## A REPORT FROM MASSACHUSETTS A.A. ARCHIVES

The experience gained in the planning and implementation of the Archives Project at G.S.O. has widened and deepened our original faith that one of the best ways to assure the future of the A.A. Fellowship is to nurture its past. Our *Primary Purpose* remains, of course, to carry the message of hope to the still-suffering alcoholic. We can, however, within the context of the whole range of A.A. Services, renew our own sense of purpose by collecting and preserving the rich and meaningful heritage of our past. The main purpose of the Archives, consistent with A.A.'s primary purpose is to keep the record straight so that myth does not predominate over fact.

As we are part of A.A. as a whole we are collecting Archival Material about the whole fellowship. We would like more material on E. Mass. i.e., early group histories, oral history by early members, early clippings and magazine articles about A.A. etc.

Boston A.A. was founded by Paddy K. whom Marty M. had taken to Blythewood. The Boston Group provided us with a fresh wonder and a big heartbreak too. Its founder could never get sober himself and he finally died of alcoholism. Paddy K. was just too sick to make it. Slip followed slip, but he came back each time to carry A.A.'s message at which he was amazingly successful. Time after time the group nursed him back to life. Then came the last bender, and that was it. This very sick man left behind him a great group and a triple A rating for valor.

Ruth Hock and Bill W. gave Paddy and others a great amount of support, encouragement and information about A.A. when they were struggling to get a group started in the area. Paddy apparently held a meeting on Wednesday Nov. 13, 1940 but the first regular meeting of the Boston Group was on the first

*Archival display used at sharing sessions in Western Pennsylvania. Photograph courtesy of Big Jean M., Pittsburgh, PA*

## SERIALLY . . . THE ARCHIVAL HANDBOOK (PART III)

### WHAT MACHINES NEEDED FOR ARCHIVES?

If microfilming is to be undertaken, then a microfilm reader will be needed. Also, a duplication machine is a good idea, if copies of material are to be provided from time to time. If an oral history project is started, a tape machine, either 7″ reel (better for permanent storage) and/or a cassette recorder, as well as a Copycorder (brand name), which is a cassette recorder able to make a duplicate copy.
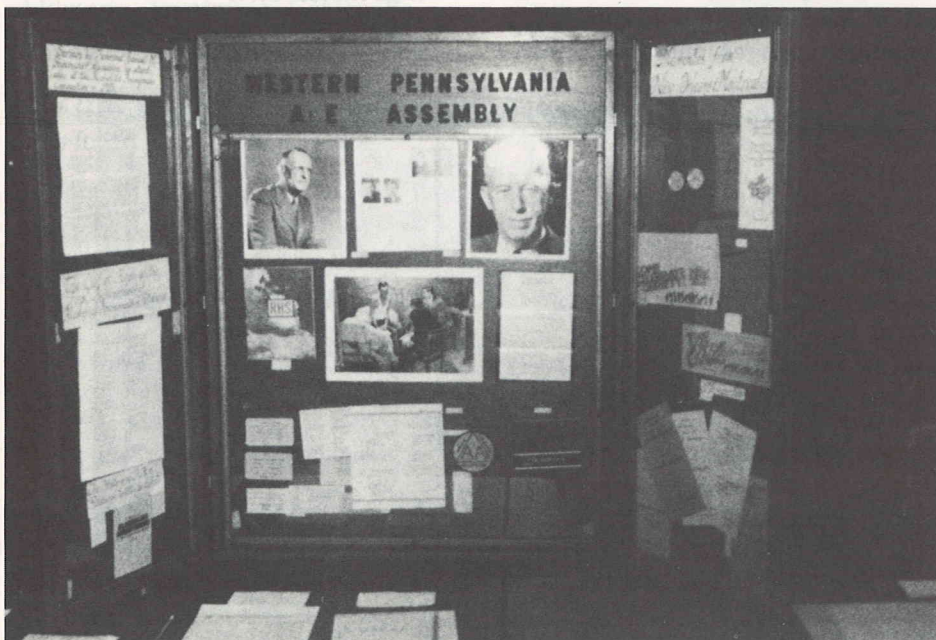
### SUGGESTED CLASSIFICATIONS FOR HOLDINGS, PRIVACY LEVELS

