

# **A Pre-AA History Book**

**A Study of Synchronic Events  
Between Years 1926 and 1935  
which Culminated in the Birth of  
Alcoholics Anonymous**

**Bob S.**

## Forward

The purpose of this book is to present a brief sketch of AA pre-history in hopes of promoting a greater interest in the exciting past of Alcoholics Anonymous. This book does not attempt to delve deeply into pre-AA, but includes a number of short snippets that may be interesting for the casual reader. There are many wonderful books on this subject which are approved by the General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, from which I have made use for this writing, as well as many outside books too numerous to mention, so I will not try. . . . But thank you!

I have had very much research assistance writing this book; I would like to thank Bruce C., and Dan R., from Muncie, Indiana, who helped dig up important facts from Manchester, VT, in 2008. I would like to thank Ron F., from Bloomington, IN, for purchasing a long 100' tape measure to authenticate the Thacher residence location in Manchester, VT, as well as Jay S., from Redondo Beach, CA, and Barefoot Bill, from NJ, who repeated the same project to doubly assure authenticity. Also, I have learned much about early AA in Manchester, via email, from Les C., from Colorado. Arthur S., from Texas, sent important documents and pictures. And of course, Mel B's book, "*Ebby, The Man Who sponsored Bill W.*" was more helpful than I can say. But I must say, Thanks to everyone!

Although the address of the Thacher residence *is* listed in this book, there continues a concern that the present owners may be bombarded with well-meaning and interested AAs. For this reason, we ask that no inquiries be made from the present owners. They know nothing about AA or its history.

This book is my own doing and is not endorsed by any Alcoholics Anonymous Group, District, Area or GSO or other agency of Alcoholics Anonymous. The information herein is history as I found it, but that does not mean that it is definitely correct one hundred percent. History is that way.

This volume was originally written as not for profit. It is hoped that readers will print it not only for their own research, but also as a gift for an AA newcomer. Your Aunt Maud would probably not be thrilled by this volume. I personally consider the information included in this book to be so reliable as to be used for AA history seminars or general sharing of AA facts.

I hope you enjoy this book,

Bob S.

# A Picture Page of Pre-AA History



1931 (maybe 1926) Dr. Carl Jung informs businessman, Rowland Hazard that his sobriety is contingent on a spiritual experience



During this period the Oxford Group, started by Rev. Frank Buchman, helped many members obtain spiritual experiences.



Rev. Sam Shoemaker, from the Calvary Church, 21st & Park Ave. S., NYC, headed the OG in the United States. Roland joined the ranks here.



1934 Ebby Thacher was in hot water for being drunk (again) and shooting pigeons at his parents 'summer cottage' at Manchester, VT.



Ebby faced six months confinement at Brattleboro Asylum (above), however, Oxford Grouper, and Broadway actor, Cebra Graves (the judges son) got Ebby off the hook and to the care of (then-sober) businessman Rowland Hazard.



Ebby closed the family 'cottage' and lived in Grouper, Shep Cornell's prestigious Manhattan apt. for two weeks, but then . . .



Late summer 1934—Ebby's new quarters became the Calvary mission at 246 E. 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, in Lower Manhattan—*what a revoltin' development!*



**Bleak Late Nov. Day 1934**

Ebby remembers his *soused-up* friend, Bill Wilson, and carries the sobering OG message at the famous *Kitchen Table Meeting* (p. 9 of the Big Book).



May 12, 1935—Bill carries his drinking and recovery experience to Doctor Bob Smith. AA begins the following month.



# Carl Jung's Original Letter to Bill Wilson

PROF. DR. C. G. JUNG

KÖLNACHT-ZÜRICH  
BESCHLAGE 228

January 30, 1961

Mr. William G. Wilson  
Alcoholics Anonymous  
Box 459 Grand Central Station  
New York 17, N.Y.



Dr. Carl Jung as he  
would have appeared  
when he treated  
Rowland Hazard.

Dear Mr. Wilson,  
your letter has been very welcome indeed.  
I had no news from Roland H. anymore and often wondered what has been his fate.  
Our conversation which he has adequately reported to you had an aspect of which  
he did not know. The reason was, that I could not tell him everything, ~~was that~~  
those days I had to be exceedingly careful of what I said, I had found out that  
I was misunderstood in every possible way. Thus I was very careful when I talked  
to Roland H. But what I really thought about, was the result of many experiences  
with men of his kind.  
His craving for alcohol was the equivalent on a low level of the spiritual  
thirst of our being for wholeness, expressed in mediaeval language: the union  
with God.<sup>1)</sup>  
How could one formulate such an insight in a language that is not misunderstood  
in our days?  
The only right and legitimate way to such an experience is, that it happens to  
you in reality and it can only happen to you when you walk on a path, which leads  
you to higher understanding. You might be led to that goal by an act of grace  
or through a personal and honest contact with friends, or through a highest  
education of the mind beyond the confines of mere rationalism. I see from your  
letter that Roland H. has chosen the second way, which was, under the circum-  
stances, obviously the best one.  
I am strongly convinced that the evil principle prevailing in this world, leads  
the unrecognized spiritual need into perdition, if it is not counteracted either  
by a real religious insight or by the protective wall of human community. An  
ordinary man, not protected by an action from above and isolated in society  
cannot resist the power of evil, which is called very aptly the Devil. But the  
use of such words arouse so many mistakes that one can only keep aloof from  
them as much as possible.  
These are the reasons why I could not give a full and sufficient explanation to  
Roland H. but I am risking it with you, because I conclude from your very  
decent and honest letter, that you have acquired a point of view above the mis-  
leading platitudes, one usually hears about alcoholism.  
You see, Alcohol in Latin is "spiritus" and you use the same word for the  
highest religious experience as well as for the most depraving poison. The help-  
ful formula therefore is: spiritus contra spiritum.

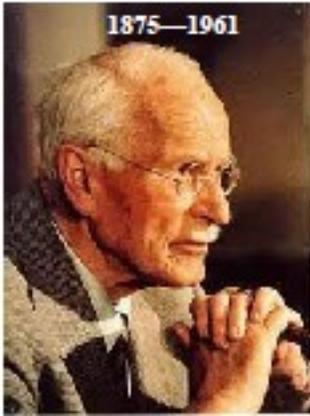
Thanking you again for your kind letter

I remain

yours sincerely

<sup>1)</sup> "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so  
panteth my soul after thee, O God." (Psalm 42,1)

# First Pre-AA Founding Event



Dr. Carl Jung's house at Bollingen, Lake Zurich, Switzerland



Rowland Hazard his 60s  
(1881 - 1945)

The Big Book relates the story of an alcoholic American business man who placed himself under the care of Dr. Carl Jung; however, the doctor's treatment was unsuccessful. Jung advised Rowland that his only hope for sobriety was a spiritual experience (pp 26 and 27).

AA lore has this event taking place during 1931 – Cebra Graves told Bill Wilson that Rowland informed him that the meeting took place in 1930 or 1931.\* However, later researchers have come to different conclusions:

Dubiel showed in this book, that although A.A. tradition said that Hazard was a patient of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung for a year in 1931, he could have spent two months with Jung at most during the course of that year, and even that would have been difficult, based on his study of the Hazard family papers.

But in the period immediately following the publication of this book, two other researchers, Amy Colwell Bluhm, Ph.D., and Cora Finch, working independently, established that Rowland actually arrived in Zurich in May 1926 (five years earlier than the traditional A.A. date).

See Bluhm's article "Verification of C. G. Jung's analysis of Rowland Hazard and the history of Alcoholics Anonymous" in the American Psychological Association's journal History of Psychology in November 2006.

\* Culture and Society Quarterly, Vol 3, No. 7 (April-June 2008)

# Rowlands' Continued Search



In effort to find the spiritual help suggested by Dr. Jung, Rowland attended the **Oxford Group** meetings in New York City, located in the Calvary Episcopal Parish House in the upscale Gramercy Park section of lower Manhattan. This spiritual group was started by Reverend Frank Buchman in 1921 with the title of, *A First Century Christian Fellowship* (That name was changed to **Oxford Group** in the late 1920s). Reverend Samuel Shoemaker was Minister of the adjacent Calvary Church. This was virtual American headquarters for the Oxford Group during the 1930s. Reverend Sam was known nationwide via radio and his writings.



