hotel clerk, now deceased, who did very well, considering his line of work. (He did have a few slips). Then followed others who were interested and with the help of friends from Fort Worth, Dallas and other travelers, the Wichita Falls group began to grow. On Walter's first birthday, the group, with their wives as guests had a dinner in the main ballroom of the Kemp Hotel (its Chef being a member in good standing) and it was well attended. The guest speaker was a member of the Fort Worth Group who was most interesting.

"The old Group One continued its growth the second year, and later, one part of the group pulled out and organized another group. These splits have continued and the A.A. program has prospered.

"There was a problem, at first, in 'drying out' some of the fellows, but we would take the prospect to a hotel room, and with a 'questionable' amount of paraldehyde, and some one sitting up with him around the clock, we would get the prospect sober. This made for progress.

Later, we found that the St. Louis treatment, consisting of an ounce of whiskey every four hours, monitored by someone staying with the prospect at all times, was better than any other method of 'drying out' a prospect - provided, of course, that the prospect agreed to it and indicated his desire to attain "absolute sobriety."

"Later on, Jules B. (now deceased) opened a 'drying out joint' with proper medical supervision which prospered in that the patient, or prospect, who was able to do so, paid his own way. This effort resulted eventually in a private, charitable corporation being formed which now owns its own property in a desirable neighborhood, and is not a burden to either the AA groups or the public. It is known as "Hopecrest Lodge, Inc," located on Harriet Street near and across from several apartment houses. A member of the medical profession who is not an 'alky', has strongly supported this cause.

"There are now five listed and very active groups functioning in Wichita Falls. They are a monument to a lot of people who have served the cause of A.A. well. Hopefully, our prayer is that "Our Higher Power" will continue to bless and direct us, both in our own sobriety and in carrying the program to the persons who need and want our way of life."

... Walter F., Wichita Falls, Texas

Frank K. submitted the following about Wichita Falls AA:

"A series of most fortunate circumstances directed me to Fort Worth and AA in January 1946. I resided at that time in Wichita Falls, Texas. At that time the Fort Worth Group met in an old two-story and basement red brick house on Fourth Street near downtown, between a

YWCA and a big Methodist Church. Gof guided me back two or three times a week for meetings and I came to know the most wonderful group of people; time and memory being a problem, I cannot recall half of their names. To mention a few: Allen C., Loren T., Willis K., Harry D., Helen Mc., Addie A., Charley K., Mac B. The Dallas, Texas, group was regularly represented by beautiful Esther E., Icky S., Horace F., Al B. and many others. Rubln B. came in from Goree, Bill W. from Lubbock, and so many others.

"Willis K. suggested I call Walter F., a resident of Wichita Falls, and ask him to come with me to the meeting. Against my inclination I did, and Walter readily accepted, much to my surprise. The magic worked and Walter's dry date is February 1946. Then came Frank R., Ross K., Allen C., a car load, so we ran a small ad in the local paper with a P. O. Box Number in Wichita Falls. We started meeting in the Holt Hotel. Instant success. Bill P., Manager of the Holt, joined us; Frank H., Frank E., Bonnie & Joe B., Paul T., Ray and Estalee; Dumps L., Buddy J., Benny Mc., Joe B. - and so many more. So, AA was born in Wichita Falls in the Spring of 1946. Later, Jack and Florence came in, Dallas G., Lem T., Juanita J., Dee T., and so many more. I wish I could recall all the wonderful guys and gals.

"Goree started up, Rubin and John B., Bobby and Bruce B. - several others. The Goree group met in Munday, Texas, on Tuesday, usually ten to fifteen in attendance.

"A doctor came in from Chillicothe, and soon a group was meeting there. A group started up in Vernon, Texas. We regularly visited Goree, Vernon, Chillicothe, Ft. Worth and Dallas, and they attended our meeting, a round robin all the time. I owe so much to so many.