The G.S.O. Archives recognizes three main classifications. Examples of each category are listed in this outline (pages 24-26). Because of our anonymity Tradition, the G.S.O. Archives cannot be as open or make data available without supervision as freely as would other archives. The archivist and the Archives Committee should work closely to decide how you can make your archives as available as possible to meet local needs, and consider questions of how much to share, with whom, and under what circumstances. These decisions should be consistent with both A.A. Traditions and generally accepted procedures of archival good taste and common sense.

### INFORMATION EXCHANGE

The Archives Committee chairperson in Northfield, Minnesota, reports: "(a) That we were archivists and could not manage our own file cabinet; (b) That no human power could organize our collected history; and (c) That God could and would if he were on the Committee."

# WASHINGTON AREA HISTORY

## HOW TO GO ABOUT IT

Compiling and writing your Group's history can be an exciting and rewarding experience. By the time you have finished you will probably know more about the past experience of the Group and how it evolved within the community than any other of its members. You will understand what others had to go through in order that AA would be available when you needed it — and you will better understand the total AA experience. With understanding will come more of a feeling of being a vital part of the living Fellowship of AA.

Your first step in compiling a history will be to talk to the oldtimers in the Group. With their help you can make up a list of names of the earliest members who might still be around. Many of the key people may no longer attend the Group meetings or may have moved to other nearby communities; no source of information should be overlooked — we all have spotty memories!

You might want to have a meeting of oldtimers — you'll be surprised how they can jog each other's memories when they get to reminiscing about the "good old days"! If one of your friends has a tape recorder, so much the better — so many stories are going to be swapped that you'll have a hard time keeping up with your note taking. And remember, the Washington Area Archives wants copies of any tapes made by oldtimers! You might also consider having a joint meeting of oldtimers from a number of Groups in the community or even from all of the Groups within your community or District.

Once you start writing your history from what you have learned from this early oldtimers meeting (or meetings) you will begin to detect gaps in the story. Now is the time to talk to the oldtimers on a one-to-one basis. You will know better what questions to ask at this point and your increasing awareness will help you guide the conversation to fill in the information you need. You may be surprised at how many events outside of the Group itself are vital to explaining its history.

As soon as you think that your history is nearly complete, share it with oldtimers and other members — remember, it's their history and they can be a lot of help in filling in missing information and in putting that final touch on it. When you feel that your story is complete give one copy to your District Archivist (or DCM if you don't have a District Archivist) and mail the original to your appropriate History Coordinator:

