

The Washingtonians & the Twelve Traditions

In AA Comes of Age pg 96 Bill W wrote: "The Twelve Traditions are to group survival and harmony what AA's Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind."

The history of the Traditions of AA is a fascinating one. There is actually more written about the Traditions in AA literature than there is about the Steps.

This is in the form of a timeline to cover the history of the Traditions up through 1988. That is when the last major chronicle of Traditions history was published in the book "The Language of the Heart."

The articles that follow will be on the topics of:

- Part 1 - What and when did Bill W likely know about the Washingtonians?
- Part 2 - The Washingtonians
- Part 3 - The birth of the Traditions
- Part 4 - The evolution of the Traditions from long to short form
- Part 5 - The role of the Traditions in the General Service Structure
- Part 6 - The links among the Traditions, Conference Charter (Warranties) and Concepts

Source references for the postings are:

12&12-Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
AABB-Alcoholics Anonymous, the "Big Book"
AACOA-AA Comes of Age
AGAA-The Akron Genesis of Alcoholics Anonymous, by Dick B
BW-RT-Bill W by Robert Thomsen
BW-FH-Bill W by Francis Hartigan
BW-40-Bill W My First 40 Years, autobiography
DBGO-Dr Bob and the Good Old-timers
EBBY-Ebby the Man Who Sponsored Bill W by Mel B
GB-Getting Better Inside Alcoholics Anonymous by Nan R
GTBT-Grateful to Have Been There by Nell Wing
GSC-FR-General Service Conference-Final Report (identified by year)
GSO-General Service Office-service pieces
GSO-AC-General Service Office Archives Collection
Gv-Grapevine-identified by month and year
HIW-How It Worked by Mitchell K
HT-Harry Tiebout-the Collected Writings, Hazelden
LOH-The Language of the Heart
LR-Lois Remembers, by Lois W
MMM-Mrs Marty Mann, by Sally and David R Brown
NG-Not God, by Ernest Kurtz
NW-New Wine, by Mel B
PIO-Pass It On, AAWS
SI-Sister Ignatia, by Mary C Darrah
SD-Slaying the Dragon, by William L White
SM-AA Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service
www-Internet

Part 1 - What and when did Bill W likely know about the Washingtonians?

The August 1945 Grapevine carried Bill W's first Traditions article titled "Modesty One Plank for Good Public Relations" (LOH 3-6). The previous month's Grapevine had an article by CHK of Lansing, MI about the Washingtonians. Bill used the CHK article as a reference to begin his Traditions essay commentaries. The July 1945 Grapevine article by CHK contains a number of factual errors about the Washingtonians that eventually carried into Bill's Grapevine essays and subsequently into the 12&12 and AACOA. So far I can find no other source that Bill W was exposed to on the Washingtonians prior to 1945 (that does not mean there weren't any).

The September 1945 Grapevine carried Bill's second Traditions article titled "Rules Dangerous, but Unity on Public Policies Vital to Future of AA." He mentions the Washingtonians again but his commentary is misinformed i.e. "they mushroomed to a hundred

thousand members, then collapsed." (LOH 6-9 - its title has been shortened). In an October 1945 Grapevine article titled "The Book is Born" Bill mentions the Washingtonians again, in what I believe is an incorrect context as to the major issues of division in the Washingtonians (LOH 9-12) - more on this later.

The December 1946 Grapevine reported on the NY Intergroup's 11th annual dinner that "Bill W, one of the two co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, delivered the principal AA address at the dinner. He reviewed AA's tremendous growth in the past few years and predicted its future. "If we remember that our first duty is face-to-face help for the alcoholic who still suffers from his illness, we need not worry about our future," he said. Drawing a contrast between AA of today and a similar organization, The Washingtonians, of 100 years ago, he pointed out how important it is to adhere to simple principles if AA is to survive. He compared the principles of the Franciscan order of 700 years ago to the principles of AA today, and concluded with a restatement of the Twelve Points of Tradition that have evolved through experience in AA.

In 1950 past General Service Board Chairman Milton A Maxwell, published an extended paper on the Washingtonians while he was Assistant Professor of Sociology at the State College of Washington at Pullman. This paper was the primary source reference for October 1962, February 1971 and January 1991 Grapevine articles. There are other Grapevine articles about the Washingtonians and it should be noted that these articles do not necessarily go through a vetting and editing process to validate and corroborate their content. An excellent source of information about the Washingtonians is William White's "Slaying the Dragon" (the whole book is a gem).

The October 1962 Grapevine article about the Washingtonians illustrates some of the difficulties and precautions of using the magazine as a reference source. Editorial license is interspersed among source references. The October 1962 Grapevine article states: "What happened to them? By an AA 'coincidence' there arrived at the Grapevine the same week an excerpt from a scholarly treatment of 'The Washingtonian Movement' written by Milton A. Maxwell, PhD and published in the Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol. The Washingtonians, Dr. Maxwell points out, had certain notable features later incorporated into AA: (1) Alcoholics helping each other (2) Weekly meetings (3) Shared experience (4) Fellowship of a group or its members constantly available (5) A reliance upon the Higher Power (6) Total abstinence from alcohol. Unfortunately, the movement eventually was torn apart in the political and doctrinal warfare associated with the temperance and abolition movements."