"Bill O., now in Brownwood, told me he had the registration list of the Austin convention in 1948, that Wichita Falls had the largest group attending. Bill and Lois, Ila P., Ed H., Father Pfau, many, many more were present. I treasure the memory.

"In reflection, Horace F., Icky S. and Walter F. come to mind: Horace, the kind, gentle, ever encouraging, made my third and last slip (11-11-47) a learning experience. Icky - direct, earnest, a lay-it-on-the-line, fish or cut bait, kind of man. Walter - steady, dependable, always with me, always ready to listen, searching for the right word or deed. God Bless them all and the countless thousands to whom I owe so much, and this wonderful AA program."

... Frank K., Tyler, Texas

IN AUSTIN

Ed H. related the following informatin about AA's beginning in Austin, Texas.

"I returned to Houston from the Navy and called for help again from AA on October 16, 1945. A member named Jack H. was the first one to call on me. At this time I met another man from Austin, Ernest P., who incidentally Jack H. had brought to Houston to be indoctrinated into AA. Ernest and I decided to go back to Austin about November 1, 1945, but Ernest was working up in Mason building a road, and nothing was done about starting the group until one day during the latter part of November. The same Jack H. who had called on me in Houston called Ernest to say that he was drunk again and needed help in the Austin Hotel. Ernest and I made the call on him. Jack needed medical attention, so we called Dr. Wade. As mentioned in a previous issue, I had met Dr. Wade in Galveston at the County Hospital in 1940. Dr. Wade later had come to Austin to practice. When Dr. Wade called on Jack that day at the Autin Hotel, we got to talking and Dr. Wade told us there were two more fellows in Austin who were AA's: Clarence L. and Ryan P. Ryan had sobered up in Little Rock, Arkansas and moved to Austin. Clarence L. had read an article about AA in the "Family Circle" magazine published by Safeway Stores, he wrote to New York and received AA literature. Clarence was trying to stay sober that way. Well, we got busy and called Clarence and Ryan and the four of us, Ernest P., Clarence L., Ryan P., and myself got together and began talking about organizing an AA group in Austin. It so happened that a few days after that, we got a call from Jimmy M., who had sobered up in Dallas on December 3, 1945. Then there were five of us.

We met at my mother's home at 706 San Antonio Street, Austin, Texas, on December 13, 1945, an officially organized the group. I was elected chairman and held that office for over a year. Being chairman also included duties of secretary, treasurer and whatnot. Remembering my mistake in remaining in the office of secretary too long in Houston, which the members there did not take too well, I decided that I had better resign my office after a year, which I did. It is said that there are more deposed dictators in AA than any place in the world. We started getting in more new members an on January 29, 1946, we started meeting in a room at the Driskill Hotel in Austin."

IN ARLINGTON

(Excerpts from a tape of a talk by Ken H. on the early days of AA in Arlington).

"As you all know, I am Ken H., an alcoholic. I came to AA in California in 1961. I had been making three meetings a week in my home group and going to other groups in the surrounding territory for meetings. I came to Arlington in 1968 to work. I called AA the minute I got into town and was told they had a meeting over on Abram Street at 11:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. I had the address so I went looking for it. At that time, Arlington

was not as large as it is today - just a one-horse town. I went up and down Abram until I spotted the little green house. I thought, "that can't be it." It didn't look too good on the outside and looked worse on the inside. When it rained, you sank in the mud up to your knees. I found out they started AA in Arlington in 1951 in the little green house. I went to the only source that I knew to get this information: Betty P., Buck and Bill G., people who had been around the AA program the longest. You might say I got it from the horse's mouth.