**EASTERN WASHINGTON**
(Districts 1,2,3,4,5,6,20,25,26)
Jan

**KING COUNTY**
(Districts 13,14,15,16,17,18,24)
Nora

**NORTHWEST**
(Districts 11,12,23)
Claudette

**SOUTHWEST**
(Districts 7,8,9,10,21,22,27,28,29)
Donn

## GENERAL GUIDELINE FOR GROUP HISTORIES

Your input to the Washington Area History should trace the history of your Group in story form. For a Group that has only been in existence for a year your input might only be a few paragraphs; for a long-established, active Group it might be a number of pages long. Don't worry
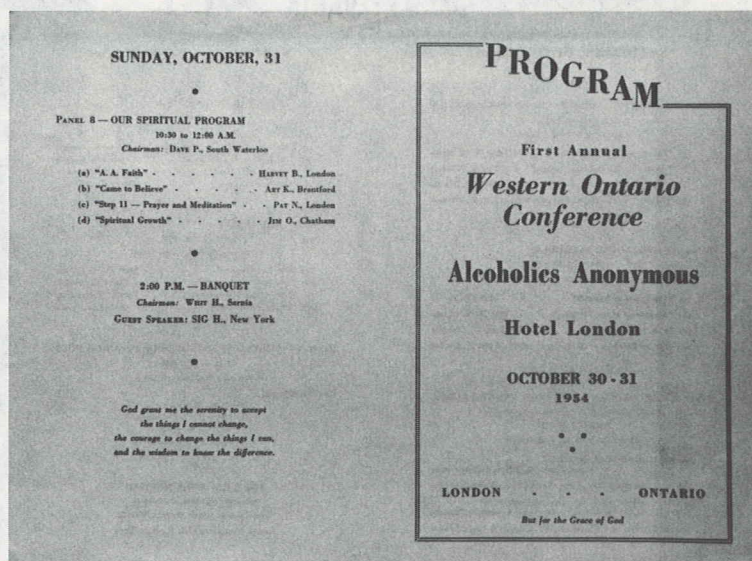
about form, we have some talented rewriters who will take care of that where necessary; our rewrites, when they are necessary, will be returned to you for your approval. Please do include last names wherever possible — we will need them to crosscheck references to those individuals who have been very active in the fellowship. *Any last names you include will only be used within the History Committee; they will not be included in the book when it is printed.* Please include the current Group name and where and when it meets. We also need your name, phone number, address and District number so that we will know who to contact if we have any questions.

Some of the items of interest which you might include in your input are:

When and why was the Group first formed and where did it meet? Was it meant to fill the needs of a specific segment of the Fellowship? Was it a "spinoff" from another Group? Who was instrumental in forming it and who were the first officers? How many members did it start with? Did it keep the original name; if not why did it change?

How has the Group evolved: has it changed names, meeting places or times; has it moved; has the makeup of the Group changed; has it added or lost book studies, beginners tables, etc.?

*Program of First Annual Western Ontario Conference held at the Hotel London, October 30-31, 1954.*

## GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR GROUP HISTORIES

Has the Group been involved in any outside activities as a Group: potlucks, institutions, Public Information, 12th Step work, workshops?

Has the Group had any problems; how did it overcome them?

What do you feel makes the Group unique — what are the good qualities about the Group? Does the Group now have any weaknesses — has it ever had?

Has the Group ever been involved in any unusual projects or disagreements?

Have any "unusual" or "unforgettable" characters ever been associated with the Group?

Does the Group have any particularly close relationship with another Group? Do the members of this Group also attend another Group together?
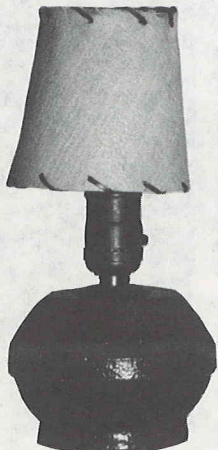
Is there any other thing in the Group's history which is particularly interesting? Does it have any particular new plans for the future?

Do any of the original members of the Group still attend meetings?

Have any other Groups spun off from this Group?

What segment of the Fellowship is currently represented in the Group: oldtimers; Treatment Center Patients; young people; professionals; DWI's?

If the Group is no longer active, why did it fold?



*Lamp used at first meeting in Canada at the Denmark Restaurant, January 13, 1943.*

## CATALOG SYSTEM FOR WA GROUP HISTORIES

We will be using a temporary cataloging system until we get a regular person to handle this task. The reason for having this system is to give the Coordinators, Eric, and myself a means of knowing what we currently have in the way of inputs and what we need. As the histories come in to Eric, he will give them to me; I will enter them in the catalog and return one copy of each history to Eric. Both Eric and I will have complete files of all of the inputs. In the event that any of the histories are sent from the Groups directly to either Eric or I, we will see that the appropriate Coordinator gets a copy for his or her file.

Now, to explain the format of the catalog:

"Ref" simply refers to the number the computer uses to keep track of the data; it is not a permanent number and will change as any entries are deleted (most likely due to inadvertent duplication).