The last sentence beginning with "Unfortunately" is the editorial license of the article's author. It gives the impression that it is a conclusion derived from the Maxwell paper. In fact, Maxwell's paper makes no mention at all of abolition or slavery. The paper also lists the guidelines published by the Washingtonians on how to organize and conduct Washingtonian meetings. Article 3 of these provisions was to "Forbid the introduction of sectarian sentiments or party politics into any lecture, speeches, singing, or doings of the society." The matter of prohibition evolved into a definite divisive issue among the Washingtonians.

Part 2 - The Washingtonians

In the early 1800s, the relatively new republic of the United States was truly on a destructive alcohol binge and the effects were devastating. Prominent historical figures, such as George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, urgently called for a change in drinking practices. They appealed to the country for "temperance" which at that time meant "moderation" in drinking. (SD 4-5)

By the 1820s, people in the US were drinking on average 27 liters (7 gallons) of pure alcohol per person each year. Many religious and political leaders were beginning to see drunkenness as a national curse. Momentum was picked up by religious leaders to change the notion of "temperance as moderation" to mean "temperance as abstinence." This began the growth of American temperance societies that would later lead to the alcohol prohibition movement. (SD 4-5)

1840 April 5 - a group of six drinking club friends (William Mitchell, John Hoss, David Anderson, George Steers, James McCurley and Archibald Campbell) from Chase's Tavern in Baltimore, MD formed a total abstinence society. Pledging to "not drink any spirituous or malt liquors, wine or cider" they named themselves the Washington Temperance Society (in honor of George Washington). They later became known as Washingtonians. They required a pledge of total abstinence and attendance at weekly meetings where members would tell their stories of drunkenness and recovery. As a body, they recognized no religion or creed and were politically neutral. Each member was supposed to help alcoholics who were still drinking. They sought out new prospects ("hard cases"). Their weekly meetings were held at Chase's tavern until the owner's wife objected to the increasing loss of their best customers. They had a 25-cent initiation fee (\$5.50 today) and member's dues of 12 ½ cents per month (\$2.75 today). (SD 8-9, www Milton Maxwell paper)

1840 November 19 - the Washingtonians held their first public meeting. Growth of the movement was extremely rapid. Widespread and enthusiastic support came from numerous temperance societies. The Washingtonians had great success in mobilizing public attention on temperance by relaying their "experience sharing" of alcoholic debauchery followed by glorious accounts of personal reformation. A leader of the movement noted, "There is a prevalent impression, that none but reformed drunkards are admitted as

members of the Washingtonian Society. This is a mistake. Any man may become a member by signing the pledge and continue so by adhering to it." (SD 9, www Milton Maxwell paper)

1841 May 12 - the Washingtonians organized the first Martha Washington Society meeting for women and children in NY. They provided moral and material support to reform female inebriates and assisted the wives and children of male inebriates. This was the first temperance movement in which women assumed leadership roles. The movement also spawned juvenile auxiliary groups. Freed blacks organized separate Washingtonian societies. (SD 10)

1843 Mid-to-end - the Washingtonian movement peaked after having reached all major areas of the US. Estimates of its membership vary and are contradictory. The sole requirement for membership was to sign a "total abstinence pledge." Members included teetotalers, temperance advocates, and a large segment of adolescents (under age 15) and drinkers of various types whose numbers far exceeded that of the "drunkards." A reliable estimate of the number of alcoholics in the mix is impossible to derive. Over the lifetime of the movement, hundreds of thousands signed pledges but the number of rehabilitated alcoholics was likely under 150,000. (1996 GSC-FR 15, SD-10, www Milton Maxwell paper)

1847 - Estimate of when the Washingtonians "spent its force." The society originally favored "moral suasion" to achieve reformation of the alcoholic through abstinence. However, the Washingtonian membership makeup changed rapidly and radically to consist mainly of non-alcoholic temperance advocates. Sentiments shifted away from reformation of alcoholics to the pursuit of a legal means to prohibit alcohol. Washingtonian practices came to be viewed as outmoded and interest waned. There was no sudden collapse. When the novelty and emotional appeal of the Washingtonians became outmoded, they simply faded from the scene.

"AA Comes of Age" (pg 125) cites issues such as religion, politics and abolition of slavery as root causes of the Washingtonian decline. While there were certainly cases of this, there is no compelling evidence to support or conclude that these issues had a major role in the Washingtonians downfall. Prohibition was certainly a very divisive issue among the Washingtonians as were power struggles among its leadership. However, the major and pervasive causes of the Washingtonians downfall appear to be a direct result of their departing from their original membership makeup (which started out as all alcoholics) and their departing from their original primary and single purpose (which began as one alcoholic helping another alcoholic who was still suffering). It is a powerful lesson on the vital importance of AA's Traditions to the ongoing survival of the AA Fellowship. (SD 8-14, 12&12 178-179, AACOA 124-125, PIO 366-367. www Milton Maxwell paper).