Rev. Frank Buchman  
1878-1961



Rev. Sam Shoemaker  
1893-1963



Calvary Episcopal  
Church-21st St.  
and Park Ave. South



Calvary Parish House  
is adjacent to  
Calvary Church

From this group Rowland learned about their Four Absolutes: Honesty, Unselfishness, Love and Purity, plus their practical living tenets. However, it would seem that Rowland did not recover at this point. Here is an excerpt from Cora Finch's long account of Rowland Hazard's life and struggles with alcoholism. [stellarfire.org](http://stellarfire.org):

*“Since Rowland was a typical alcoholic, however, it took him seven more years of denial and misery -- as he continued to refuse to take Jung's prescription seriously -- before he met Courtenay Baylor from the **Emmanuel Movement** and began seeking a spiritual solution to his alcoholism..”* Bluhm's and Finch's work corroborated the A.A. tradition that Rowland Hazard was Carl Jung's patient for a considerable length of time, and the two of them discovered a good deal of detail about Rowland's relationship with Jung and the general background. Jung ended up telling Rowland that he had never seen alcoholics of his type recover until they became willing to commit themselves to the spiritual life—for expanded information: <http://health.groups.yahoo.com/group/AAHistoryLovers/message/5564>

**So, it would seem Rowland was on and off the wagon till the time he was fated to offer his experience and good help to the next person to set the AA ball rolling during the summer of 1934: Ebby Thacher.**

***The Common Sense of Drinking***, by Richard Peabody (1931), was a very popular alcohol recovery book of the 1930s, Richard Peabody found sobriety through the Emanuel Movement with the help of Courtney Baylor.



# Rowland's Treatment by the Emmanuel Movement



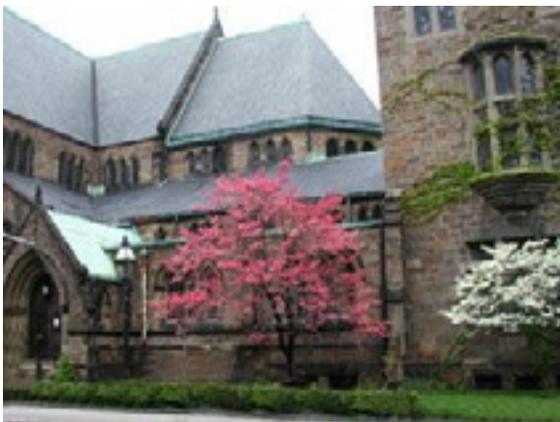
COURTENAY BAYLOR -- The only surviving photo of Baylor, the famous alcoholism therapist from the Rev. Elwood Worcester's Emmanuel Movement, who had both Rowland Hazard and Richard R. Peabody as his patients, and was thus an important indirect influence on early Alcoholics Anonymous.

Baylor was the author of *Remaking a Man: One Successful Method of Mental Refitting* (1919).

Photo discovered by Mitchell K. in September 2012, after spending years looking for a verifiable likeness of Baylor in countless archives and libraries.

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From Courtenay Baylor's book: **Remaking A Man** - ...in the glorious certainty that he need never fail again - he finds perfect freedom and happiness. **(From August to September 1934, Baylor treated Rowland H. in Mass. - Rowland brought the message of the Oxford Group to Ebby T., who in turn brought the message to Bill).**



The Emmanuel Movement was begun in 1906 by the Rev. Elwood Worcester at Emmanuel Episcopal Church in Boston, which is located at 15 Newbury Street, where this avenue runs into the Boston Public Gardens at its east end. The gardens, together with Boston Common, form a vast open area of green grass and beautiful flower beds right in the heart of downtown Boston. —Thanks to writings by Glenn F. Chesnut

# Edwin Throckmorton Thacher

The stage is now set for the next important Pre-AA History person to appear in this sequence of events: Edwin Throckmorton Thacher. “Ebby” came from a well respected family; three members of his family had become mayors of his home town of Albany, NY. His eldest brother, Jack Thacher, was a 1932 Democratic Nominee for Governor when the then-presiding Governor, FDR, was making his sweep into the White House. Ebby, was highly intelligent, although he had problems at school and never earned a college degree. Through the years, he became involved in the sort of hi-jinx of which his politically motivated family hardly approved. Ebby stated that he had been reprimanded by the local authorities because of his drinking and probably *wasn't doing his brother [Jack] any good* [definitely an understatement]. Jack had been Mayor since 1926. In the fall of 1932 (Probably near election time!) Ebby moved to his family’s vacation resort town of Manchester, VT, where he knew people. He lived in the **Brattenkill Inn** for the next two years, but he then took residence at the Thacher families summer home, at **110 Taconic Avenue**, in an upscale neighborhood of Manchester [Robert Todd Lincoln., president Lincoln’s son, had lived directly across the street at the turn of the century].



Ebby (1896-1966)



Lincoln Home 125  
Taconic Avenue

Ebby recalls an early 1929 drinking episode when he and Bill Wilson convinced an Albany ‘barnstormer’ pilot, Ted Burke, to fly them to Manchester, Vermont. They had learned that the Manchester, VT, Airport was to about to open and it might be a fine idea if they would be the very first to land; to be certain that this feat would not go unnoticed they phoned Manchester officials of their intention. They had been drinking all

night, consequently, when they disembarked from the plane they both fell drunkenly on the ground before the amazed crowd of well wishers, including the town band. Bill spent the next day writing apologies. Page 83, Dr. Bob and the Good Old timers. . . . \*Please read the **Manchester Journal** newspaper article about the airport’s opening in the Appendix section.



It is also AA lore that drunken Ebby ran his car into the side of a kitchen; when the shocked owner came out, he asked her for a coffee. She phoned the authorities instead!



Thacher Residence in Manchester



Historic Taconic Avenue



Brattenkill Inn 1930s

# “Taking A Trip, Not Taking A Trip”

Ebby’s family doubtless hoped that the relative tranquility of the Manchester resort community would bring about at least some moderation of his drinking sprees, and it did – sort of. After a few months, Ebby joined a group who spent the entire winter clearing the trails of the Green Mountains.. He claimed to have drank two pints of gin on the first day, but there was no more to be had for the next six months of pseudo isolation. He spent the winter of 1932 – 33 enjoying the rugged work and doing lots of hunting on the weekends. Upon return to the village of *Manchester Depot* [two miles from *Manchester*] he continued to stay dry for a few more months; but soon



Green  
Mountains



Thacher Summer 'Cottage'

thereafter his drinking bouts resumed. Ebby moved into one of the furnished rooms of the large family residence on Taconic Avenue in Manchester during the spring of 1934.

Ebby’s sprees brought about two slight brushes with the Manchester authorities; he was fined only five dollars on each occasion, but with the warning that the third time it could go hard on him. Perhaps it was remorse that led to Ebby to follow his brother’s urging to paint the huge family summer ‘cottage’ that summer. But not surprisingly that task was too much for one person, so a professional helper was hired for added assistance and the job was finished that summer. He must have felt a great satisfaction, for who wouldn’t be proud of such a large scale accomplishment! There is no evidence of this, but perhaps Ebby was celebrating with a little hooch when he noticed a flock of ungrateful pigeons on the roof. Out came his shotgun—and doubtless the neighbors, as well — as loud blasts shattered the tranquility of this calm and peaceful community.

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Dr. Carl Jung coined the word synchronicity in his book, “*An Acausal Connecting Principle.*” AA history abounds with examples of just the right set of circumstances [*people*] who turn up at just the right time to cause a notable event [*beginning link of AA*]. Cebra Graves, Shep Cornell and Roland Hazard arrived to help Ebby at the exact time of his life to formulate an example of Jung’s *Acausal Connecting Principle!*



*Symbols of Synchronicity*

# Off The Hook!

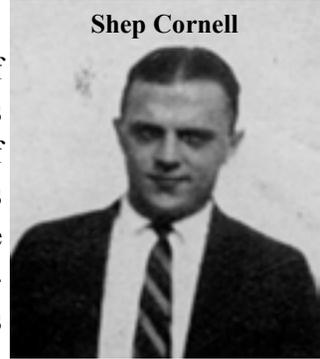


**Ebby Thacher**

Ebby remained in a state of reoccurring drunkenness and depression during the summer of 1934, although he was residing in his family's beautiful summer Manchester home in one of the finest resort areas in the country. As his sadness loomed that July afternoon, one time Broadway actor and current State Senator, Cebra Graves, happened by Rowland Hazard's home near Arlington, just a few miles south, where several happy Oxford Groupers were making use of the swim-

ming pool. When the conversation turned to missionary work, Cebra remembered his old golf acquaintance, Ebby, and invited Sheppard Cornell to come along; Rowland opted to stay by the pool.

Ebby was sitting with his head in his hands; his suit was a bit dirty. "Having a good time Ebby?" was returned by a few angry words. "You don't have to live like this," quipped, Cebra. They cleaned his suit and got him to eat, then they spoke about the principles of the Oxford Group. Although, Ebby was not ready to quit drinking, Cebra found a professional painter to help him finish the house painting project.



**Shep Cornell**



**Cebra Graves**

The pigeon shooting incident took probably place in late August or in September. Resultantly, Ebby was escorted to the Bennington Courthouse where he faced a possible Six months confinement in Brattleboro Asylum. Luckily, Cebra's father was the judge and Rowland Hazard



**Brattleboro Asylum**

offered to take Ebby under his wing via the Oxford Group program of recovery. The judge agreed that if Ebby came back to court Monday morning sober, he would be off the hook!