"Location" is obvious for a Group. For a District, etc. it would be a city identified with the District, etc.

"Dist" is the District # which the history is identified with.

"O" stands for "Outline"; the single-digit number is a rating based *roughly* on the amount of information in the outline. A "0" indicates that we do not have an outline; a "1" indicates a very sketchy outline and a "9" indicates a very extensive outline bordering on enough information for a full history. Be aware that this rating is quite arbitrary — probably quite dependent on how I feel at the time I enter the information!

"H" stands for "History" and the number entered is the same as for the preceding. A "9" here indicates an extensive writeup, probably far more than we can use; again, "0" indicates that we do not have a writeup!

"T" stands for "Type" and is an indication of what category the history fits into — I plan on using the following codes:

A — relates to Area service: Area Committee, Archives, H&I, etc.

## A REPORT FROM MASSACHUSETTS AA ARCHIVES

Wednesday of March 1941. This was at Dr. Hatlestad's office 115 Newbury Street.

Dr. Hatlestad was not an alcoholic and he was an officer of the Jacoby Club which he claimed had members who had stopped drinking. There seemed to be a conflict re: affiliation and self support, which later became A.A. tradition. The group found new quarters at 123 Newbury St. and after a couple of other moves settled at 306 Newbury St. much larger quarters as the group was growing.

As the Jack Alexander article, published in March 1941, started to take effect many groups started to spring up and in 1945, twelve other groups joined the Boston Group to form an intergroup Central Service at 30 Huntington Ave.

In 1950 Bill W. came to Boston. That was the year Dr. Bob made his last A.A. talk and the Traditions were accepted at the International Convention. The trustees and Dr. Bob had agreed to let Bill proceed with the General Service Conference Structure.

Bill gave a talk at the hotel Bradford to a full house in the main ballroom. On this trip Boston held one of the first elections in the Fellowship for a delegate to the First General Service Conference to be held in April 1951. Bob G.'s name was drawn from the hat per third legacy procedure and Jim M. whose name was also in the hat said his Higher Power made a fine choice as Bob G. served the Area well.

This is but a very small and incomplete part of A.A.'s history in E. Mass. This information came from material in our Archives: A.A. Comes of Age, Pass It On, Correspondence with members and G.S.O., Archives Handbooks, G.S.O. and E. Mass.

We need more historical information on E. Mass. A.A. to balance our Archival Collection.

## CATALOG SYSTEM FOR WA GROUP HISTORIES

C — refers to Clubs

D — Districts

F — Fellowship Halls (most of these will probably be referred to us as Groups and will be listed as such.

G — Groups; and probably Meetings since the membership very often does not make a distinction between the two.

I — Intergroups

M — AA Meetings, when they are identified as such.

O — the inevitable "Other" category.

T — towns and other geographical areas (such as counties).

"Contact" will usually be the name of the person who sent the information to us. It may also contain a reference to information which is contained in another history. For instance, a District history may contain a lot of information about the formation of a certain Group — the Group will be entered separately and reference will be made back to the District history.

"Address" and "Phone" refer to information about the "Contact".

"Date" is usually the approximate month and year when the material was received. If the material is old and the date of writing is known, that date will be the one used.

For now the catalog will be presented in two forms: one will be an alphabetical listing by the Group name, the second will be a listing by District number. If you feel that some other means of sorting would be more helpful to you, let me know — I may be able to accommodate you. One of the few nice things about computer databases is that they are flexible!
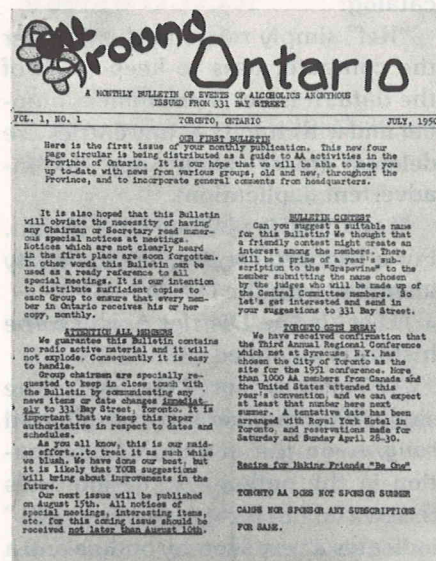
Hopefully, this system will be of some help. Please let me know if there are errors in the catalog — we are going to have a lot of information to keep track of; Let's Keep Up With It!

## INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Harold also notes, "Our continuing effort on the District scrapbooks will be completed at our next Committee meeting. Each district will have a scrapbook which will circulate among its groups to give a brief glimpse of our Fellowship's history at the local level. There will also be room to record each individual group's history. A format to aid you in writing your group's history appears below. It will be distributed at the Assembly meeting in October.

"In the next three months, we will begin a vigorous attempt at taping our oldtimers. If you know of an oldtimer who would be of interest to the Archives Committee, please drop me a postcard or give me a call."



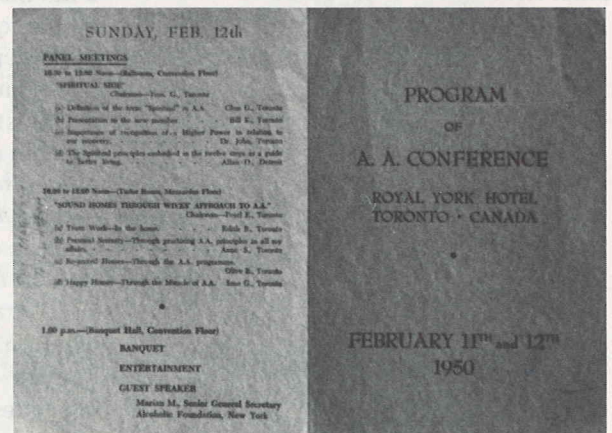*First issue of monthly bulletin "All Around Ontario" dated July 1950.*

Susan of the B.C. Yukon Area Archives is seeking assistance from anyone who can help her in initiating the cataloguing of archival material. Susan has an IBM PC XT 640K, 2 Floppy Disc Drives 360k each, Monochrome Monitor with graphics card, 80 col. dot matrix printer with compressed font, 300/1200 baud modem, plus software such as DBase 11 and 111, Lotus 1-2-3, etc. If you have any experience with systems and hardware, please contact Susan c/o the G.S.O. Archives.

Also, our friend Mac writes from Hialeah Gardens, Florida, that he is searching for phono records of the 1955 Conference in St. Louis or copies thereof. Anyone with leads can contact Mac through the G.S.O. Archives.

In order to complete a second set of Big Books G.S.O. Archives is interested in obtaining the following books:

| First Edition | Second Edition |
|---|---|
| 4th printing | 4th printing |
| 6th printing | 6th printing |
| 7th printing | 7th printing |
| 8th printing | 8th printing |
| 10th printing | 9th printing |
| 11th printing | 10th printing |
| 12th printing | 11th printing |
| 13th printing | 12th printing |
| 15th printing | 14th printing |

*REMINDER:* Readers write this newsletter—a forum for the exchange of information and ideas. So we look forward to hearing from *you*.



*Program of A.A. Conference held February 11-12, 1950 at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto.*

*(Photographs courtesy of Tommy H. of Scarborough, Ontario.)*

| Ref | Group Name | Location | Dist | O | H | T | | Date |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 00019 | Allyn Group | Allyn, WA | 10 | 0 | 2 | | G | 12/81 |
| 00018 | B Street Group | Aberdeen, WA | 21 | 0 | 3 | | G | 10/80 |
| 00035 | Back to Basics | Puyallup, WA | 29 | 4 | 0 | | G | 02/85 |
| 00085 | Bellingham Bay | Bellingham, WA | 11 | 2 | 0 | | G | |