Part 3 - The birth of the Traditions

1935 June - Almost a century after the Washingtonians, the AA Fellowship started in Akron, OH. It was a result of an action that later formed the heart of Step 12 and Tradition 5 as AA's primary purpose of carrying a message of recovery from one alcoholic to another still-suffering alcoholic. AA's co-founders, Bill W and Dr Bob, first met on Mothers Day May 12, 1935. A few weeks later, Dr Bob went on his last binge. Bill helped him through 3 days of sobering up to get ready for a scheduled surgery. Dr Bob had his last drink on the day of the surgery, which is celebrated as June 10, 1935. Bill W's sobriety date is December 11, 1934. AA marks its beginning as the day that Dr Bob, the second alcoholic, had his last drink. (AACOA, DBGO, PIO)

1935 July 4 - Carrying a message to a still-suffering alcoholic also led to the founding of AA's first group. Bill W and Dr Bob visited Bill D at Akron City Hospital in late June. Bill D had already been hospitalized 8 times in 1935 for his drinking and it took 5 days before he admitted he could not control his drinking. The 4th of July is an important date in our nation's history (it is Independence Day). The 4th of July is also an important date in AA history. AA's first group, Akron #1, marks its beginning as July 4, 1935 when Bill D, AA #3, was discharged from Akron City Hospital and joined with Bill W and Dr Bob to help other alcoholics. During the first 4 years of the AA Fellowship, there were two groups: Akron #1 and New York City. (AACOA 71-73, AABB 184, BW-RT 219-220, DBGO 81-89, NG 37, 319, PIO 152-154, GB 42, AGAA 202-203).

In their earliest years, the AA groups in Akron and NY were directly affiliated with the Oxford Group. It certainly was helpful at the beginning but over time, it produced problems. During 1936, Bill W's efforts in working only with alcoholics were criticized by NY OG members. Similarly, in Akron, T Henry and Clarace Williams were criticized by OG members who were not supportive of their efforts being extended primarily to alcoholics. (NG 44-45, NW 73, AGAA 76)

1936 December - AACOA 102 notes that one of the earliest personal experiences that influenced the Traditions occurred when Bill W was two years sober. Charles B Towns offered Bill a lucrative job at his hospital as a lay alcoholism therapist. After years of a hand to mouth existence Bill wanted the job very much. The question was put to the NY group meeting in Bill's home and they rejected it. Bill complied and cooperated with their decision and later wrote in AACOA 101-102: "Three blows, well and truly struck, had fallen on the anvil of experience. The common welfare must come first. AA cannot have a class of professional therapists. and God, speaking in the group conscience, is to be our final authority." Bill went on to write "Clearly implied in these three embryo principles of tradition was a fourth: Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." (AACOA 100-102, LR 197, BW-RT 232-234, NG 63-64, PIO 175-177)

On the AA calendar of "year two" (1937) the spirit of Tradition 3 emerged. A member asked to be admitted who frankly described himself to the "oldest" member as "the victim of another addiction even worse stigmatized than alcoholism." The "addiction" was "sex deviate" (revealed by Bill W in an audiotaped talk to the 1968 GSC). Guidance came from Dr Bob (the oldest member in Akron, OH) asking, "What would the Master do?" The member was admitted and plunged into 12th Step work. (DBGO 240-241 12&12 141-142) Note: this story is often erroneously intermingled with an incident that occurred eight years later in 1945 at the 41st St clubhouse in NYC. (PIO 318, 12&12 141-142).

1937 Late spring - some leaders of the OG at the Calvary Mission ordered alcoholics staying there not to attend meetings at Clinton St. Bill W and Lois were criticized by OG members for having "drunks only" meetings at their home. They were described as "not maximum" (an OG term for those believed to be lagging in their devotion to OG principles). (EBBY 75, LR 103, BW-RT 231, NG 45, NW 89-91)

1937 August - Bill and Lois stopped attending Oxford Group meetings and the NY AAs separated from the OG. This was the beginning of AA separating itself from outside affiliation and it set the groundwork for what would later become Tradition 6. The Akron group remained affiliated with the OG for two more years. (LR 197, AACOA vii, 74-76)

1937 October - Bill W and Dr Bob met again in Akron, OH. There were two groups then and about 40 sober members (more than half were sober for over a year). It was a remarkable success story since every one of the sober members had previously been considered hopeless and beyond any help at all. Bill had some rather grandiose ideas for AA hospitals, paid missionaries and a book of experience to carry the message to distant places. Dr Bob liked the book idea but not the hospitals and paid missionaries. In a meeting at T Henry Williams home, Bill's ideas narrowly passed. A single vote made the difference among the meeting of 18 Akron members. The NY group was more enthusiastic. This historic milestone marked the decision to write the Big Book. (AACOA vii, 76-77, 144-146, BW-RT 239-243, DBGO 123-124, NG 56-57, PIO 180, LOH 142)

1937 Late - The book project's first challenge was financing and it was no simple matter. The country was still in the grips of the great economic depression and the prospects of World War II were looming dangerously large in Europe and Asia. Initial efforts to raise funds were not successful. Bill W's brother-in-law, Dr Leonard V Strong, set up a meeting in December 1937 with Willard S Richardson (who was an ordained minister and manager of John D Rockefeller's philanthropies). A second meeting took place in January 1938. (AACOA 147-149, BW-RT 245-246, NG 65-66, PIO 181-185)

1948 February - Willard Richardson asked Frank Amos to visit Akron and make a report on the Fellowship. Amos wrote a very favorable and glowing report that Richardson sent to John D Rockefeller Jr urging a donation of \$5,000 a year for 1 or possibly 2 years (the equivalent of \$74,000 a year in today's dollars). (BW-FH 105-106 says \$10,000, \$5,000 a year for 2 years, in LOH 61 Bill W says \$30,000 - both figures are wrong). (SM S3, BW-RT 246, LR 197, DBGO 128-135, BW-FH 105-106, PIO 185-187, LOH 143, AGAA 217, 258)