It was Saturday and Ebby felt the shakes coming on strongly. He remember that there were four bottles of Ballantine's Ale cooling down in the cellar. "Go ahead!" he thought "My God, you are shaking apart!" He picked them up . . . He later stated, "Well, I just couldn't do it. It wouldn't be playing the game square the way I looked at it." Luckily for all of us, he took those tempting four bottles of ale three doors down the street and gave them to a neighbor. **Otherwise, than Ebby Thacher's sense of honesty at that moment, we wouldn't have AA today!**



# Ebby's Miraculous Release

Ebby was let *'off the hook'* on the following Monday. Judge Collins Graves (Cebra's father) released him from his impending commitment to the dreaded Brattoboro Asylum; instead, he was given over to the benevolent sponsorship" of millionaire Oxford Group member, Rowland Hazard. But more importantly, he was also let *"off the hook"* by a mysterious release from his deadly obsession to drink! This miracle happened directly after giving up those four bottles of ale to his neighbor . . . and this release lasted more than two and a half years, allowing Ebby time to carry the Oxford Group message to Bill Wilson which eventually, of course, allowed many thousands of alcoholics to also get *"off the hook."*  
**Thank you God!**



Bennington Court House

Ebby closed the family house for the winter and stayed with his assigned 'Sponsor,' Rowland, in nearby Shaftsbury for a week or so. He then accepted Shep Cornell's invitation to reside at his Manhattan apartment. But he soon thereafter took up residence at the Calvary Mission at 246, East 23 Street. Most AA historians I have read or talked with agree with this fact. However, Cebra Graves remembers that Ebby moved into the plush Oxford Group's headquarters building,



A Neighborhood property

It does not escape my notice that Ebby was not yet a practicing member of the Oxford Group. Consequently, his unlikely release was probably not the result of the Four Absolutes, the OG tenets, or even consistent and sincere prayer. What might have caused this astounding and unlikely event? Of course, Dr. Jung might have interjected his word: synchronicity. Others may have considered it simply a coincidence. (Whatever that means!) Yet others, such as yours truly, consider this miraculous event as a blessed' interjection from God who, in His mercy, decided that it was high time to send down an angel of relief for all those poor suffering alcoholics. **Edwin Throckmorton Thacher** was chosen to be a major participant in this magnificent endeavor. .



**Archangel Raphael**  
 (Angel of healing power)

A 1920s photo of the Calvary Episcopal church at 21<sup>st</sup> and Park Avenue South. Reverend Sam Shoemaker was the rector of this church and leader of the Oxford Group for the United States. The Calvary House is adjacent to the right of the church.



Gramercy park is directly across the street from Calvary House.



An opposite view of the Calvary Parish House. The Oxford Group's guest rooms and offices were in this building

# Ebby: On Again, Off Again!



Shep Cornell

Francis Shepard Cornell (1899-1985) was a non-alcoholic drinker who was not without prestige. (Please note that most of Ebby's benefactors were of the same ilk!). 'Shep' had a seat on the NY Stock Exchange, in 1940 ran for Congress from NY's 22<sup>nd</sup> District (Upper Manhattan/Harlem) and was a Lt. Col in the USAAF. Ebby stayed in



Shep's Manhattan apartment for a short period, then moved in with one of the "brotherhood" who ran Calvary Episcopal Mission. The "brotherhood" was a group of twelve men who ran the mission and administered to the ever revolving patronage. Ebby had a great personality when sober and helped the newly sober men make their "surrender," doubtless using procedures from the Oxford Group. Searcy W., Ebby's Texas sponsor during the 1950s, stated that Ebby was quite good talking over problems with the patients at his Texas Clinic.

Ebby's own mission style "surrender" took place November 1, 1934. So he had been dry for maybe two months, or so, by this time; perhaps



Nell Wing

this sort of deflation helped him maintain his sobriety for the longest period since becoming an alcoholic many years previous: **two years and seven months!** But that wasn't all; Ebby lived thirty-one years after his alcoholic release and was **sober approximately half that time!** After his slip,



April of 1937, Ebby was on-again, off-again through the years and often being enabled by none other than the NY Central Office. Nell Wing, Bill's Wilsons long time secretary, told how Ebby would arrive at the Office, 415 Lexington Ave., to borrow money from Bill, or sometimes drunk, he would fall asleep

on the couch. I would suppose, even drunk, he was considered an AA hero, of sorts, and it would be hard to say no—for after all . . . !



Ebby during the 1960s

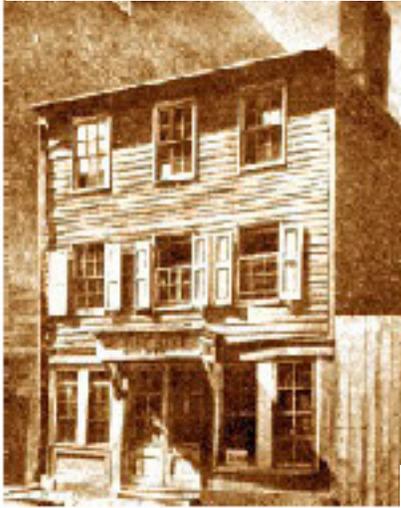
Ebby loved children, was a charming conversationalist and very witty. His friends stuck with him; thusly, Cebra Graves arranged for him to move to Searcy Ws drunk farm in Dallas; with Searcy's sponsorship he stayed **sober for nearly seven years.** Then on and off the wagon he died of a stroke, March 21, 1966, nearly 70 years old, at McPikes farm and treatment center facility. **He was two and a half years sober.**

Now, back to the Calvary Mission. . . .

*Searcy W., during a talk at Danville, Indiana, identified himself as:  
"The man who sponsored the man who sponsored Bill W."*

# The Water Street Mission

(Jerry McAuley Launched New York's First Mission For Alcoholics)



This is the original mission at 316 Water Street. Started by Jerry McAuley, his wife and friends during October, 1872

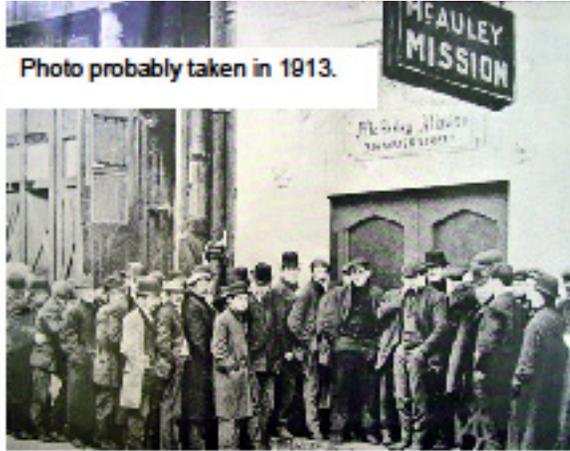


Photo probably taken in 1913. This is a later reconstruction of the Water Street Mission, still at 316 Water Street, under the Brooklyn Bridge. Pictured is a breadline for the immigrant poor.



*Jerry McAuley*

The McAuley Mission has moved several times. It is now called the NEW YORK CITY RESCUE MISSION. It's present location is 90 Lafayette Square.

"Samuel Hopkins Hadley took over as Superintendent of the McAuley Rescue Mission at 316 Water Street in 1886. From that time until his death in 1906 he helped convert hundreds, if not thousands, of hopeless drunks. Sam's son, Henry Harrison Hadley II, named after Sam's brother Coronal Henry Harrison Hadley, would also sober up and be converted after his father's death. Harry Hadley would later collaborate with Sam Shoemaker in opening the Calvary Mission on 23rd Street in Manhattan and become its first superintendent. At The Calvary Mission both Ebby Thacher and Bill Wilson would separately answer calls to come to the rail, kneel at the mercy seat, and experience the Power of conversion." - Excerpt from The Golden Road of Devotion