When I first came to Arlington in 1968, there were 8 to 10 active members, except on birthday nights there would be 25 or 30 present. I fell in love with AA in that dark run-down little house on Abram Street. I left Arlington in 1968. The group moved that year to quarters on Center Street, where our City Hall now sits. The building was furnished to us without charge because no one had occupied it for at least 18 years, and it was in very bad condition. I was fortunate, being in the construction business. I would work my regular job until 4:30 in the afternoon, go home to the motel, shower, and change clothes. I would then go to where the AA club was being built. We would work until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning, have AA meetings. Twelve steps would come in and we would stop work long enough to make the call - there was four or five of us doing this. The fellowship we had those nights was something I had never experienced before. We were able in 2-1/2 months to restore that building. The man who had given us free rent gave us the kitchen cabinets and sink. We completely redecorated the upstairs. We had a nice meeting hall, an alanon room, alateen room and a baby sitting room and an office. We did not see any roaches while we were renovating. Once we got in there, they nicknamed it "cockroach alley" because they came from every place. AA met in that facility until 1973, then we moved back into the little house where we began. A meeting twice a day, 7 days a week in the City of Arlington.

I sang the praises of the Arlington Group all over the United States, Canada and Mexico, never knowing that I was going to come back to live one day. Whenever my travels brought me within one or two hundred miles from here, I would come to Arlington to get a shot of the AA here.

I think the first group to break away from the first group was Payne and his Triangle Group. Payne and Ann's minister, knowing Payne's past history of drinking, gave Payne an old building that set out on the front of the Church lot . . . it was the construction building when they built the Church. They gave that to Payne for his meetings because they didn't want him getting drunk again. Payne and the Triangle Group meetings did not conflict with anyone else, because the meetings did not start until 10:00 p.m. at night.

During the time we did not have to pay rent, we got the idea to elect a building committee and put money into a fund so it would accumulate and we could one day buy our own building to hold our meetings. When the time came to look for a place, one was found and the group then disagreed about buying the house. So, another split came about - those who moved to the new location and those who stayed behind. As a result in 1974 we now had three groups in Arlington.

I sort of swell up with pride when I call somebody long distance pertaining to the program of AA and I say, "This is Ken H. from the Cooper Street Group in Arlington, Texas" and they say "yeah we have heard about you people".

IN LONGVIEW

"Doc" W. sent us the following bit of history:

"My sobriety started November 1, 1943, but my AA life did not start until I read Jack Alexander's article in the Saturday Evening Post. I ordered what we in AA call 'The Big Book.' I met myself on its every page, and began having meetings by myself. Thank God it worked. When I had been sober 18 months, Jack L. came by my office and said, 'I know you have had about as rough a time as any of us with alcohol; how did you quit?' I told him about AA. He said he was on his way to Houston, Texas, and asked if there was a group there. I did not know, but suggested he look in the Houston telephone directory. He found the telephone listing there, and met Tommy T., Scott M. and Claud H. from Nacogdoches, Texas, and Doc B. from Palestine, Texas, all of whom had a drinking problem, and had gone to Houston seeking answers. Jack L. had told them I was a lone member here in Longview, so when the Nacogdoches boys returned home, Tommy T. wrote a letter inviting me to meet with them, as they were going to start a group there. I went and we five started a group there, it being the first in Deep East Texas.

"It was not long before "Shack" came to my office, having been sent by Sloan Gentry, a Christian Church Minister here. Shack was my first "baby - (a term referring to a new recruit). We said "before AA there was no way we would have traveled that far without the assurance of drinks upon our arrival."

"It was not long before we had enough members to start a group in Longview, and in Palestine. In a short time, Morris McE. of Tyler came to see me about organizing a group in Tyler, which we did.

"Then, Marshall, Texas called and we started one there. Soon the groups were going in all the towns around here. Shreveport, Louisiana, was very supportive and most helpful in our early days. The last account I had,

there were five thousand members in Deep East Texas I'm sure there are more now.

"Hoping this is some information you desire and assuring you I shall be happy to cooperate any way I can."

Yours sincerely, "Doc" W.