1938 March - Rockefeller replied to Richardson that it was contrary to the policy of his philanthropies to fully fund a charitable enterprise unless it was decided to carry it indefinitely. Rockefeller declined to make a donation for the second year but did provide \$5,000 to be held in a fund in the Riverside Church treasury. Much of the fund was used to immediately assist Dr Bob by paying off the mortgage to his home. The remainder was used to provide Bill and Dr Bob, who were both in very difficult financial straits, with \$120 a month (\$1,800 a month today) so that they could continue to dedicate themselves full time to the Fellowship. (BW-RT 247, AACOA 149-151, DBGO 135, PIO 187-188, GSO-AC)

1938 August 5 - the Alcoholic Foundation was established as a charitable trust with a board of five Trustees (in LOH 61 Bill W said it started with seven Trustees). The trust indenture document specified that non-alcoholic trustees were to make up a majority of the board. The terms "Class A" and "Class B" trustees were used to make a distinction between non-alcoholic and alcoholic board members. Its first meeting took place on August 11. (GSO, BW-RT 248, AACOA 151-152, LR 197, NG 66, 307, 330).

1939 April - the first edition of "Alcoholics Anonymous" was published at a selling price of \$3.50 (\$52 today). the Foreword to the first edition Big Book has many of the key principles that later shaped the Traditions. To quote from the foreword: "... It is important that we remain anonymous. We would like it understood that our alcoholic work is an avocation. When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as 'a member of Alcoholics Anonymous' ... Very earnestly we ask the press also, to observe this request, for otherwise we shall be greatly handicapped ... We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted ..." (AABB xiii-xiv 4th edition) this text also later formed the basis for the AA Preamble

In the late 1930s and early 1940s, public relations had the most dramatic impact on AA membership growth. Liberty Magazine, headed by Fulton Oursler, carried a piece titled Alcoholics and God by Morris Markey (who was influenced to write the article by

Charles Towns). It generated about 800 inquiries from around the nation. Oursler (author of "The Greatest Story Ever Told") became good friends with Bill W and later served as a Trustee and member of the Grapevine editorial board. (AACOA 176-178, LOH 145, 180-183 BW-FH 127-129, PIO 223-224)

Membership grew suddenly in Cleveland due to the September Liberty Magazine article and a series of editorials in the Cleveland Plain Dealer by Elrick B Davis. As a result, the Cleveland group was flooded with appeals for help. Newcomers with just a few days of sobriety were assigned to make 12th Step calls. Cleveland membership surged from 20 to several hundred. (AACOA viii, 177-178, BW-RT 261, LR 197, LOH 145-146, SI 164, PIO 224, AGAA 4-5)

1939 October - (AACOA viii says summer) Akron members of the "alcoholic squad" withdrew from the Oxford Group and held meetings at Dr Bob's house. The founding of the Cleveland Group and this action by the Akron Group ended all outside affiliation between the AA Fellowship and the OG or anyone else. (NW 93-94, SI 35, DBGO 212-219, NG 81, GTBT 123, AGAA 8-10, 188, 243)

1940 February 8 - John D Rockefeller Jr. held a dinner for AA at the Union League Club. 75 of 400 invited guests attended. Nelson Rockefeller hosted in the absence of his ill father. The dinner produced much favorable publicity for AA. It also raised \$2,200 (\$32,000 today) from the attendees (\$1,000 from Rockefeller). Rockefeller and the dinner guests continued to provide "outside contributions" of about \$3,000 a year (\$43,500 today) up to 1945 when they were asked to stop contributing. The Alcoholic Foundation received the donations and income from sales of the Big Book for safekeeping. (LR 197, BW-RT 264-267, AACOA viii, 182-187, NG 92-94, BW-FH 109-112, PIO 232-235).

1940 April 16 - Cleveland Indians baseball star "Rollicking" Rollie H had his anonymity broken in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and nationally. Bill W did likewise in later personal appearances in 1942 and 1943. (AACOA 135, BW-RT 268-270, DBGO 249-253, NG 85-87, 96-96, AACOA 24-25, BW-FH 134-135, PIO 236-238, GTBT 156)

1940 May 22 - Works Publishing Co was legally incorporated as a publishing arm of the Alcoholic Foundation. The major stockholders, Bill W and Hank P, gave up their stock with a written stipulation that Dr Bob and Anne would receive 10% royalties on the Big Book for life. (AACOA 189-190, LR 199, BW-FH 119, SM 11, PIO 235-236, GTBT 92, GSO-AC)

1940 October - Bill W went to Philadelphia to speak to Curtis Bok, one of the owners of the Saturday Evening Post (the largest general circulation magazine in the US with a readership of 3,000,000). Later, in December, Jack Alexander was assigned to do a story on AA. (LR 131, BW-RT 278-279, BW-FH 140-141, PIO 244-245, GB 82)

1941 March 1 - Jack Alexander's Saturday Evening Post article was published and became AA's most notable public relations blessing. The publicity caused 1941 membership to jump from around 2,000 to 8,000. Bill W's and two other members' pictures appeared full-face in the article. (AACOA viii, 35-36, 190-191, BW-RT 281, LOH 149-150, BW-FH 146, PIO 245-247) The article, led to over 6,000 appeals for help to be mailed to the NY Office. (SM S7, PIO 249) Consequently, the NY office asked groups to donate \$1 (\$14 today) per member, per year, for support. This began the practice of financing what is today called the General Service Office from group and member donations. (AACOA 112, 192, LOH 149, SM S7)

From all these public relations blessings emerged the proven principle in the long form of Tradition 11 that states, "There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us."