## Calvary Mission,

246 East 3rd Street. New York, NY (1926—1936)



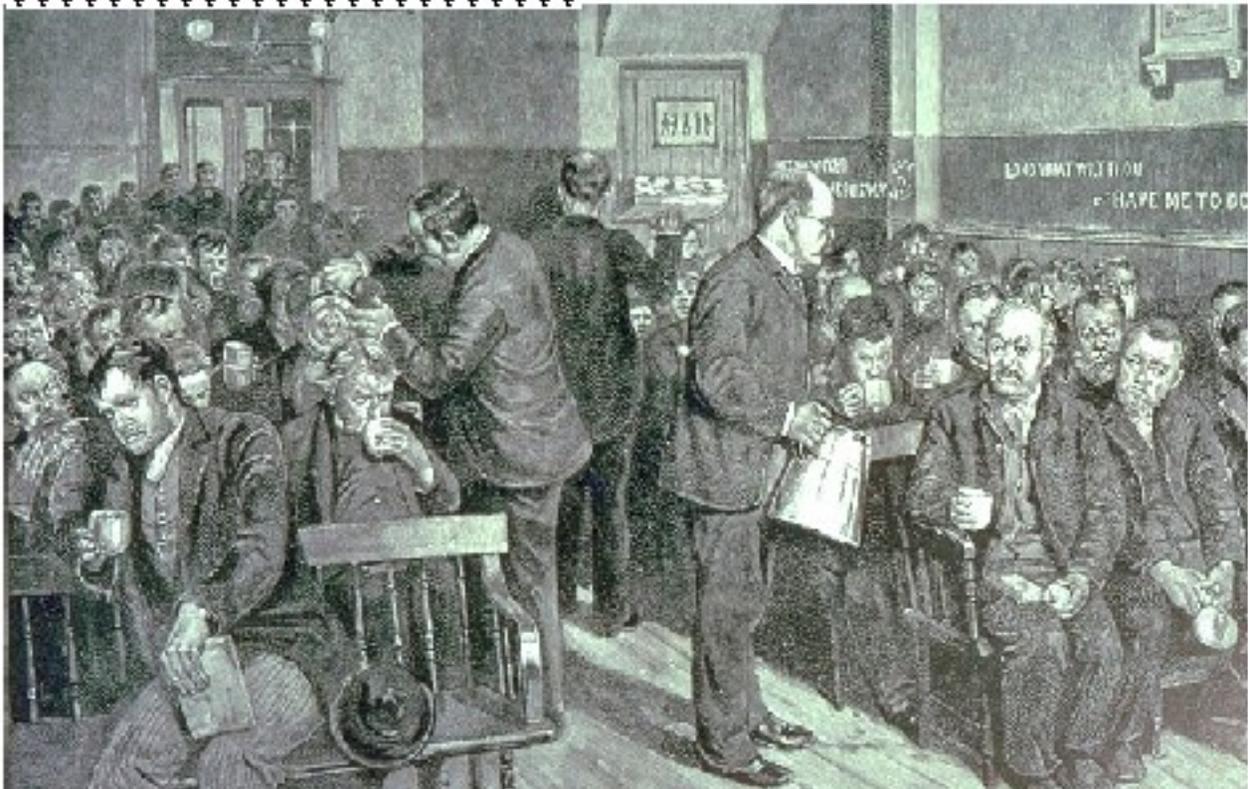
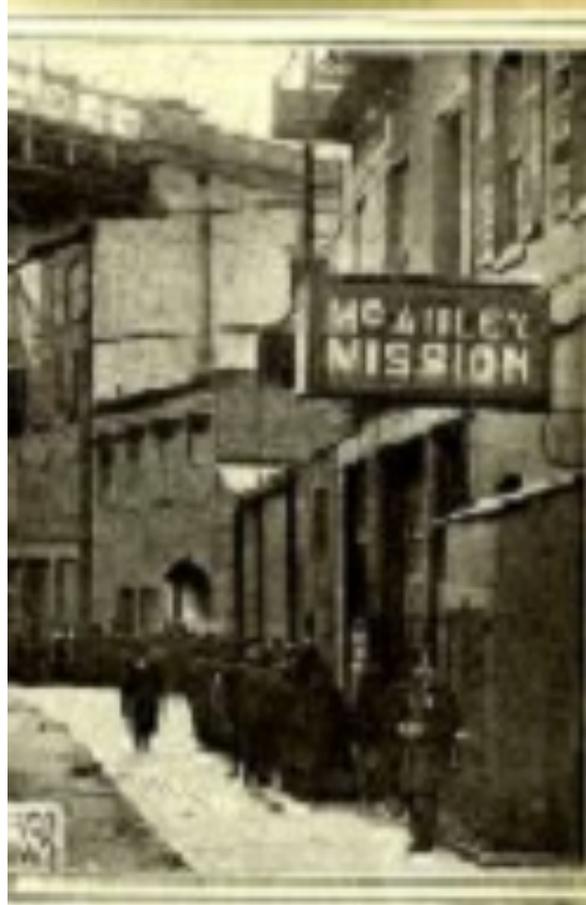
This 57-bed mission provided two meals a day and aided more than 200,000 homeless in its ten years.



# *“Beneath The Brooklyn Bridge”*

## **Ebby Thacher: “What a Revoltin’ Development!”**

Just imagine! Ebby, who grew up with a silver spoon in his mouth, probably with servants, thank you; whose brother, Jack Thacher, served as Mayor of Albany, NY. (Jack was in the running for NY Governor when FDR became president in 1932). Poor Ebby, who just last month was living in a large and beautiful house in upscale Manchester, VT, ends up in a joint such as this. The picture below is not of the Calvary Mission, where he actually landed, but of a much earlier drying out establishment from the 1800s – perhaps the interior of McAuley’s



# *Kitchen Table Talk Has Good Effect*



Lois Wilson



Bill & Ebby

Ebby learned of Bill Wilson's troubles from his Wall Street friends and in the spirit of the Oxford Group he set out to 'witness' to his old friend. He called Bill's wife, Lois, and the project was okayed, so on a bleak November day, Ebby showed up at 182 Clinton Street; their *kitchen table talk* lasted for hours.\* Probably the most helpful part of Ebby's messages was—of course, that he was amazingly sober—but also, the Oxford Group's *simple religious idea* (vital spiritual experience) and *a practical program of action* (The Four Absolutes and the OG tenets). In whatever manner this message was conveyed, it must have been rather simply put, as Bill listened, doubtless a bit soused, over his continually filled glass of pineapple juice and gin.

Bill, at this time, was very depressed and even thought to be suicidal; they moved his sleeping quarters to a lower room for fear of him jumping from the window. Ebby's message must have given Bill good hope because shortly thereafter he visited Calvary Mission to see what was what! But he met Alex the Finn en route and they both arrived all boozed up. But Bill—who Bill is—gave a lecture from the podium anyway!

Reverend Sam Shoemaker, who became Bill's spiritual mentor, later commented that Bill was an exceptional man.

A few days afterward, **Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1934**, Bill was headed for Towns Hospital at 293 Central Park West in Manhattan. He had been previously treated three times in the past year, or so, by Dr. Silkworth. At this point AA (*or not AA*) was skating on thin ice, because Bill picked up four bottles of beer on credit en route to the subway entrance—he had only six cents in his pocket! Lore has it that he arrived carrying two philosophy books in one hand and waving his last beer with the other. He was shouting to Dr Silkworth: "***I've got the answer! I've got the answer!***" The good doctor put Bill to bed, induced barbiturates to sedate him, and belladonna for calming his stomach. But one might be sure that Bill finished his beer first!

Bill had been drinking for only one month this time, so he was not ailing as badly as on earlier such occasions. When the effects of alcohol faded away, he fell into a deep depression, but **he never drank again!**

\* Big Book, pages 7-9



182 Clinton Street in Brooklyn Hts., near the Brooklyn Bridge. Bill and Lois lived here from 1930 to 1939.



This is the historic kitchen table from Clinton Street where Ebby first 'witnessed' to Bill. It is now on display at Stepping Stones Museum in Bedford Hills, NY.



**Towns Hospital**  
**293 Central Park West**  
**Manhattan, NY**

**Dr. William Silkworth**  
**Bill Wilson's Doctor**

## The Belladonna Treatment

The mixture was given every hour, day and night, for nearly 50 hours. The end of the treatment was marked by the abundance of [stools](#) and then [castor oil](#) was given to the patient as a further purgative. The treatment was also described as 'puke and purge'. Every 12 hours the patient was given CC (Compound Cathartic) pills and Blue Mass. These were 19th century medications of varying composition. Blue Mass included mercury, and was prescribed for a cornucopia of ailments.

When a patient was admitted to the hospital while intoxicated or at the end of a spree, the first thing that was done was to put the patient to sleep. The only medication given prior to the hypnotic was the four CC pills. The hypnotic Lambert found best contained [chloral hydrate](#) and [morphine](#) along with one or two grams of [paraldehyde](#). If the patient went to sleep easily on this hypnotic it was safe to wake him every hour for his belladonna regimen. Dr. Lambert believed it was important to administer a small amount of [strychnine](#) every four hours. ~ [wikipedia.org](#)

## More About Towns Hospital

Towns claimed a ninety percent success rate from his cure based on the reasoning that those people he never heard from again had been cured. Towns' reputation by the 1920s had greatly diminished in the medical community as his claims regarding his cure became more exaggerated. The Towns-Lambert cure bordered on quackery.

Lambert eventually broke off his association with Towns Hospital. Towns was making claims that his cure was guaranteed to work for any compulsive behavior, from morphinism to nicotineism to caffeinism, to kleptomania and bedwetting. Lambert realized that the percentage of those deemed to be cured needed to be greatly reduced since he had observed that a number of people over the years kept returning for cure after cure. During the 1920s a large part of the hospital revenues was from repeat business. ~ [wikipedia.org](#)

# Bill Wilson's Spiritual Experience

Ebby visited Bill on his third day at Towns. Bill inquired, "Ebby, what was that neat little formula?" Ebby reiterated the kitchen table message from Clinton Street on that recent bleak November day of 1934. At this juncture Bill went through a process strikingly parallel with the twelve Steps of today (p. 13 of the Big Book). He humbly offered himself to God to do with him as he would, he acquainted his schoolmate (Ebby) with his problems and deficiencies and made a list of people he had harmed, etc..

