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Purpose

This workbook has been prepared to assist the members of the Area 62 Archives committee. It contains items that have been reviewed and approved by the archives committee. This workbook is considered service material and is a supplement to the Archives Workbook (M-44I) published by A.A.W.S. The A.A.W.S. workbook provides a general description of the roles of an Archives Committee and Archivist as well as information about our principle of anonymity and other helpful suggestions. It was the consensus of the members of the Area 62 Archives Committee that it did not need to produce a separate copy of the A.A.W.S. Archives Workbook. The committee members felt the guidelines and forms they had voted on was representative of the needs of Area 62. Additionally, the forms contained in this document are intended to be removed and copied as needed.

A Brief History of Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina

Our hope is that when this chip of a book is launched on the world tide of alcoholism, defeated drinkers will seize upon it, to follow its suggestions. Many, we are sure, will rise to their feet and march on. They will approach still other sick ones and fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous may spring up in each city and hamlet, havens for those who must find a way out.

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 153

In the archives of the General Service Office in New York there is a letter dated November 13, 1942, from an attorney in Spartanburg named John L. Apparently, this is the earliest written inquiry to the office from someone in South Carolina. The group that later was established because of this inquiry marks the beginning of Alcoholics Anonymous in our state. John L. wrote in part, "A group of us are interested in the book published about 1939 by your society and are interested in forming a local chapter." Other correspondence in the New York archives indicates the group experienced difficulty getting started, but eventually did hold its first official meeting on September 15, 1944, at the Cleveland Hotel in Spartanburg. There were six members in attendance.

In the summer of 1946, Marvin M. moved to Spartanburg from Atlanta, Georgia and discovered the group no longer existed. He resurrected the group and the members began calling it the Central Group. The group, however, again had problems meeting consistently and became inactive. In 1955, a new Central Group was started and began holding meetings regularly at 202 Pine Street and later at 109 Wall Street. In the early 1950s, several Central Group members in Spartanburg formed a nonprofit organization named Alconon Inc. The organization later obtained funding and was able to purchase property and construct a facility at 349 East St. John Street. Members attending meetings at the location started the second group in Spartanburg and named it the St. John Group. In the early 1970s, the Central Group and the St. John Group merged and became known as the Central-St. John Group.

Information in the South Carolina General Service Committee Archives indicates Mary D., a woman in Columbia, wrote the then named Alcoholic Foundation in New York in late November 1944. Mary informed the office that she and two other members of Alcoholics Anonymous had started an A.A. group in the city. Her letter named the other two members as David H. and John C. The group was

holding meetings in the private dining room of the Jefferson Hotel, where John C. was employed. The group later began referring to itself as the Columbia Group and moved their meeting location to 819 Harden Street in the mid-1940s. On January 31, 1947, an organization named A Corporation of Alcoholics (ACOA) was registered with the South Carolina Secretary of State's office, as a nonprofit organization. Following the organization's construction of a facility at 2015 College Street, the Columbia group later began holding their meetings there. Other groups were started in Columbia and in the surrounding area during the late 1940s and early 1950s and members renamed the group the Central Group.

General Service Office records show that William H. of Charleston, South Carolina began corresponding with the New York office as early as 1943. He stated in one of his letters that he had been sober for over ten years outside of A.A., but would be glad to help get Alcoholics Anonymous started in Charleston. As often occurred when starting new groups in A.A.'s early days, William H. experienced a great many problems. After several failed attempts, he was able to have the group hold its first official meeting on March 26, 1946, at St. Phillip's Episcopal Church's Parish House. The group later dissolved. In 1948 two other groups in Charleston, the Mid-Town Group and Tidewater Group, started meeting.

Directories and other material in the South Carolina General Service Committee Archives reveal Alcoholics Anonymous grew rapidly in South Carolina during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Groups were started in cities across the state, including Greenville (1945), Anderson (1946), Bennettsville (1947), Laurens (1948), Greenwood (1948), Conway (1950), Greer (1951) and Lancaster (1952). The material also shows the first state convention in South Carolina was held in Charleston, July 16-18, 1948, at the Francis Marion Hotel. Approximately 100 A.A. members attended the convention. By the end of 1952, the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina had reached 917 with 44 groups registered with the New York office. John J., from Cheraw, became the first delegate elected from South Carolina. He attended the 1952 and 1953 General Service Conferences in New York.

The growth of Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In 1959, the membership increased to 1,015 and there were 64 official groups. In 1969, there were 1,294 active A.A. members attending meetings in 84 registered groups in South Carolina, which was officially designated as Area 62 by New York. In the mid 1960s, Area 62 divided itself into three regions known as the Upper Region, Central Region, and Lower Region. The state was further divided into districts in the mid-1970s.

It is suggested that each group and district in the state elect representatives to the Area Assembly, which is responsible for conducting the state's A.A. business. In June 2001, assembly members voted to amend the Area Structure and Procedures and eliminated both the regions and regional nominating committee used in elections. Following this decision, all eligible Area 62 members have been invited to stand for area offices, and elections have been conducted according to the Third Legacy Procedure as described in the *A.A. Service Manual*.