1941 - Clarence S founder of AA in Cleveland joined with Cleveland pioneer Abby G to start AA's first Central Office. Bill W also credits Abby G and the Cleveland Central Office with introducing the principle of rotation to AA.

1941 December 8 - the US entered World War II. With the possibility of being recalled to active duty in the Army, Bill W requested that he be granted a royalty on book sales to provide financial support for his wife Lois. The board approved a 10% royalty. Prior to this, Dr Bob was voluntarily giving Bill half the 10% royalty that he and Anne were (irregularly) receiving. (1951 GSC-FR 13)

1942 - Board Trustee A LeRoy Chipman asked John D Rockefeller Jr. and his 1940 dinner guests for \$8,500 (\$102,500 today) to buy back the remaining outstanding shares of Works Publishing Inc. stock. Rockefeller lent \$4,000, his son Nelson \$500 and the other dinner guests \$4,000. By acquiring all the outstanding shares it ensured that complete ownership of the Big Book would be held in trust for the entire AA Fellowship. Rockefeller's custom was to forgive \$1 of debt (\$12 today) for each \$1 repaid. The Rockefeller and dinner guest loans were repaid by 1945 out of Big Book income. (AACOA 189, BW-FH 110-111, SM S7, LOH 148, AACOA says \$8,000)

1942 October - Clarence S stirred up a controversy in Cleveland after discovering that Dr Bob and Bill W were receiving royalties from Big Book sales. (DBGO 267-269, BW-FH 153-154, AACOA 193-194) Bill and Dr Bob re-examined the problem of their financial status and concluded that royalties from the Big Book seemed to be the only answer to the problem. Bill sought counsel from his spiritual sponsor, Father Edward Dowling, who suggested that Bill and Bob could not accept money for 12th Step work, but should

accept royalties as compensation for special services. This later formed the basis for Tradition 8 and Concept 11. Due to the amount of time both co-founders dedicated to the Fellowship, it was impossible for either of them to earn a living through their normal professions. (AACOA 194-195, PIO 322-324)

1940s Early - the NY office was variously called the Headquarters or Central Office or General Office. It had the vital job of responding to letters from groups and members. It also provided a central communications link to members attempting to start groups and helping them with growing pains. The letters from groups and members gave firm signals of a need for guidelines to help with problems that occurred repeatedly. Basic ideas for the 12 Traditions came from these letters and the principles defined in the Foreword to the first edition Big Book. (AACOA 187, 192-193, 198, 203-204, PIO 305-306, LOH 154)

1944 June - Volume 1, No. 1 of the Grapevine was published (1,200 copies). The Grapevine later played a critical and central role in the development of the Traditions and General Service Conference. It is also recognized in the long form of Tradition 9 as AA's "principal newspaper" given its newspaper format at the time. (AACOA viii, 201-203, 212, LOH 153-154, SM S79, PIO 305)

1945 - The Alcoholic Foundation wrote to John D Rockefeller Jr and the 1940 dinner guests that AA no longer needed their financial help. Big Book royalties could look after Dr Bob and Bill and group contributions could pay the office expenses. If these were insufficient, the reserve accumulated out of literature sales could meet the deficit. In total, Rockefeller and the dinner guest donated \$30,700 (\$345,000 today) to AA. The donations were viewed as loans and paid back out of Big Book income. This led to the principle of being fully self-supporting declining all further outside contributions and later formed the basis of Tradition 7. (AACOA 203-204)

1945 April - by the mid-1940s the accumulated letters sent to the NY office by groups and members led to reliable conclusions on what practices worked well and what did not. Groups were also asked to send in their membership rules and it provided quite a jolt. If all the rules were applied everywhere, it would be impossible for any alcoholic to join AA. Earl T, founder of AA in Chicago suggested to Bill W that the experiences sent in from group and member correspondence might be codified into a set of principles to offer tested solutions to avoid future problems. Earl recommended to Bill W that he codify the Traditions and write essays on them in the Grapevine. Earl T had a major role in the development of the Traditions (both long and short forms). He later served as a Class B Trustee from 1951-1954 and helped establish the General Service Conference. He is also the member described in the Big Book chapter "The Family Afterward" (AABB 135) as getting drunk again after his wife nagged him about his smoking and drinking coffee. (SM S8, AACOA 22, 203, GTBT 54-55, 77, SM S8, PIO 306, LOH 20-24)

Bill W wrote in AACOA 208 that the period from 1945-1950 was one of immense strain and test. The three main issues were money, anonymity and what was to become of AA when its old timers and founders were gone. This 5-year period saw Bill's most intensive and exhaustive work of establishing a service structure and advocating the Traditions.

The August 1945 Grapevine carried Bill W's first Traditions article titled "Modesty One Plank for Good Public Relations" setting the groundwork for his 5-year campaign for the Traditions. The preceding July 1945 Grapevine edition had an article by member CHK of Lansing, MI about the Washingtonians. Bill used this article to begin his essay commentaries on the Traditions. The July 1945 article by CHK contained a number of factual errors about the Washingtonians that carried into Bill's Grapevine essays and subsequently into the 12&12 and AACOA.

1946 April - The Grapevine was incorporated in April 1946 as the second publishing arm of the Alcoholic Foundation. The April 1946 Grapevine carried Bill W's essay titled "Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition." They later came to be called the "Long Form of the Traditions." Bill W wrote Grapevine essays on the Traditions up to late 1949. The essays are preserved in LOH and were used in writing the 12&12 and AACOA.