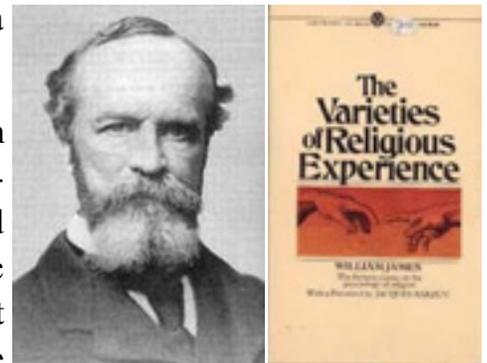
Bill's depression was momentarily lifted but, after Ebby left, it returned with added severe guilt over how badly he had treated his ever loyal wife, Lois. Somehow, his agnostic convictions began to fade. In a moment of despair and utter deflation he shouted: "If there be a God, let him show himself!" Bill was suddenly overcome by a sense of peace and serenity the likes of which he had never known. But when the light and ecstasy subsided, he felt an overwhelming spiritual presence. A sense of victory over alcohol prevailed! He was a free man!

Bill wondered what had happened; was this a hallucination from the medicine? Or, was he going crazy? But Dr. Silkworth noticed that Bill was strangely different! His trusted doctor told him that he had experienced a rare and benevolent psychic change, and he had better try to hold on to it. If Bill was not convinced, a happenstance of Carl Jung's 'Synchronicity', once again, came into play. Ebby brought in a book [at just that time] that proved to remove all doubt: "*The Varieties of Religious Experience*," by William James.

Bill read enough of this rather difficult book (but maybe not all its 475 pages) to convince him of that he had similarities with those recorded conversions. There were three main comparisons: 1) All had experienced utter defeat in some vital area of their lives. 2) All had admitted they were defeated. 3) All had appealed to a higher power for help. The book expressed the idea that such 'religious experiences' had validity and value. History has certainly revealed the truth of this supposition in the magnificent life of Bill Wilson!

By the bye, Jerry McAuley was succeeded at the **Water Street Mission** by S. H. Hadley. His example of recovery from alcoholism was cited in William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. In the late 1920's Hadley's son, Harry, joined with the Reverend Sam Shoemaker to establish the Calvary Rescue Mission. It was the place from which Ebby T. (Thacher) carried a message of recovery to Bill W. Hadley who was also in charge of the mission when Bill W, fresh out of Towns Hospital, visited to carry his new-found message.

This again seems to me another example Jung's 'synchronicity.' . . . Or maybe, dare I say, the working will of what Bill Wilson called, "*The Father Of Light!*"



William James (1842-1910)  
The book above was published in 1902



Harry R. Hadley

# From Belief Into Action!

The fact that Bill, at 39, lived without an alcoholic drink until his death 36 years later makes evident that his spiritual transformation at Towns Hospital was indeed a reality. He left the hospital a free man; free to go back to Wall Street; free to pursue his dream of living in that world of those affluent Manchester vacationers of his youth, or at least return to the times of 1920s when he felt that he “*had arrived!*” But instead of making a b-line for those coveted financial towers, his days and nights were spent carrying his exciting message to the down-and-out sots at the Calvary Mission, as well as the upper class drunks at Towns Hospital. He brought drunks into his beautiful Clinton Street residence, fed them, prayed for them, and unceasingly attempted to



transfer his wondrous alcoholic release; day after day, week after week, month after month, but they *all* stayed drunk—*every one of ‘em!* But he steamrolled dead ahead, dismissing urges to give up his thrilling chase in honor of the financial rewards and respected positions awaiting him in the world of finance. Bill was indeed a changed man! He had undergone a spiritual transformation.

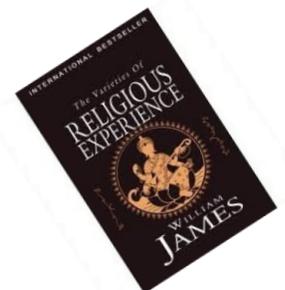


**Rev. Sam Shoemaker**  
was Bill’s  
spiritual mentor.

Reverend Sam Shoemaker became Bill’s spiritual mentor at the time Bill and Lois began regular attendance to the Oxford Group meetings at the Calvary House. This must have been blessedly beneficial for a such a newly defeated ex-agnostic such as Bill. The particulars of what transpired are not known, but doubtless a deep impression was resultantly stamped on Bill’s willingness to believe in God. Bill and Lois made many other Oxford Group friends. They spent many evenings with them after the meetings at Stewart’s Cafeteria, along with several alcoholics. Ebby and Rowland Hazard were

also regulars. This practice has continued in today’s coffee shops around the world; it is now tagged as the AA *meeting-after-the-meeting*.

Bill once stated that he couldn’t remember whether it was Ebby or Rowland who brought him the all-important “*Varieties*” book at Towns. Rowland never actually ever joined AA but was known to stop by the 24th Street Clubhouse from time to time. Rowland remained Ebby’s Oxford Group ‘sponsor;’ he helped Ebby in prayer, encouraged him to give Oxford Group talks and even took him to his Alamagordo Ranch in New Mexico during the summer of 1935. Much to Bill Wilson’s dismay, Ebby started drinking again in the spring of 1937, after two years and seven months of sobriety. It would seem that Rowland was also off and on the wagon after this period, but was probably sober in 1938-39, but there are no clear records, He died in 1945.



*Bill Wilson said he considered William James a founder of AA,  
because his book played such an important part in his recovery.*

# A Few Oxford Group Teachings

Bill learned many enduring principles from the Oxford Group Meetings during those early months of 1935. Many of these became entwined in the Twelve-Step program he was to write several years later. I think it is important to realize that the original name of this movement was *The First Century Christian Fellowship*. It was started by Reverend Frank Buchman [boo k-muh n], in 1908. The name changed to the *Oxford Group* in 1938, then to *Moral Rearmament* in 1938. Dr. Bob, generally referred to this movement by its original “Christian Fellowship” title. Today, It is called *Initiatives of Change*; it is based in Caux, Switzerland.



Conference Center for Initiatives of Change

This nondenominational fellowship was light on theology, but stressed four moral standards – absolute: Honesty, Unselfishness, Love and Purity. Their Four Principles were Confession, Restitution, God Guidance and Conversion. Bill placed these principles surreptitiously in the Big Book, but with little reference to their Oxford Group origins.

They also practiced what they called “*Automatic Writing*.” Following a period of meditation and prayer they would write down what came to their mind. Oxford Group writer, AJ Russell, wrote a daily devotion book titled *God Calling* spawned from *this* procedure. . . . and even today, some AA members still make use of this process.

It is rather amazing that Bill, who was just weeks distant from a life-long agnostic bent, would so suddenly and energetically carry the Christian message to drunks all over the place. What a complete transformation! He later would state that this was one half spirituality and one half



Loeser's Department Store in Brooklyn, NY

desire to be number one. He would drag drunks home day and night and it would be up to poor Lois to feed them. She was working at Loeser's Department store for \$18 a week (\$275 in today's money, which is less than our current poverty level). Many of Bill's friends were less than impressed by his new-found zeal, especially the Oxford Groupers who were more interested in saving entire countries than a handful of drunkards. Bill was not considered “*maximum!*” Yet Bill was not dissuaded; but wasn't it about time to check out his old Wall Street haunts? But what about his ruined reputation? Who could possibly be impressed by yet another ‘on the wagon’ episode?

# An Akron Business Trip

Two important lessons:

1. In the spring of 1935, Bill divulged to Lois that perhaps he had been a flop at fixing drunks; to which she replied: “But Bill, don’t you see? You’re sober!”
2. Dr. Silkworth also had his say on the situation. He told Bill to stop preaching and start discussing his allergy to alcohol and his seem inability to stop starting—that he was hopeless not only after the first drink, but also before the first drink (*Physical Allergy/ Mental Obsession*). It was probable that most of Bill’s ‘clients’ had had their fill of sermons at Calvary Mission.

These two lessons were to save Bill’s sobriety in the following month of May. (*Watch for following examples of synchronicity!*)

Businessman Howard Tompkins of NY’s *Beer & Company* was impressed with Bill’s recovery which led to a job offer in relation to a proxy fight involving an Akron company, *The National Rubber Machine Company*. If Bill could have pulled this off he might have been president and be back in the chips once again. Things were looking good, but after a brief return trip from NY, the tide had changed and the opponents seemed to have won. Yet there was hope in legal matters and Bill was left in Akron with the promise that Beer & Company would financially support his efforts. The others returned to NY on Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1935, leaving Bill alone in a strange city.



The next day, a Saturday afternoon, Bill’s apprehension grew as he paced the lobby of Mayflower Hotel wondering what was next. He was down to ten dollars and bored. The cheerful chatter from the hotel bar certainly seemed inviting! How about enjoying a ginger ale and striking up a conversation—no harm in that! After all, had he not been dry for almost five months? Why, even just a few drinks might be all right!