IN PLEASANTON (The Little Sahara Club)

"On August 19, 1954, Frank P. went to Alcoholics Anonymous at the Sahara Club on Navarro Street across from the downtown Sears Store in San Antonio, Texas, accompanied by two Elders of his church: Walter Pursch, Bill Gray, and Frank's attorney, J. Taylor Brite. Frank wanted to be sure that AA was legal.

"After attending AA for some months by himself, he thought that he would get some of his old drinking buddies to share this wonderful way of life with him, so he latched onto W.E. (Dub) R. In December of 1954 and took him to the meetings in San Antonio with him for a six-week period and we decided that we would start a group of Alcoholics Anonymous.

"Frank's mother had a house in Pleasanton that was not being used at that time and she agreed to let AA use it without any remuneration except that they keep up the taxes and insurance on it.

"February 19, 1955, Frank P. and Dub R., along with Chester McD. met with Zoe and her husband, Doc B., Central Office San Antonio, and Dr. Joe M. and the first meeting of the Pleasanton Group was held and has been in operation ever since. Some of the old-timers in the Pleasanton Group have gone on to their reward: Margarito R., Jimmy R., Chester McD., Kermit H., R.L.D. and others that I cannot at the moment recall.

In December 1959, Mary Eisenhower Perkins passed from this life and in her will, she had the clause that her home at 816 Ohio Street in Pleasanton be deeded to the Pleasanton Group as long as they used it only for an AA meeting place in order that it might help some other mother's son or daughter as it had helped her son.

"The Pleasanton Group of AA celebrated its 24th Anniversary on February 24, 1979, at the Pleasanton High School Cafeteria.

"Many suffering alcoholics have been helped through this Group and it is well-known all over Texas for the love and sharing of its members. The attorney, J. Taylor Brite, who went with Frank P. to AA to be sure it was legal is now the Presiding Judge, 81st Judicial District, Atascosa County, Texas. The Pleasanton AA Group holds open meetings twice a week: Tuesday and Saturday at 8:00 p.m. at 816 Ohio Street.

... Frank P., Pleasanton, Texas

IN HOUSTON

Roy Y. is the oldest surviving member of AA in Texas. He had his last drink on September 15, 1940. We happened upon a tape that was made of the anniversary celebration of the Suburban Group in Austin, Texas in 1979, where Roy was one of the speakers and had this to say:

"I am Roy Yeargen, an alcoholic. That isn't what they called me in 1940. That term was not very familiar to me - I was a dirty, lousy, falling-down drunken bum. Now, I understand that I am a poor sick alcoholic. You know I would not have been hanging around all these years if I were not an alcoholic. So, I'm not going to do any qualifying. There are people here who know about my drinking, but your chairman said you wanted to know a little bit about the early days in Texas. As many of you know, Larry Jewell, a newspaper man in Cleveland, came to Houston and on the train coming to Houston, he wrote a series of articles which appeared in the Houston Press, a newspaper he was to go to work for. It was these articles that led me to find Larry. It took me a week to locate him. Larry was a very sickly guy, very slight and frail. He had had a lung removed and had an open place in his side where you could hear him breathe. He was in bad physical shape, but he was really 'on fire.' Larry told me his story and after talking to him for a few minutes, I realized that I had seen a prayer answered, because prior to hearing of these articles, I had asked God to show me the way and it was then that I realized that my prayer had been answered.

"AA had no format to run a meeting. Nobody told us what to do. We had the Big Book. We rented a room at the YWCA for \$1.50 a week rent. (At one time we were \$27.00 behind in our rent and that was our only expense.) No one had any money. During a meeting if someone needed to know what time it was, somebody was sent outside to see the Jeweler's Clock on the corner. In fact we were rather suspicious of anyone that came in and still owned a watch. If they had a watch left, then there was no way they could be an alcoholic and must have an ulterior motive. We finally decided that he was there for the social prestige.