Part 4 - The evolution of the Traditions from long to short form

1946 - Bill started to feel out the board and the Fellowship on the idea of various geographical Areas coming together as an elected service conference. The board and Dr Bob were not very enthusiastic about the idea. This marked the first suggestion for the General Service Conference. (LOH 338, SM 12 says 1945)

1946 - A dispute arose over a funding solicitation letter from the National Council for Education on Alcoholism (NCEA) by Marty M. Dr Bob and Bill W's names appeared on the letterhead. An Alcoholic Foundation Board statement on fund raising was printed in the October 1946 Grapevine to disavow AA affiliation. (GTBT 29, NG 119, MMM 185)

1947 April 8 - after a difficult year of talks on policy and structure, Bill W wrote a paper titled "Our AA General Service Center-The Alcoholic Foundation of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow." It outlined a history of the Foundation and recommended a General Service Conference and renaming the Alcoholic Foundation to the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Trustee's reaction was at first defensive and then outright negative. They saw no need for change. Most members would not associate the seeds

of the Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts with the years 1946 and 1947 respectively. AA was on the verge of its teenage years and a visionary Bill W was laying the groundwork for the membership's coming of age. (AACOA 210-211, www, GSO-AC)

In his August 1947 Grapevine Traditions essay titled "Last Seven Years Have Made AA Self-Supporting" Bill W wrote "Two years ago the trustees set aside, out of AA book funds, a sum which enabled my wife and me to pay off the mortgage on our home and make some needed improvements. The Foundation also granted Dr Bob and me each a royalty of 10% on the book Alcoholics Anonymous, our only income from AA sources. We are both very comfortable and deeply grateful." (LOH 62-66)

The December 1947 Grapevine carried a notice that an important new 48-page pamphlet titled "AA Traditions" was sent to each group and that enough copies were available for each member to have one free of charge. It was AA's first piece of literature dedicated totally to the Traditions.

A sad and gloomy cloud emerged in 1947; Dr Bob was stricken with cancer. (AACOA 209, BW-RT 303-304) Dr Bob's cancer was diagnosed as terminal in the summer of 1948. Bill W was spurred into greater urgency by the progression of Dr Bob's illness and pressed harder for a General Service Conference. It resulted in hot debates and a serious rift developed between Bill and the Class B Trustees over Bill's use of "sledge-hammer tactics." In AACOA 210 Bill admits to writing a sizzling memo that "nearly blew the Foundation apart." (AACOA 210-211, DBGO 320, 348, GSO-AC)

1949 July 14 - in a letter to the Rev Sam Shoemaker Bill W wrote "So far as I am concerned, and Dr Smith too, the Oxford Group seeded AA. It was our spiritual wellspring at the beginning." In AACOA 39 Bill also wrote, "Early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others straight from the Oxford Groups and directly from Sam Shoemaker, their former leader in America, and from nowhere else." (AGAA 137)

1949 - as plans for the first International Convention were under way, Earl T suggested to Bill W that the Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition would benefit from revision and shortening. (AACOA 213 says it occurred in "1947 or thereabouts"). Bill, with Earl's help, set out to develop the short form of the Twelve Traditions, which was published in the November 1949 Grapevine. (AACOA 213, GTBT 55, 77, PIO 334, www)

The entire November 1949 Grapevine was dedicated to the Traditions in preparation for the Cleveland Convention in 1950. In 1953, two wording changes were made to the version published in 1949: the term "primary spiritual aim" was changed to "primary purpose" in Tradition Six, and the term "principles above personalities" was changed to "principles before personalities" in Tradition Twelve. The November Grapevine issue also contained an article by Bill W titled "A Suggestion for Thanksgiving." Bill endorsed a suggestion in a letter and article from member TDY titled "You have a stake in the future of AA." The suggestion was to "adopt Thanksgiving Week as a time for meetings and meditation on the Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous." (LOH 95-96).

1950 July 28-30 - AA's 15th anniversary and first International Convention was held at Cleveland, OH (estimated 3,000 attendees). The Traditions meeting was held in the Cleveland Music Hall. Following talks on the Traditions by 6 old-timer members, Bill W was asked to sum up the Traditions for the attendees. Contrary to popular belief, the short form of the Traditions were not approved at the 1950 Convention, Bill W did not recite either the short or the long form of the Traditions to the attendees. Instead, he paraphrased and summarized a variation of the Traditions that is preserved in LOH 121. This is what Bill W read and was approved:

"That, touching all matters affecting AA unity, our common welfare should come first; that AA has no human authority - only God as he may speak in our Group Conscience; that our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern; that any alcoholic may become an AA member if he says so - we exclude no one; that every AA Group may manage its own affairs as it likes, provided surrounding groups are not harmed thereby; that we AAs have but a single aim, the carrying of our message to the alcoholic who still suffers; that in consequence we cannot finance, endorse or otherwise lend the name 'Alcoholics Anonymous' to any other enterprise, however worthy; that AA, as such, ought to remain poor, lest problems of property, management and money divert us from our sole aim; that we ought to be self-supporting, gladly paying our small expenses ourselves; that AA should remain forever non-professional, ordinary 12th Step work never to be paid for; that, as a Fellowship, we should never be organized but may nevertheless create responsible Service Boards or Committees to insure us better propagation and sponsorship and that these agencies may engage fulltime workers for special tasks; that our public relations ought to proceed upon the principle of attraction rather than promotion, it being better to let our friends recommend us; that personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and pictures ought to be strictly maintained as our best protection, against the temptations of power or personal ambition; and finally, that anonymity before the general public is the spiritual key to all our Traditions, ever reminding us we are always to place principles before personalities, that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all."