But Bill immediately felt the grip of terror of that first drink. He remembered what Lois had told him (*lesson #1 above*) and realized he needed to talk with another alcoholic or it was curtains. He espied a directory of local ministers

and for no conscious reason phoned a certain Reverend Walter F. Tunks who turned out to be the *strongest Oxford Grouper of all the ministers in Akron*. Was this yet another occurrence of Carl Jung’s ‘synchronicity’? . . . or, dare say, that of a nature more Providential?



A rum hound from NY

Phone booth in Mayflower lobby

# Bill Meets Henrietta

Reverend Tunks provided Bill with numbers of ten Oxford Group members to which Bill risked his then-precious nickels to no avail, save one contact, Norman Sheppard, who knew about Henrietta Seiberling's efforts to help a doctor get off the hooch. Her very name made Bill wax diffident. He realized she was a member of the prodigious *Goodyear Rubber Company*; such a millionaire socialite would doubtless take a dim view on the prospect of helping some unknown New York drunk find another drunk—Bill left the telephone booth and dejectedly returned to his room. But in profound desperation he finally made the call (*Note that was call #12!*).



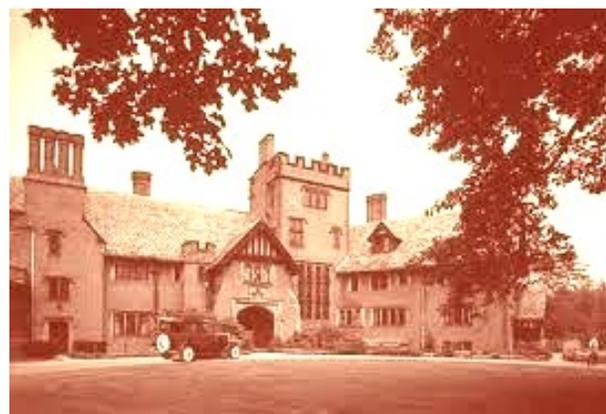
Only weeks before, Dr. Bob Smith had admitted to the Akron Oxford Group that he was a secret drinker and would they pray for him; Henrietta believed that Bob's answer would come through regular prayer. So, When a phone call came from a rum hound from New York who needed another drunk to keep him sober she thought to herself: "This is really manna from heaven." She replied: "You come right out here."

One must wonder whether Bill invested his limited funds on a taxi ride, or walked those several hilly miles. (*A speaker at the 2008 Founder's Day believes he walked, so the next day he planned to count the exact number of steps that Bill would have taken; then report back to us the next year, but I have never heard the report.*)

Henrietta *did* arrange for the two alcoholics to meet for supper at the gatehouse of the Stan Hywet Mansion where she and her teenage children were then residing. This was Sunday Evening, May 12, 1935. Dr. Bob Smith, his wife Ann, and 17 year old son, Bob, arrived at about five o'clock, but Dr. Bob's severe hangover would not allow him to partake of the supper.



Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, founded by Frank Seiberling in 1898



The 65-Room Stan Hywet Mansion was the residence of the Sieberling family

# Bill Meets Dr. Bob



Dr. Bob had in mind that time spent with this mug would be snappy, so he had made Henrietta promise that they would stay only 15 minutes after supper, but this notion became less compelling when Bill said something to the effect that Dr. Bob appeared to need a drink. But the 15-minute talk continued *on and on* till eleven o'clock! Perhaps the prevailing factor sparking the doctor's continued interest was that Bill's revelations came from personal experience, unlike from other benignly motivated friends who spoke from book knowledge. Another factor would have been that Bill doubtless related Dr. Silkworth's ideas of the *physical allergy* and the *mental obsession* . . . any true alcoholic would immediately see the truth in this concept through their own experience.

Bill's recently enlightened method of talking with new prospects reflects lesson #2 from the earlier page of this book. Doctor Silkworth's pointing out the necessity that Bill change his approach from preaching to personal experience, at just the right time, may well have provided another example of Dr. Carl Jung's notion of '*synchronicity*.'

Dr. Bob had been privy to the teachings of the Oxford Group for over two years, so he obviously would not have been impressed by Bill's new-found spiritual knowledge. Just as today, one drunk sharing his or her alcoholic experience with another alcoholic best implants the seed of hope into a newcomer's world of doubt and confusion.

But yet, it is not beyond reason that Ebby's miracle would have been discussed, as well as Bill's spiritual experience at Towns Hospital. Plus, certainly, both parties would have shared a mutual interest in the Oxford Group teachings of which they were both deeply and regularly involved.



# How The Oxford Group Came To Akron

The spiritual program of Oxford Group had served as a magnet, of sorts, bringing Bill together with Dr. Bob, but this was just a beginning. It is interesting how the Groupers' chose to be in Akron in the first place. Jim Newton was the catalyst for events leading to this unlikely choice of cities. In 1924, at the age of 20, Jim, with the help of his father, purchased 55 acres of raw land in Ft. Myers Florida, adjacent to the properties of inventor, Thomas Edison and auto manufacturer Henry Ford. In time, Jim became like a second son to the Edison family.

Resultantly, Jim became associated with many famous and influential friends of the Edisons, such as President Hoover, neighbor Henry Ford, and manufacturer Harvey Firestone, Sr. In 1928 Harvey Firestone asked Newton to move to Akron, Ohio, to assume the position of "Secretary to the President" of the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company. He accepted, moved to Akron, and was lodged in the Portage Country Club (where Bill Wilson was to be briefly lodged six years later). Shortly thereafter he was placed in the position of "President of Firestone Realty." He was then informed that he was being groomed for the presidency of Firestone.

Jim was of course welcomed by the Firestone family, but became closer to Russell "Bud" Firestone. But it was revealed that Bud had a very severe drinking problem and had been to several 'dry out' institutions to no avail. At this time Jim had been an ardent Oxford Group member for many years and had known many of its movers and shakers, including the Reverend Sam Shoemaker. In effort to help Bud, they took a train to an Oxford Group gathering in Denver; riding back home in a private car, Reverend Shoemaker helped Bud do a 'surrender.' His life changed immediately and his family was saved from a fifth-a-day drunkard.

Harvey Firestone, Sr. was a member of an Akron Episcopal Church, headed by the same Reverend Walter Tunks who Bill Wilson phoned in 1935. Impressed by what Sam Shoemaker of the Oxford group had done for his son, he invited, Oxford Group founder, Frank Buchman, to bring his group for a ten-day event at Akron's Mayflower Hotel. The Oxford Group departed on January 23, 1933, but left six of its members behind in effort to continue 'House Parties' in the rubber capital of the world. In April of 1935 Oxford Group 'House Parties' were started at T. Henry and Clarace Williams home at 676 Palisades Drive.

So that is, in brief, how Jim Newton paved the road for the Oxford Group to settle in Akron, Ohio.



**Harvey Firestone, Sr.  
1868-1938**



**Russell 'Bud' Firestone and his  
wife at Hialeah Race Track '37**



**Jim Newton and Bud Firestone**



# Dawn Of Hope Fades to Doubt

Now back to Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith. Perhaps to insure that Bill continue in Akron to help Dr. Bob, Henrietta asked a neighbor to arrange that he be put up in nearby Portage Country Club for the following two weeks. But afterward, the Smiths asked Bill to move in with them, and he stayed for the entire summer, departing on August 29<sup>th</sup>. Bill was not entirely broke because the proxy fight financing from **Beer & Company** continued through the summer. A May 1935 letter to Lois told of their failed attempts to help a once-prominent local surgeon who had become a “terrific rake and a drunk” recover. (So this was their first, maybe only, such pre-AA attempt.)



Dr. Bob Smith  
1879-1950

Henrietta and Ann encouraged the recovering imbibers to participate in daily spiritual reading; this included readings from the Good Book such as *Sermon on The Mount*, *Corinthians 1- Chapter 13*, and *James*; also, a small Methodist pamphlet, *The Upper Room*. Of course, there were the precepts of the Oxford Group which doubtless included the *Four Absolutes* (called *Standards*). Afterward, there would be a ‘quiet time’ of perhaps a half-hour, but often lasted for a full hour.



Ann Ripley Smith  
1881-1949

Sue Smith, the teenage daughter, remembers a bottle on the kitchen shelf (to prove temptation wasn’t there). Bill was adamant about this “proof,” which about drove Ann crazy, but to her relief, the bottles soon disappeared un-drunk.

At some point, perhaps in May, when Dr. Bob had been sober only two or three weeks, he told that he was looking forward to attending The yearly convention of The **American Medical Association** in Atlantic City; he had been doing so for years. But Ann brought up the disagreeable reality that every time he had gone to this get-to-gather he got drunk. Bill Wilson, who kept whisky bottles on Ann’s sideboard, took the position that alcoholics had to learn to live in the *real world*. Dr. Bob won!



Residence of Dr. Bob and Ann Smith  
855 Ardmore

Dr. Bob recalled that he drank everything he could get his hands on as soon as he boarded the train, and bought several quarts on his way to the hotel. Five days later, Ann learned that he had returned *boiled as an owl* and was sleeping it off at his nurse’s home. Bill spent the next few days tapering him off with hookers of scotch and beer. Yet, Dr. Bob was extremely nervous and shaky; this was especially prevalent due to the fact the he had started a surgical procedure on a patient at Akron City Hospital of which he was solely responsible to complete on Monday; his already battered reputation was at stake.