"We had what we called a 'split meeting'. Everyone there would meet in what Larry called the 'Inspirational' part of the meeting. That is when Larry talked. Then the women would have to leave and go into another room . . . It mattered not whether the women were alcoholic or not . . . it was merely a separation of the sexes. The women then had their meeting with Larry's wife Bonita running the meeting. The men had their closed meeting with Larry running the meeting. When the women finished their meeting, they joined the men again and everyone repeated the Lord's Prayer and the meeting closed. Before leaving the premises, the women would announce where the Sunday get-together was going to

be . . . usually a Park because we didn't have anyone with a place large enough to have it. I couldn't take them to my room at the YMCA.

"When we would meet on Sundays, we would make our 12-step calls 'en masse' . . . as a group. Everybody would go. We had a regular route and some very dependable people in the Downtown Area. Most of the time we had to stay in the downtown area because nobody had a car and we could not go too far. Once in a great while one of the members managed to borrow a car and we would expand ourselves. Imagine, if you will, 14 or 15 guys walking in on a cheap rooming house - the poor guy is laying in the bed with his aspirin and bay rum on the chair, bothering nobody, and 15 guys walk in and surround the bed. Then Larry would go to the head of the bed and he would deliver the sermon. We didn't know much about qualifying people to start with.

CONTINUATION OF HISTORY OF EARLY DAYS OF AA IN HOUSTON

as related to us by Ed H.

On March 1, 1941, Jack Alexander's article about Alcoholics Anonymous appeared in the Saturday Evening Post. In those days all inquiries and pleas for help went to the New York Office, and Ruth Hock, then secretary, would dispatch the mail to the appropriate locations. One of the first inquiries sent to us in Houston was from a defrocked preacher, Howell S., who had a wonderful wife, Molly, one of the most spiritual people I've ever known. Then a guy showed up named Ed F., who had read the article in San Antonio. He had recently been fired from his job there and he came over to Houston because he was told that this was the nearest point to contact AA. Ed F. and I became great friends; in fact, we rented a garage apartment out on Southmore Boulevard. The AA meetings were still being held at the YMCA. The letters kept pouring in from New York, and since neither Ed F. or I were working at the time, we were kept busy from 12 to 18 hours a day making what we thought were 12-step calls. Actually, most of the calls were on distraught wives of alcoholics, but here and there we were able to find a person who meant business and we were able to help. Some of those early members coming in about that time were: Clarence (Bull) D., Earl D., Joe F., George P. (who moved to Albuquerque and did a marvelous job in AA there); also a man came all the way from Denver, Colorado to find out about AA, since Houston was the nearest point of contact. He returned to Denver to start the group there. A newspaperman, Jack McC., joined us in Houston, later moving to San Antonio, where he attempted to start a group of AA. This attempt failed.

Early one morning when Ed F. and I were still going day and night on 12-step calls, Larry's wife, Bonita, called and asked us to make a call on a drunk woman named Esther

E. Well, Ed and I had been calling on people day and night and were pooped out, so I begged off on that call. That is how I missed out on being the sponsor of Esther E., who later went to Dallas and founded AA in that city and became dean of all the alcoholic ladies in the State of Texas. The next day we went to Bonita's house and met Esther. Esther had sobered up on her own and was there that morning having coffee and learning what AA had to offer.

In 1941 our first little AA Office was in the Shell Building and later it was moved to the Zindler Building across from the Courthouse. The rent on these offices was donated.

Other early members were Ed B., Carl S., Russell H., Madison R., Jim B., Bill R., Randy W., Tom W., Sid M., Keeling A., Hodi F., Paul P., Dr. George M., Gordon S., Leo B., Hal S., Courtland J. and Fred K.

