

Flowchart of Events of Interest to Members Of The Fellowship of Alcoholics
Anonymous by Miles M.

William Griffith Wilson born Nov. 26, 1895, in a small room behind a bar in East Dorsett, VT., to Gilman and Emily Wilson.

1901 - Professor William James lectures at University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Lectures published as "The Varieties of Religious Experience" in 1902.

Bill's father, Gilman, deserts the family.

Bill's mother, Emily, moves to Boston and becomes an Osteopathic Physician. Bill and sister Dorothy live with maternal grandparents, Fayette and Ella Griffith.

Bill's first "success" making a boomerang - "a fitting irony".

@1907 - About age 12 Bill "leaves the Church" over a required temperance pledge.

1908 - Oxford Group begun as A First Century Christian Fellowship. Frank Buchman, Founder. They espoused the Four Absolutes: Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love. They practiced the principles of self-survey; confession; restitution; and service to others.

1909 - Bill begins secondary education at Burr & Burton Academy.

1911 - Ebby Thatcher and Bill first met.

1912 - Bill's "first love", Bertha Bamford, dies after surgery in New York. Bill began a three year depression.

1914-1918, World War I

1914 - Bill enters Norwich University - a military college with strict discipline.

Bill meets Lois Burnham, daughter of New York physician Dr. Clark Burnham.

April 6, 1917 - U.S. enters World War I.

Summer 1917 - a Second Lieutenant in the coast artillery at Ft. Rodman, Mass., Bill takes first remembered drink - Bronx Cocktail - feels a miracle - relaxed and free. A profound experience he recalled vividly more than 50 years later.

January 24, 1918 - Bill marries Lois Burnham.

Summer 1918 - On way to France, Bill visits Winchester Cathedral and is stirred by a "tremendous sense of presence". Reads epitaph on headstone of a Hampshire Grenadier.

Nov. 11, 1918 - Armistice signed, World War I ends.

January 16, 1919 - 36 states ratified constitutional amendment for prohibition.

May 1919 - Bill returns home.

1920 - Bill enters Brooklyn Law School.

1921 - An investigator for U.S. F & G and also works around Wall Street.

Christmas 1923 - Bill vows to stay sober one year - Lasted only 2 months.

1925-26 - Bought motorcycle and became (First?) "Market Analyst." Disease progressing.

1926 - On Wall Street full time. Disease progressing.

Late 1928 - Early 1929 - Bill crosses "invisible line" in his drinking.

Oct. 1929 - Stock Market collapse.

Nov. 1929 - Bill goes to Canada for a job with Dick Johnson.

1930 - 31 - Back in Brooklyn and Wall Street. Living with Lois's family - unemployed. Disease progressing.

1931 - Rowland Hazard sees Dr. Carl Jung in Zurich, Switzerland. Told no medical or psychological hope for an alcoholic of his type; told that the only hope was a spiritual or religious experience or conversion. This considered "the first in the chain of events that led to the founding of A.A."

Spring 1932 - Bill's business deal in New Jersey - drank Apple Jack and drunk three days. Contract cancelled.

At Towns Hospital, Bill meets Dr. William Silkworth on second admission. "The Little Doctor Who Loved Drunks."

1930-34 - Bill in "An Alcoholic Hell".

1933-34 - Bill in Towns Hospital four times.

Dec. 5, 1933- Prohibition ended.

Bill resumes drinking after each admission. Disease progressing.

Summer 1934 - Dr. Silkworth pronounces Bill a "HOPELESS DRUNK"

Rowland Hazard returns to America and becomes involved in Oxford Group.

1934 - Emmett Fox publishes "The Sermon On The Mount".

Aug. 1934 - Rowland Hazzard and Cebra persuade court to parole Ebby Thacher in their custody. Ebby sobers up at Oxford Group at Calvary Episcopal Mission, where Sam Shoemaker works.

Nov. 1934 - Ebby T. carries message to Bill at home. Tells his story. "One Alcoholic Talking To Another."

Bill starts attending Oxford Group at Calvary Church, Bowery Mission.

Bill drinks again - Back to Towns Hospital.

Dec. 1934 - Bill has "Hot Flash" spiritual experience at Towns Hospital. NEVER DRANK AGAIN.

Dr. Silkworth assured Bill he was not crazy; rather a "psychic upheaval" or "conversion experience."

The next day Ebby brought Bill a copy of William James' "Varieties of Religious Experience".

Bill reads "Varieties of Religious Experience", an explanation of need for Pain, Suffering, Calamity and "Deflation in Depth" and the "Simultaneous Transmission of Hope." The two "Halves" are joined into a "Whole."

Bill returns to Oxford Group and works with other alcoholics, also at Sam Shoemaker's Calvary Mission and at Towns Hospital, emphasizing his "Hot Flash" spiritual experience. He noted they "seemed to do better" talking of their common problems, but no success in sobering up others.

Bill develops belief that alcoholics are resistant to the "Four Absolutes" of the Oxford Group.

1935 - Bill, still sober, but no success yet in helping others. Still frequents Wall Street. Went to Akron Ohio for proxy fight. Lost proxy fight. Bill at Mayflower Hotel. Very discouraged and afraid he might drink.

May 11, 1935 - Bill reached realization of: I need another alcoholic. "He starts making telephone calls. The final founding moment of A.A.

Rev. Walter Tunks referred Bill to Norman Sheppard, and Norman referred Bill to Henrietta Seiberling, an Oxford Group adherent. She arranged a meeting the next afternoon at the Seiberling Estate with Dr. Bob Smith.

May 12, 1935 @5:00P.M. - Bill meets Dr. Bob. Bob still drinking. Bill tells Bob of his experiences with alcohol the hopes, promises, failures told of the obsession, compulsion, and physical allergy; told him of Ebby's visit and simple message, "show me your faith and by my works I will show you mine."