# AA Begins!

Dr. Bob's tapering off was augmented with a diet of tomato juice, sauerkraut and karo corn syrup (Believed to supply both vitamins and energy), plus a little beer to quiet his nerves. Bob and Bill shared one of the upper bedrooms that was large enough for two beds during this crucial period. Early Monday morning, on the day of the scheduled operation, Bill was awakened by the statement: "I am going through with this!" Bill inquired, "You mean the operation?" Dr. Bob replied yes, both—that he was going to perform the operation and also do what ever it takes to get sober, and stay sober. They fell back to sleep. The operation was scheduled just a few hours hence.

The doctor was still shaking as Bill and Ann drove him to Akron City Hospital, but just before leaving the car, Bill gave him some beer and a "goofball" (barbiturate) to hopefully calm his erratic nerves. A misguided scalpel could end the life of his patient as well as his career. Bill and Ann returned to 855 Ardmore and nervously listened for Dr. Bob's phone message of success or no. Hours passed, but finally came the good news that they were praying for. . . . But more hours passed and dire anticipation arose as the newly sobered alcoholic had not returned. They feared the worst! But at last he walked in the door happily announcing that he had simply been busy "mending fences" (making amends to fellow doctors and associates). In other words his "program of action" had finally begun. Up till this time Dr. Bob simply had a 'fellowship,' but now he had a '*program of action*' to go along with it. He never drank again!

AA celebrates this day as the date that AA started. The official date is **June 10, 1935**.

However, it seems probable that the *actual* date of Dr. Bob's sobriety may be a week later than generally supposed: **June 17, 1935**. The JAMA excerpt below makes clear that their Atlantic City convention started on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 1935, not on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, as Dr. Bob's account reports. Here follows a probable timeline:

**Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>:** Dr Bob starts drinking on the train; buys more booze upon arrival.

**Monday, June 10<sup>th</sup>:** Stays sober till evening.

**Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup>:** Checks out of hotel.

**Wednesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>:** Blackout begins.

**Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup>:** May have arrived back to Akron train depot.

**Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup>:** Picked up by nurse.

**Saturday, June 15<sup>th</sup>:** Drying out.

**Sunday, June 16<sup>th</sup>:** Day 3 of drying out.

**Monday, June 17<sup>th</sup>:** Last drink!



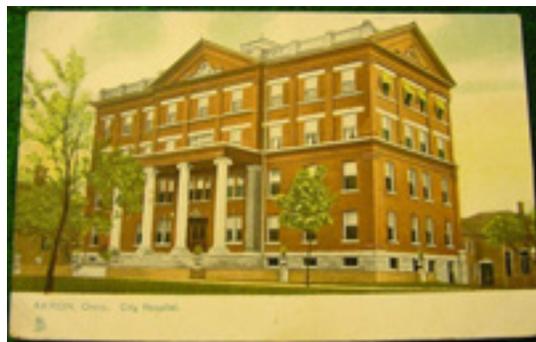
The screenshot shows the JAMA logo at the top, followed by navigation links: Home, Current Issue, Past Issues, Topic Collections, CME, Multimedia, and Subscribe. Below this is the title "THE 1935 ANNUAL SESSION" with an "EXPAND" button. A note states: "Since this article does not have an abstract, we have provided the first 150 words of the full text." The excerpt text is partially visible: "regarding social tendencies affecting medical practice. Unquestionably the Atlantic City session will go down in history as one of the most successful ever held and will mark a new peak at which future sessions may aim." The bottom of the excerpt is cut off, showing "The meeting began on Monday, June 10, in the midst of a downpour, which it is..."

# A Paradox Indeed!



It would seem unlikely that a spiritual program such as Alcoholics Anonymous would have had its beginning by one drunk giving another drunk a bottle of beer in a car in front of a hospital where the drinker was not to be the patient, but the drinker was the doctor!

The following pages will delve into other aspects of this subject even deeper, so please read on.



AKRON CITY HOSPITAL (1930s)

# Timely Events of AA Formation

*Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*

Synchronicity is the experience of two or more events, that are apparently causally unrelated or unlikely to occur together by chance, that are observed to occur together in a meaningful manner. The concept of synchronicity was first described by Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung in the 1920s

+++++

The following illustrations from this book may correlate with Dr. Carl Jung’s, “*acausal guiding principle.*”

This book has made clear that other than Rowland Hazard’s 1926 to 1931 interplay with Dr. Carl Jung, the chain of events leading to AA’s solution of a vital spiritual experience would not have connected to its next link. Hazard was a very wealthy individual who might have sought help from any number of famous doctors; perhaps the well respected Sigmund Freud or Alfred Adler, either of which would have doubtless offered their own conventional solution, but doubtless not the surprisingly unorthodox *spiritual experience solution* of Jung. Rowland had visited the Zurich doctor more than once during that five year span and in those days one did not “Lear Jet” around the world. It would seem that “something” was directing Rowland Hazard to possession of the vital information that in which he was in 1934 fated to carry to Manchester, Vermont.

*Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle.* (Jung—Hazard)

The short narrative, earlier in this book, of “Ebby’s Miracle” relates how Ebby Thacher was *struck sober*, minus the least willingness to follow the Oxford Group guidance of Cebra Graves and Shep Cornell. As a matter of fact he had told them to go to h —! Yet “*something*” blessed him with and immediate release from any desire to drink. Cebra saved him from being sentenced to Brattleboro Asylum, and Rowland got into the game at just this crucial time for the judge to place Ebby’s into his custody. . . . and as this intricate puzzle comes together, Shep Cornell arranged that Ebby stay in his Manhattan apartment for a short time. Rowland Hazard learned the importance of a vital spiritual experience in Zurich in 1931, now in 1934, this vital message is being transferred to Ebby Thacher in New York – and guess who is living in Brooklyn!

*Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle.* (Jung—Hazard—Thacher)

Bill Wilson was close to death on that bleak November day of Ebby’s 1934 ‘kitchen table’ visit. Dr. Silkworth had already told Lois that he may be dead within a year; besides he was so suicidal that his bed had been moved downstairs. He had been treated at Town’s Hospital three times to practically no avail. The end seemed near with no hope in sight. Lois prayed for a miracle.



## Timely Events Of AA Formation

### *Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle*

As we know, Ebby's visit had a profound effect on Bill; so much so, in fact, that shortly thereafter, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1934, found Bill walking toward the subway with what he considered 'sober-inducing paperwork' of which he planned to share with Dr. Silkworth upon arrival at Towns Hospital. But, alas, en route he purchased those four bottles of beer we have read about. We can all thank our lucky stars that the physical craving did not overpower his reasoning and the last of those four beers were his last.

*Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle (Jung—Hazard—Thacher—Wilson)*

Then, just after Bill Wilson's spiritual experience at towns, when he was not sure of what that was all about, a book by William James [*The Varieties of Religious Experience*] turns up that convinced him that that his spiritual episode was indeed the real thing! Other than that assurance, Bill would have most likely gone back to Wall Street or started drinking again per usual.

*Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle  
(Jung—Hazard—Thacher—James—Wilson)*

When Bill randomly chose Reverend Walter Tunks' name from list on the telephone booth, he by chance, chose the strongest Oxford Group member of all the ministers in Akron; consequently, became privy to Norman Sheppard's phone number who in turn connected Bill with the critical "manna from Heaven" conversation with Henrietta Seiberling.

*Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle  
(Jung—Hazard—Thacher—James—Wilson—Tunks)*

Bill arrived in Akron at just the time when Dr. Bob had recently requested the Oxford Group members to pray for his release from alcohol. Henrietta was heading this daily group project. Had Bill Wilson arrived before, or several months later: who knows! But Henrietta connected Bill to Dr. Bob at just the 'right' time!.

*Synchronicity: An Acausal Connecting Principle  
(Jung—Hazard—Thacher—James—Wilson—Tunks—Seiberling—Dr. Bob)*

Also, if there was a controlling factor whose job, was to make AA happen, just notice the social status of the *movers and shakers* mentioned in this book. **William James**, the father of modern psychology, **Dr. Carl Jung** was famous for his writings, **Rowland Hazard** was a millionaire, **Ebby Thacher's** brother was Mayor of the capital city of NY State, **Cebra Graves** was a Broadway actor and State Senator, **Shep Cornell** ran for Congress and had a seat on the Stock Exchange, **Jim Newton** was a rising star in the financial world, members of the **Firestone** family also played a crucial part, **Henrietta Seiberling** was of the Goodyear Tire Company, and of course, spiritual leaders, **Frank Buchman** and **Sam Shoemaker** were known world wide.

# Appendix Pages Follow:

It is the sincere hope of this author that this scant view of pre-AA history will raise the level of the reader's interest so as to better keep our precious past alive. It is my hope that you will reprint these pages for your sponsees, Home Group, District, Area, Intergroup, local clubhouses and for your AA friends. This sort of picture book prints out with infinitely better quality when photo paper is used. The following list contains websites of other AA History books by Bob S. The Indiana AA History PowerPoint is by Bruce C.