Shortly after Esther E. came in April of 1941, a man was transferred to Houston from Baltimore where he had found AA. This fellow told the group here how they did things in the group in Baltimore. One of the things he mentioned was that the group elected a "steering committee" to handle the affairs of the group. Well all this time Larry J. had been running the group here and some of the members were complaining about his dictatorial manner. So, the group decided to elect a steering committee and Larry did not like this at all. He pulled out of the group for a while. Ed H. said, "I stayed with Larry, not because I thought he was right - I thought he was wrong - but it seemed to me that the little fellow needed a friend."

Soon after that Ed H. left Houston to go to St. Louis, Missouri, to work for a while. He found upon his return to Houston that Larry had a slip and moved out to a small hospital out on Harrisburg Boulevard. Larry said he was going to establish a new group there and call it the "Founders' Group". Ed H. says, "at that time I was drinking again and when Larry had his Big Meeting I could not attend because I had liquor on my breath. To make a long story short, Larry's new group flopped very soon and eventually Larry came back to the old group in early 1943.

It was about this time that the AA Group got together and rented their first club rooms in the basement of the old Ambassador Hotel. Everybody contributed something. At the time Ed H. was working for the Cargill Company and he donated a table. Roy Y. made the remark to Ed that Ed was trying to buy his sobriety. Ed said Roy was exactly right, because he was far from being on the program at that time.

Ed H. said he became secretary of the group at the time he came in the first time, mainly because he was the

only one with a typewriter. Even though he had a slip, Larry kept him on as secretary. This accounted for some of the criticism Larry was getting from the group. Finally, Larry had to take me off the job, Ed said, when he saw I just wasn't staying sober very long at a time.

It was World War II time, of course; the first part of 1942 found me going into the Navy and Roy Y. went into the Army. Roy Y. had been sober since his first contact in September of 1940 and has never had a slip. Roy stayed sober all through the War; in fact, he became a chaplain's assistant and did a lot of work with alcoholics in the Army, whereas I went into the Navy and did not stay sober; in fact, I stayed drunk as much as possible.

Fred K. furnished the following list of early members who were in the group while it was located in the basement of the old Ambassador Hotel: Hal N., Anna Mae T., Dick D., Dr. B., Jim L. and wife; Clem Y., Jake B., Fritz G., Jo G., Jack N., Pat G., Ray B., Charlene K., Kay L., and Carl W.

CARL W. related the following: Some time prior to July 4, 1942, when he staggered into AA for the first time, the group was meeting in the basement of the old Ambassador Hotel at Fannin and McKinney Streets. Carl said, "Since most of us there were the lowest of low-bottom drunks, we just lived there in the hotel, too, because we'd run out of other places to live before we found A.A. I shudder to think of the suffering we'd have caused had we held to our beliefs at that time regarding the requirements for A.A. membership. Thank God, our tolerance grew as AA grew. In 1942 we had our first AA group split as a result of a difference of opinion among the members. One point at issue was that some members felt we were taking it too easy, sitting around on some donated discarded overstuffed furniture. Another thing was a quarrel over how the meetings were being run. Happily, this was resolved shortly after, for Larry J. was one of the dissidents and some of us nearly got drunk over it. Larry J. came back to the fold in early 1943 and died later that year - still sober and in marvelous spirits. I consider myself fortunate to have known him." Carl adds, "it is hard now to realize the misunderstanding and intolerance of the church and medical profession that existed at that time. It has been one of my great pleasures to see our gradual acceptance by them. In 1942 there was only one doctor in Houston who would treat a drunk as a drunk. I don't even remember his name as he was on vacation when I needed him most. Bishop Quin's faith in us was a beacon of hope, for he was the first of the "men of the cloth" to offer friendship and understanding."

FRED K. takes up the story, . . . "From the Ambassador Hotel, we moved to a rented club room in the 3500 block of Milam Street. Just a few of the members coming in at this time were: Anna D., Ruth F., Harry S., Jack L.,

Claire W., Cliff B., Angus McL., Bobby M., Dup B. and wife, Lois, Stephanie T., Paul M., Bill C., Florence D.