Following Bill's summation, the attendees unanimously approved the Traditions by standing vote. Notably missing from what Bill recited to the attendees were the principles in Tradition 10 of AA having no opinion on outside issues and not drawing the AA name into public controversy. Nevertheless, the attendees unanimously approved what Bill W presented. (AACOA 43, PIO 338, LOH 117-124)

1950 July 30 - Dr Bob made a brief appearance for his last talk. (GSO, PIO 339-342) Bill W later visited Dr Bob in Akron, OH for their last visit together. Bill advised Bob that the board would likely give its consent to a multi-year trial period for the General Service Conference. Dr Bob gave Bill his endorsement as well. (AACOA 213-215, DBGO 325, 340, 342-343, PIO 342, 344)

On November 16, 1950 Dr Bob (age 70) co-founder of AA, died of cancer at City Hospital in Akron, OH.

1950 - Class A trustees Leonard Harrison and Bernard B Smith resolved a 5-year conflict between Bill W and the Board on having a Conference. Smith, who Bill later called "the architect of the service structure," chaired a trustee's committee that recommended that Conferences be held on a trial basis from 1951-1954 and that in 1955 it would be evaluated and a final decision made. The recommendation was approved at the Board's Fall meeting. (AACOA 209-212, PIO 344)

Part 5 - The role of the Traditions in the General Service Structure

The 1951 trial Conference took place from April 20-22, 1951. 37 US and Canadian delegates (half the planned number) convened at the Commodore Hotel in NYC as the first Conference Panel. Bernard B Smith presided. 15 Trustees and various staff members from the NY Office and Grapevine Office joined the Conference as voting members. The Conference unanimously recommended several advisory actions. Among them, that AA literature should have Conference-approval.

The 1952 trial Conference was the first Conference with all Delegates attending. Based on a 1951 Conference advisory action recommending that AA literature should have Conference approval, the Board formed a special Trustees committee on literature to recommend literature items that should be retained and future literature items that would be needed. Bill W also reported on the many literature projects he was engaged in. The Conference unanimously approved the Board proposals and Bill's projects (which later resulted in publication of 6 Conference-approved books). While it did not recommend specific advisory actions, by approving existing literature to be retained, the Conference retroactively approved the Big Book and several existing pamphlets, which included the long form of the Traditions.

At the 1953 trial Conference, Board Chairman Bernard B Smith reported that the corporate name of "Works Publishing" had been changed to "Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing." The first Conference-approved book to be distributed under the new publishing name was the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12). It contains the final wording of the short form of the Traditions, as we know them today. (AACOA ix, 219, PIO 354-356) The 1953 Conference also recommended that no policy should be declared or action taken on matters liable to gravely affect AA as a whole unless by consent of at least 3/4 of the members present. A mere majority should not authorize action." (Reaffirmed in 1954)

1954 - Lillian R an actress and nightclub singer became the first of many celebrities to break their anonymity and announce their alcoholism and membership in AA. Her book (later movie) I'll Cry Tomorrow was a sensation. Sadly, Lillian went on to drink again and it generated bad publicity for AA. (GB 77, PIO 308-309)

February 2, 1954 - Bill W declined an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from Yale U. (LOH 205, GB 69, BW-FH 201)

At the 1954 trial Conference, Board Chairman Bernard B Smith delivered an eloquent talk. Its next to last paragraph is today highlighted in Chapter 1 of the AA Service Manual with the title "Why Do We Need A Conference?" The actual title of his talk was "The Lost Commandment, The Dictionary and AA." He left no doubt at all that he was firmly in favor of continuing the Conference on a permanent basis. Among other items, the Conference unanimously approved the corporate renaming of the "Alcoholic Foundation" to the "General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous." The renaming took place in October 1954.

June 26-29 and July 3, 1955 - the 5th and last trial Conference convened in St Louis, MO. 75 Delegates unanimously recommended adoption of a permanent Conference Charter subject to approval of the second International Convention that would convene in St Louis on July 1. Bill W brought up the first Conference discussion to change the Board ratio to a 2/3 majority of alcoholics. The board ratio issue would be debated endlessly over the course of 10 Conferences. The 1955 Conference also recommended that a plan for selecting Class B trustees be approved. This was the first move to establish Regions - the initial geographical groupings were called "Area A" thru "Area E."

AA's 20th anniversary and 2nd International Convention was held in St Louis' Kiel Auditorium from July 1-3, 1955. Estimated attendance was 3,800. Its theme was "Coming of Age." On the final day of the Convention, Bill W made some introductory remarks and presented a resolution to the attendees, the heart of which read: "BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED: That the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous should become, as of this date July 3, 1955 the guardian of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, the perpetuator of the World Services of our Society, the voice of the group conscience of our entire Fellowship and the sole successors to its co-founders, Dr Bob and Bill." It was unanimously approved by the attendees.

Part 6 - The links among the Traditions, Conference Charter (Warranties) and Concepts

The 1955 approval of the Conference also extended to a new publication titled "The Third Legacy Manual of World Service as Proposed by Bill" the forerunner of today's "AA Service Manual" both of which contain the Conference Charter. The Conference Charter has 12 Articles, the 12th of which is also called "The General Warranties of the Conference." The six Warrantees in Article 12 are a condensed version of the Traditions to ensure that the Conference always functions in the spirit of the Traditions. In 1962, the Warranties also formed Concept 12 of the Twelve Concepts for World Service.