The first Intergroup office, named the Greater Columbia Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous, opened in Columbia in September 1979. Other Intergroup offices opened in the 1980s in Greenville, Charleston, and Myrtle Beach. These offices provide members easy access to meeting information and allow for the quick purchase of literature. In the 1980s and 1990s, in addition to standard speaker and discussion type meetings, A.A. meeting schedules show that "Big Book" study meetings, "Twelve and Twelve" meetings, and meetings for young people, women, gays, and other specialized groups became commonplace across South Carolina. Meetings also began to be held in the mornings, at noon, in the afternoons and late at night. Moreover, nonsmoking meetings became the norm in most places. Today, groups can be found everywhere in South Carolina, from large metropolitan areas, which have scores of groups and hundreds of meetings, to small towns such as Denmark, Estill, Ridgeway and Greeleyville, which have only one or two meetings a week.

On March 20-23, 1997, the 50th Annual South Carolina State A.A. Convention was held at the Adams Mark Hotel in Columbia, South Carolina, with nearly 800 members in attendance. In April 1997, at the 47th General Service Conference in New York, Betty S. from Columbia was elected Southeast Regional Trustee. In October 1999, Darwin H., from Conway, South Carolina, was elected as delegate to the 50th General Service Conference.

When *Alcoholics Anonymous* was first published in 1939, Bill W. expressed the hope that our Fellowship would one day reach everywhere and that it might provide a means of recovery for alcoholics who wanted to recover. As we enter a new millennium, data shows that we have grown in South Carolina from one group and six members in 1944 to over 300 groups and approximately 7,000 members in the year 2004. It is evident that Bill's hope has been realized to a large extent in our Area. May God continue to bless us.

Anonymous

Group History Questionnaire

Name of group: _____

Previous group name: _____

District: _____

City/Town: _____

Date: _____

Person submitting history: _____

- 1) How did the group get its name?

- 2) Who were the members that started the group (including early members) and when?

- 3) Where has the group met over the years?

- 4) What days, times, etc. does the group meet?

- 5) What type meeting are held (open, closed, speaker, literature, beginner, etc)?

- 6) What was A.A like in the early days in your area?

- 7) How were new members contacted and how was 12th Step work done?

- 8) Was the cooperation of local community and professional agencies (ministers, doctors, law enforcement agencies, etc.) sought?

- 9) Were there any growing pains when the group was started or since then?

10) Where there anonymity breaks?

11) How was the group received in the community (newspaper articles)?

12) Was Al-Anon in the area and what were the relations like with A.A.?

13) Are there any newspapers clippings, pictures, flyers, meeting schedules or tapes of early members that you would like to submit to the Area Archives?

14) What else about the group would you like to relate?

Return To:
Area 62 Archivist
121 Bee Street
Summerville, SC 29483

Suggested Guidelines for Taping Individuals for Area 62 Archives

The following guidelines have been developed to assist the Area 62 Archives Committee in conducting interviews of individuals relative to obtaining information about Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina.

1. Prior to taping the individual, explain the purpose of the interview is to gather historical information about Alcoholics Anonymous in South Carolina and that it may be used in the writing of a history of A.A. in our state. Relate also that a release of copyright form must be completed and signed. Additionally, that A.A.'s traditions regarding anonymity will be adhered to as strictly as possible.
2. Try to obtain a place for conducting the interview that is free from noise and distractions. Also review the oral history questionnaire with the individual and state that it is okay if they want to make notes. It is a good idea to test your recording equipment before you begin the interview and to use 90 minute cassette tapes in case you exceed the suggested 60 minutes allotted for interviews.
3. Before beginning the interview, explain that our primary interest is the role A.A. played in their sobriety and how individually they helped with the growth of A.A. in their area. Remind them not to be unnecessarily modest and emphasize that you are more interested in their sobriety than their drinking. Further, that the tape of the interview will be stored in the Area 62 Archives.
4. A good way to begin the interview is to have the individual relate how they made initial contact with A.A. and who was instrumental in helping them. Again, remind the individual that A.A.'s traditions regarding anonymity will be adhered to as strictly as possible but for historical purposes it is best to use full names. If the individual insists on using only first names and last initials, this will be all right.
5. Remember the Area 62 Archives Committee primarily is looking for individuals with approximately twenty-five years or more association with Alcoholics Anonymous in our state. Do not forget there also are individuals who no longer attend meetings for one reason or another but can provide the archives committee valuable information about A.A. history in their area.

6. There also are spouses, children, relatives, and friends of deceased A.A. members who may be able to provide you information about Alcoholics Anonymous in your area. There also may be ministers, doctors, judges, and others who may be able to share interesting A.A. information with you. You may use the same type questions you used with A.A. members to gather this information. Also explain the purpose of the interview and how the information may be used and how the anonymity of A.A.'s members will be treated. A release of copyright form must be signed by these individuals too.