From Milam Street we moved to the Dooley Building, where with Doug G. leading the parade, we picked up more members (and a motley crew they were), and enthusiasm.

When we got evicted from skid row, we moved to 3500 Travis. It was here that we had our first real split."

Now Ed H. takes up the story again: "When I was discharged from the Navy, I returned to Houston in October of 1945, to learn that Larry J. had died in 1943. Larry became sicker and sicker before he died and had to be under an oxygen tent. I was in New Guinea at the

time Larry died."

Ed left again and moved back to Houston the first of February 1949 and went into the only existing group then, the old club house at 3511 Travis Street. Pretty soon that group split up, the bulk of the members going over on Montrose and organizing the Montrose Group. On March 29, 1949, ten of us met in the 3511 Travis Club House and decided to organize the Travis Street Group. Among those present were Angus McL., Claire W., and Anna D., Mildred G., Icky S., and several others I can't recall the names right now. I was elected secretary again, but after I was transferred to Lubbock in September of 1949, the group went on and did very well without my services.

COURTESY OF SILENT ROSTRUM

FIRST WOMAN IN A.A. IN TEXAS — ESTHER E.

(Editor's note: Esther E. is deceased. However, her story did not die with her. We found a tape that had been made of a talk she made when she was 12 years sober and this is what she said.)

"I'm Esther and I am an alcoholic. Through following the program of AA to the best of my ability, I have been sober since May 16, 1941. The only way I can maintain my sobriety is to remember always what it was like 12 years ago this weekend.

"I think we have to do time in AA before we realize that it is going to work for us. I only know that it does work if you desire it with your whole heart without reservation.

"I came from a family where alcohol was socially accepted. We lived in New Orleans, Louisiana and there was plenty to drink everywhere - cocktail lounges and bar rooms. I'm an Episcopalian and we bless our sacraments with wine. I can't remember a dinner at home that we did not have white wine and claret on the table. The family drank sherry now and then - a cordial after dinner. My sister, brother and I liked creme de menthe. However, I never really knew the effects of alcohol because our drinks had very little alcohol in them.

"In fact, it was not until about 1931 that my drinking first caused any comment. After 7 years of marriage I decided that I would divorce my husband, Frank. I went home to my parents. We were living in Dallas at the time and it only took one month to get a divorce. Well, I had a time. Finally, I couldn't stand living with my parents any longer - them watching me everything I did - and Frank was coming to see me there. I had such a feeling of insecurity - finally I went back to Dallas and remarried my husband. We left Dallas and moved to Tulsa. That

was the period when all the boys and Esther got drunk and the wives didn't and they would talk about it. We were in Tulsa for about 3 years and we moved back to Dallas. I began drinking heavier and heavier. Every night when Frank was in town he would come home to find me passed out. When he went on a trip connected with his work, he would come home to find me passed out. Finally, one morning, he said to me, "Esther, why do you do this?" It was decided that a psychiatrist might help me. I went to talk to the doctor, got drunk again and wound up in a booby hatch where they kept me for 17 days. I came out of there in worse shape than I went in. And I was very resentful of my husband for putting me in that place. From then on, my drunks ended up with me in a nursing home or at home with a trained nurse to sober me up. This was in 1936 or '37.

"For Christmas that year my husband gave me a dog, a cocker spaniel. We were living in an apartment and in consideration of the new dog, I found a house and rented it. I began taking the "samaritan treatment" to sober up. That is an excruciating way to get sober, the "urp" treatment. Nothing helped. The church tried to help me; a doctor in the congregation took an interest in helping me - he thought I had a vitamin deficiency and shot me full of vitamins. Of course, that did not keep me sober. I would take my vitamins, stop at the Triangle Drug Store and drink two beers, stop by the liquor store and get a pint of gin and go home.