The second edition Big Book was introduced at the 1955 international Convention at a retail price of \$4.50 (\$33 today). It contained a new appendix with the short and long form of the Traditions. However, it mistakenly listed the short form version published in the November 1949 Grapevine instead of the version published in the 12&12 in 1953. The error was not fully corrected until the sixth printing in 1963. (AACOA 220-227, PIO 354, 357)

At the 1956 Conference Bill W gave a talk on the rights of "Petition, Appeal, Participation and Decision" describing them as "four principles that might someday permeate all of AA's services." They later became key principles of the 12 Concepts for World Service, specifically Concepts 3, 4, 5 and 6. They would also be called "traditional rights" in the Concepts and lead some to later call the Twelve Concepts "AA's Bill of Rights." (SM 68)

The 1957 Conference approved a new set of "BYLAWS of the General Service Board" written by Bernard B Smith. They are today contained in the "AA Service Manual" as Appendix E. The 1957 Conference also approved publication of "AA Comes of Age." Guised as a 3-day diary of the 1955 Convention, it is in fact a definitive history of AA up to 1955. The Conference further recommended that no change in Article 12 of the Conference Charter or in AA Tradition or in the 12 Steps may be made with less than the written consent of three fourths (or 75%) of AA groups.

The 1958 Conference approved removing the word "honest" from the term "honest desire to stop drinking" in the AA Preamble. AA legend sometimes erroneously states that the word "honest" was removed from Tradition 3. Neither the long nor the short form of Tradition 3 ever contained the word "honest." The term "honest desire to stop drinking" is from the Foreword to the first edition Big Book. It also led to changing the wording of the AA Preamble from "AA has no dues or fees" to "There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions." The changes were approved by the General Service Board in the summer of 1958 (Best of the Grapevine, vol.1, 274-275)

The 1959 Conference voted to change the corporate name "Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing" to "Alcoholics Anonymous World Services (AAWS)." The Board approved the name change in October 1960.

1960 April - Bill W declined the opportunity to be on the cover of Time magazine. (BW-FH 201)

At the 1960 Conference Bill W announced that for the prior 3 years, he had worked on codifying principles and developing essays for the structure of the Third Legacy of Service. The principles were announced as the Twelve Concepts for World Service. The Board adopted a policy that: "The Board believes that AA members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his death, but that in each situation the final decision must rest with the family."

The 1962 Conference unanimously approved Bill W's manuscript titled "Twelve Concepts for World Service." The Conference recommended that the manuscript be distributed initially as a supplement to, and eventually as an integral part of, the Third Legacy Manual.

The 1963 Conference approved a multi-state grouping plan recommended by 1962 Conference that organized the US into six geographical Regions. Regional Trustees would be elected to the Board as Class B (or alcoholic) Trustees (AACOA x).

December 1964 - Bill W enthusiastically embraced a campaign to promote vitamin B3 (niacin or nicotinic acid) therapy and created Traditions issues within the Fellowship. (PIO 388-390)

The 1966 Conference approved a restructuring plan proposed by the Board in 1965, which changed the Board ratio to 14 alcoholic and 7 non-alcoholic Trustees. This ended Bill W's 10-year campaign to have alcoholics make up a 2/3 majority of the Board. The number of Regional Trustees was also increased from six to eight (six from the US and two from Canada).

The Board report accepted by the 1967 Conference recommended that "to insure separation of AA from non-AA matters by establishing a procedure whereby all inquiries pertaining to B-3 and niacin are referred directly to an office in Pleasantville, NY in order that Bill's personal interest in these items not involve the Fellowship." (PIO 391)

The 1968 Conference resolved that the showing of the full face of an AA member at the level of press, TV, and films be considered a violation of the Anonymity Tradition, even though the name is withheld. (PI)

July 1970 - AA's 35th anniversary and 5th Int'l Convention at Miami Beach, FL. Bill W appeared on Sunday morning for what proved to be his last public appearance and talk. Bill's health had steadily weakened due to emphysema. He was confined to a wheel chair and required the administration of oxygen. (AACOA xi, NG 145-146)

Bill W (age 75) co-founder of AA, 36 years sober, died at Miami Beach, FL on January 24, 1971. Three months after his death, the 1971 Conference recommended that the short form of the Twelve Concepts be approved.

1974 - In order to maintain subscriber's anonymity, the legal name of The AA Grapevine was changed to "Box 1980" to comply with postal regulation requiring the corporate name of an organization be placed on official envelopes and on the magazine itself. (1989 Conference-FR 24)

The 1976 Conference approved publication of the third edition Big Book. It also expanded a provision of Article 3 of the Conference Charter that any change to the Steps, Traditions or six Warranties of Article 12 of the Conference Charter, would require written approval of 75% of the registered AA Groups known to General Service Offices around the world. This advisory action makes any proposed change to the Steps, Traditions and Warranties a virtual impossibility (even so much as adding or removing a comma).

The 1988 Conference approved the AA Grapevine publication of "The Language of the Heart." It contains the Traditions essays Bill W wrote during the 1940s. It also contains many memorial and historical articles. The 1988 Conference also recommended that the 1971 Conference Action be reaffirmed that: "AA members generally think it unwise to break the anonymity of a member even after his death, but in each situation the final decision must rest with the family." Further, the AA Archives continue to protect the anonymity of deceased AA members as well as other members.

Arthur S.