7. During the interview, the individual simply may prefer to reminisce or may want just to answer the questions on the oral history questionnaire. Keep in mind we want this to be a comfortable, rewarding experience for everyone. If the member does not want to talk for a full hour, we will be happy for the time they provide us. If this is the case, the interviewer should address the most important questions first.

Oral History Questionnaire

It is extremely important that the interviewer state their full name, the date, and where the interview is being conducted to include the city or town and specific location.

1. What is your full name and sobriety date?
2. How did you yourself get to A.A.?
3. How did you hear about A.A.?
4. Did you have a sponsor and if so, who were they and how did it help you as a newcomer?
5. What contributions did you yourself make to the fellowship's growth (do not be unnecessarily modest)?
6. When was A.A. started in your town or area, and by whom?
7. Where were A.A. meetings held: Homes, churches, etc.?
8. Who were the early members who especially contributed to the growth and success of the group?
9. How were the early groups or meetings started? Was it an offshoot from the parent group, a quarrel or split with the first or main group, one person starting a group, etc.?
10. What was A.A. like in the early days?
11. How did you contact new members?
12. How was 12th Step work done?

13. Did you seek cooperation of local community and professional agencies: Ministers, doctors, law enforcement agencies?
14. Who were the founders and group officers of the early groups?
15. How often were A.A. meetings held and what was the meeting format: Speaker, open, closed, discussion, literature based, etc.?
16. Were there any special problems that arose during the early years, growing pains, etc.?
17. What were some of the group names, did they change? If so when? Was there more than one name change? What are the present names of the groups?
18. Do you know how the first group was received by the community when it started?
19. Do you think your group or groups had influence in your community; has the attitude of your local professional community, particularly towards alcoholism been changed by contact with the local members?
20. Where conferences or conventions held? When did they start, how often were they held, were they well attended?
21. Did you ever attend any conferences or conventions?
22. When did clubhouses start (if you have one), and under what circumstances? Any problems developed? How were they solved?
23. Was there any opposition to A.A. or intergroup in your area?
24. Is there an intergroup or central office in your area? When was it started? How? Were there any problems?

25. Do you celebrate anniversaries (individual or group)? How?
26. Is there Al-Anon or Alateen in your area? How are their relations with the groups?
27. Have you experienced growth in your group or area?
28. Who approaches A.A. today: more young people, women, minorities? Are there any problems?
29. Were there problems with outside issues in the early meetings: drugs, gambling, treatment center lingo, etc.?
30. Are there any “outside Agencies” in your area? What is the group’s relationship with them? Any referrals? Any problems with these?
31. How has A.A. changed since you first encountered it? How?
32. Did your group have contact with GSO? District, Area 62?
33. Is there anything else you would like to relate?

Assignment of Copyright

I hereby donate the recording (including the transcripts) of my A.A. talk (oral history) and all rights therein to Alcoholics Anonymous Area 62 Archives Committee to be kept in the South Carolina Area 62 Archives.

The recording, notes, transcripts may be quoted by persons approved by the South Carolina Area Archivist and/or the Permanent Rotating Archives Committee for any and all purposes incidental to their formal activities and operations.

If, or when the South Carolina Area 62 Archive Committee decides to publish this memoir in any form, it may copyright the transcript and/or recording in the name of Alcoholics Anonymous South Carolina Area 62 Archives Committee, in the United States and elsewhere and obtain renewal of copyright of my oral history memoirs.

I waive my right to any and all payments, royalties, and or benefits which may be received by the South Carolina Area Assembly as a result of such publication and use.

The South Carolina Area 62 Archives Committee may edit, publish, duplicate, distribute, sell and/or license the use of my oral history memoir in any other manner which it considers to be desirable and I waive any claim to any payments which may be received as a consequence thereof by the South Carolina Area 62 Archives Committee.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Area 62 Archives

Witness: _____

Area 62 Archives Deed of Gift

Thank you for your generous contribution to the Area 62 Archives. We will handle it with care. Contributions such as yours have made it possible for us to continue our efforts to have a comprehensive history of our Fellowship in South Carolina. We also want you to understand that this is a permanent contribution and that you are confident we will make the best possible use of it.

Received from: _____

Date: ____/____/____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Description of materials:

I, _____, donate the materials described above to the Area 62 Archives to become its permanent property and to be administered in accordance with its established policies. I assign all reproduction rights to Area 62 Archives, and understand that this material may be available for research or exhibit subject only to those restrictions specified on this document and those that are set forth in our Twelve Traditions.

_____ I transfer all copyrights I possess to the Area 62 Archives

_____ I do not transfer all copyrights I possess to the Area 62 Archives

Restrictions (if any):

Items not retained by the Area 62 Archives shall be discarded within one (1) year or returned to the owner. **Owner:** _____ **Date returned:** _____

I also understand that after one (1) year all items become the permanent property of the Area 62 Archives to store, move, or discard.

Signed: _____

Area 62 Archives hereby accepts the above property under the conditions specified.

Signed: _____

Area 62 Archives

Witness: _____

If moved or discarded: **Person:** _____,

Where:

Witness: _____

September 30, 2007