"Finally, in 1940 we went down to Houston. My husband thought a change of scene might help me stay sober. That was my last year to drink - nothing left but to try to stay sober. Nothing really helped. Then in April of 1941 I got drunk and decided to take my dog for his daily walk. I staggered down the sidewalk and suddenly the patrol car stopped, drove my dog home and drove me to jail.

COURTESY SILENT ROSTRUM

"I was in jail only a few hours when they called my husband to come and get me. That was the day I hit "bottom." Just a week before that (I later learned) someone had sent my husband the article in the Saturday Evening Post by Jack Alexander about AA. He was afraid to show it to me right then. I was so resentful of everything he did. He waited another week or two while I continued to drink. He was out of town and came home to find me passed out again. The next morning he came to my room and said, "Esther, I'm not going to lecture you or criticize any more, but I want you to read this article about how some people are staying sober - in AA." Frank said if I would try this new thing, he would go along with me but if I did not, I would have to go home to my parents . . . he could not stand by and watch me destroy myself anymore.

When he left me, I took several drinks to get my eyes to focus and I read the article - through and through.

From the very first paragraph something began happening to me. I realized there were other people in this world like me, that I was sick with a disease called alcoholism. It was a feeling of relief and I wanted to learn more about it. For the first time I realized there was something horribly wrong with me. The article was the first thing that had ever reached me. I told my husband I wanted to try this AA. I wrote to New York and received a personal note from Ruth Hoch giving me the name of Larry Jewell. I telephoned him and learned that he was in the hospital. So, naturally, I got a pint of White Swan Gin and stayed drunk from Monday to Friday. That Friday night, May 16, 1941 at 5 minutes to 6:00 p.m. I had a half water glass of White Swan Gin and with it, I humbly asked God to help me. I have not had a drink since. The next day I went to Larry's house and talked with his wife Bonita. And I met Ed H. and Roy Y. and all those first members . . . and the happiest life I had ever known." COURTESY OF SILENT ROSTRUM

The Lord's Prayer

* * *

(The following beautiful composition was found on the battle field at Charlestown, South Carolina during the war. It was written by a wounded comrade who never lived to get home and is quite a literary curiosity.)

* * *

Thou to the mercy seat our souls dost gather,
 To do our duty into Thee Our Father
 To whom all praise all honor should be given.
 For Thou art the great God Who art in Heaven
 Thou, with wisdom, rul'st the world's whole frame
 Forever therefore Hallowed by Thy Name
 Let nevermore delay divide us from
 Thy glorious face, but let Thy Kingdom Come
 Let Thy commands opposed be by none,
 Buy Thy good pleasure and Thy will be Done,
 And let our promptness to obey be even
 Thy very same In Earth as 'tis in Heaven
 Then for our souls, O Lord, we also pray,
 Thou would'st be pleased to Give Us this Day
 The food of life, wherewith our souls are fed,
 Sufficient raiment and Our Daily Bread
 With every needful thing do Thou relieve us,
 And of Thy mercy, pity And Forgive Us
 Our misdeeds, for Him whom Thou did'st please
 To make an offering for Our Trespasses,
 And, forasmuch, O Lord, as we believe
 That Thou wilt pardon us As We Forgive,
 Let that love teach, wherewith Thou acquaints us,
 To pardon Those Who Trespass Against Us.
 And, tho sometimes, Thou find'st we have forgot
 This love for Thee, yet help And Lead Us Not
 Through soul or body's want too desperation,
 Nor let earth's gain drive us Into Temptation.
 Let not the soul of any true believer
 Fall in the time of trial But Deliver;
 Yes, save them from the malice of the devil,
 And both in life and death, keep Us From Evil.
 Thus pray we, Lord, for that of Thee from whom
 This may be had For Thine is the Kingdom
 This world is of Thy works its wondrous story,
 To Thee belongs The Power and the Glory;
 And all Thy wondrous works have ended never,
 But will remain forever and Forever.
 Thus we, poor creatures, would confess again,
 And thus would say eternally Amen.

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