Robert Holbrook Smith. Born August 8, 1879 in St. Johnsbury, VT. Dartmouth College, Pre-Med at Univ. of Michigan. M.D. at Rush Medical college, Chicago, IL. Intern at City Hospital, Akron, OH. Proctologist. His wife, Anne was a friend of Henrietta Seiberling. They brought Dr. Bob to Oxford Group meetings for 2-1/2 yrs. and he continued to get drunk almost daily.

Bill had presented Dr. Bob four aspects of one core idea: 1) Utter Hopelessness, 2) Totally Deflated, 3) Requiring Conversion, 4) Needing Others

Dr. Bob understood with sudden clarity - the difference with the Oxford Group. "The spiritual approach was as useless as any other if you soaked it up like a sponge and kept it to yourself." The purpose of life was not to "get", it was to "give."

June 10?, 1935 Dr. Bob has last drink

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS FOUNDED

June 11, 1935 - Dr. Bob suggests they both start working with other alcoholics.

June 28, 1935 - Bill and Dr. Bob confront Bill Dotson, first "Man on the Bed." Bill D. was a prominent attorney in Akron. The 3rd A.A. Note: Bill D. had a spiritual experience without familiarity with Oxford Group principals.

Henrietta Seiberling supplied them with "Infusion of Spirituality" mainly through Paul to Corinthians on "Love" and James on "Works" if faith is to have meaning.

Summer, 1935 - Bill stayed in in Akron. He and Dr. Bob worked with alcoholics and attended weekly Oxford Group meetings and received spiritual nourishment.

Fall & Winter 1935 - Back in New York on Clinton St. Hank P. and Fitz M. got sober.

Mid 1936 - a small but solid group developing at Clinton St. in New York.

Bill's efforts with alcoholics receiving criticism from Oxford Group.

Charles Towns offers Bill a job at Towns Hospital. Bill wanted it. The question presented to the Group and rejected because - what they had, the "thing" that bound them together and those feelings could not be bought and paid for. The only authority was the Group Conscience and all decisions were to be made by the Group.

1937 - Beginning of the split from the Oxford Group.

Residents at Clinton St.: Ebby T., Oscar V., Russell R., Bill C., Florence R.

Nov. 1937 - Bill and Dr. Bob meet in Akron and compare notes. Forty cases sober and staying sober. More than twenty sober for more than one year. All had been diagnosed as HOPELESS.

A meeting of the Akron Group to consider Bill's ideas for a book, pamphlets and how to expand the movement. Presented but only narrowly passed by a majority of 2.

Feb. 1938 - Rockefeller gives \$5,000 and saves A.A. from professionalism.

May 1938 - The Alcoholic Foundation established as a trusteeship for A.A.

May 1938 - Beginning of the writing of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dec. 1938 - Twelve Steps written.

1939 - Membership reaches 100.

April 1939 - The book Alcoholics Anonymous published.

Summer 1939 - Withdrawal from association with Oxford Group complete. Oxford Group renamed "Moral Re-Armament."

1940 - Bill meets Father Ed Dowling who becomes his "spiritual advisor."

"Rule No. 62."

Feb. 1940 - First World Service January Office for A.A.

March 1941 - Jack Alexander's Saturday Evening Post article published and membership jumped from 2000.

January 1944 - Dr. Harry Tiebout's first paper on the subject of "Alcoholics Anonymous".

June 1944 - The A.A. Grapevine established.

1946 - The Twelve Traditions of A.A. formulated and published. The Washingtonians in the 1840's failed, due principally to failure to adhere to "Singleness of Purpose," and this failure influenced the development of the A.A. Traditions.

June 1, 1949 - Anne Ripley Smith died.

July 1959 - First international convention of A.A. at Cleveland, Ohio. Twelve Traditions adopted.

Nov. 16, 1950 - Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous died.

June 1953 - The book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions published.

Oct. 1954 - The "Alcoholic Foundation" becomes the "General Service Board of A.A."

July 1955 - 20th Anniversary Convention at St. Louis, MO. Second edition of Alcoholics Anonymous published. The three legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service turned over to the movement by its oldtimers.

1957 - Creation of first overseas General Service Board of A.A. in Great Britain and Ireland. A.A. Comes of Age published in October. Membership reaches over 200,000 in 7,000 groups in 70 countries and U.S. possessions.

1959 - A.A. Publishing, Inc. became A.A. World Services, Inc.

July 1960 - 25th Anniversary Convention at Long Beach, CA.

1962 - Publication of Twelve Concepts for World Service written by Bill W.

July 1965 - 30th Anniversary Convention at Toronto, Canada. Keynote adopted, "I Am Responsible."

1966 - Change in ratio of trustees of the General Service Board; now two-thirds majority of alcoholic members; the A.A. fellowship accepts responsibility for all it's future affairs.

1967 - Publication of the book The A.A. Way of Life now titled As Bill Sees It.

Oct. 9-11, 1969 - 1st World Service meeting held in New York with delegates from 14 countries.

1970 - 35th Anniversary International Convention at Miami Beach, Florida. Keynote: "This we owe to AA's of the future. To place our common welfare first; To keep our fellowship united. For on A.A. Unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come." Bill's last public appearance.

Jan. 24, 1971 - William Griffith Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, dies at Miami Beach, FL.

Oct. 5-7, 1972 - 2nd World Service meeting held in New York.

1973 - Publication of Came to Believe.

April 1973 - Distribution of the book Alcoholics Anonymous reached one million mark.

1975 - Publication of Living Sober.

1976 - Publication of 3rd Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous.

October 5, 1988 - Lois Burnam Wilson died.

Sources: Bill W. by Robert Thompsen
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