## **Richmond Indiana History** (40 pages)

[http://www.aamuncie.org/files/Indianapolis\\_AA\\_History\\_July\\_2009.pdf](http://www.aamuncie.org/files/Indianapolis_AA_History_July_2009.pdf)

[www.4dgroups.org](http://www.4dgroups.org)

## **Indianapolis History Book** (30 pages)

<http://www.aabibliography.com/historybb.htm>

[www.4dgroups.org](http://www.4dgroups.org)

## **Pre-AA History Book** (26 pages) (*That is this Book!*)

[http://www.aamuncie.org/files/Pre\\_AA\\_History\\_Book\\_2011.pdf](http://www.aamuncie.org/files/Pre_AA_History_Book_2011.pdf)

[www.4dgroups.org](http://www.4dgroups.org) — Click Downloads, then Documents — scroll down (Confidential version)

## **Indiana AA History** (A PowerPoint)

[http://www.aamuncie.org/files/History\\_of\\_AA\\_in\\_Indiana.pdf](http://www.aamuncie.org/files/History_of_AA_in_Indiana.pdf)

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**Thank you!**

*In our history lies our hope!*

It is respectfully requested that visitors refrain from interviewing residents of this property. In AA spirit, their privacy should be respected — Thanks!

**Added  
Page**



During the late summer of 2010, Ron F., from Bloomington, Indiana, used a 100' tape to measure the 29 rods (Approx. 475') westerly from Main Street, and on the north side of Taconic Avenue. The above house was at that location. Then later, Jay, S., from Redondo Beach, California, and Barefoot Bill, from New Jersey, performed the same task with the same results. ~ Bob S.

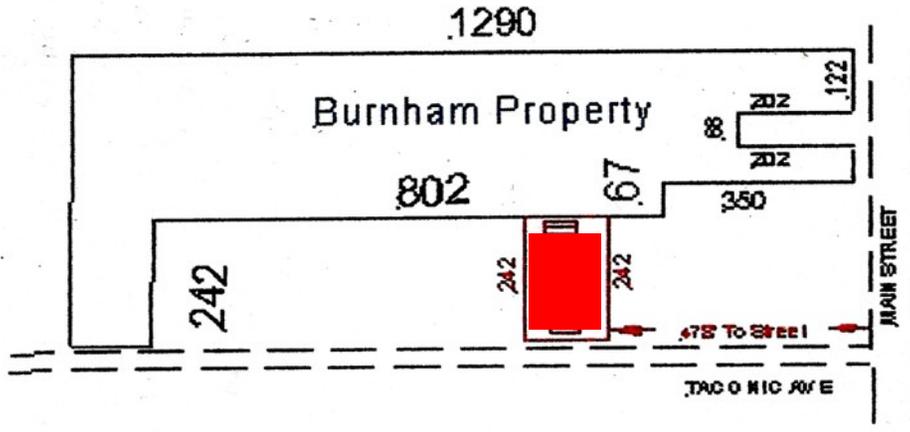
#### **Printed Thacher Deed Excerpt**

Beginning at a marble post set on the ground on the north side of said Taconic Avenue, and about 29 rods westerly from the Main Street in said Village, and also standing in the west line of land owned by Marie F. McQueen; thence running northerly along the west side of said McQueen's yard to a marble post standing on the south line of lands of Matilda Burnham; thence westerly along lands of Matilda Burnham, one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet to a stake and stones; thence southerly in a line parallel with the first described line to a north line of Taconic Avenue; thence easterly on the north side of said Taconic Avenue, and one hundred and twenty-five feet to the point of beginning.



**Diagram and Deed Excerpt of the 1923 George Thacher Property.**

(The Matilda Burnham property was owned by Lois Wilson's Mother.)



**Ebbby Thacher Property** (29 Rods = approximately 478 feet)  
(RED)

**Printed Thacher Deed Excerpt**

Beginning at a marble post set on the ground on the north side of said Taconic Avenue, and about 29 rods westerly from the Main Street in said Village, and also standing in the west line of land owned by Marie F. McQueen; thence running northerly along the west side of said McQueen's yard to a marble post standing on the south line of lands of Matilda Burnham; thence westerly along lands of Matilda Burnham, one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet to a stake and stones; thence southerly in a line parallel with the first described line to a north line of Taconic Avenue; thence easterly on the north side of said Taconic Avenue, and one hundred and twenty-five feet to the point of beginning.

**Copy of Original Thacher Deed Excerpt**

*Beginning at a marble post set in the ground on the north side of said Taconic Avenue, and about 29 rods westerly from the Main Street in said Village, and also standing in the west line of land owned by Marie F. McQueen; thence running northerly along the west side of said McQueen's yard to a marble post standing on the south line of lands of Matilda Burnham; thence westerly along lands of Matilda Burnham, one hundred and twenty-five (125) feet to a stake and stones; thence southerly in a line parallel with the first described line to a north line of Taconic Avenue; thence easterly on the north side of said Taconic Avenue, and one hundred and twenty-five feet to the point of beginning.*

Thanks to Les Cole for this deed copy and diagram.

## Summer Residence of Matilda and Dr. Clark Burnham in Manchester, VT (Lois Wilson's Parents)



3373 Main Street, Manchester Village, VT



Full Front View: note the screened porch has been removed; also, the door overhang and the trees have dramatically changed from the 1925 picture below.



3373 Main Street in 1925



Dr. Clark Burnham sitting on the front porch of the family cottage on Emerald Lake, located just a few miles north of East Dorset.

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Interestingly, Ebby Thacher's parents also purchased a summer home on Taconic Avenue that connected to the southern edge of the Burnham's property.

Bill Wilson lived in nearby East Dorset; When Lois Burnham opened a tea arbor on the north shore of Emerald Lake, Bill became a regular. This developed into a courtship during the summer of 1915. They became secretly engaged and were married on January 24, 1918.



Photo by Smith

**FIRST PLANE LANDS ON NEW FIELD**

**First Reliability 1928 Prize Winner Makes Perfect Landing at Equinox Airport.**

An airport in Manchester is a reality! The idea of an airport in Manchester for the accommodation of the many guests to this popular summer resort, who might wish to come here by airplane, was conceived and carried to execution by Mrs. George Orvis, owner of the Equinox House. Of course the field is not entirely completed as yet, but the runway is in all readiness to receive planes.

Worked on a large acreage to the east of the Battiswell River, and also due east of the Equinox House, and high enough so that the hotel may be seen, the new field has been put in shape during the past several weeks by a team of men under the charge of Jack Fox, professional of the Equinox Links. The runway is upwards of 2000 feet long and more than a hundred feet wide, with a ground runway from the main one to the hangar. A large amount of work has been necessary to put the field in shape, cutting out brush,

picking up all the stones, filling in holes, and sealing the whole tract, making the surface hard. The land is situated on a large tract of Equinox soil, which makes the ground dry at all times, which is an essential of a landing field.

The formal opening of the field will occur on July 4th, and before that date everything will be completed; the erection of the hangar, a building 60 x 80 feet to house six planes; the installation of gasoline tanks, and all the small details. Mrs. Orvis expects that there will be at least a half dozen planes here for the opening, and planes may be expected to drop in at any time.

The first plane to have the honor of landing on the new field was driven by W. C. Billings, head of the Boston Airport. He came on Saturday in response to a telephone call and after landing and inspecting the field stated that it was in better condition than any Eastern field, except the field at Buffalo, N. Y. He said that landing fields should be easily located, and be of good construction, and add that he had no trouble in landing the field, and that he could see the large sign on top of the Equinox, several miles away.

W. C. Wells, one of the bankers in attendance at the convention here last week, was an aviator during the late war, and after going over the field, decided to make the trip to Boston, Mass., by air, and telephoned to that city for Mr. Billings. This trip was made in an hour and twenty minutes flying time, the plane landing here at 2 o'clock. It took the air at 2.45 with Mr. Wells and another one of the bankers, and they were in Boston in plenty of time for dinner that evening. Mr. Wells is head of the Boston Branch of the National City Bank of New York. He was an enthusiastic in his praise of the field, as was the pilot of the plane.

According to information compiled by the New England Council, Manchester takes its place as the 11th actual airport in Vermont. In a recent survey by the Council, Vermont ranks third in number of actual airports in New England, Massachusetts and Connecticut being first and second. There are at present 45 actual and 24 proposed airports in New England. There is a possibility that Manchester may be on the line of the proposed air mail route between New York City and Montreal.

**ALL MEN**

WANT a plot and a home of their own, no matter how little.

**I Can Get It For You**

and it will not cost as much as you think. Why spend your money in rent when you might be contributing to the purchase of a home? Don't put it off another month, but call on me and see what I have to offer.

**Louis Martin**  
REAL ESTATE  
Manchester, Vermont

**W. W. BENNETT**  
Undertaker and Embalmer  
Automobile Hearse and Ambulance  
Hospital Cases Attended To.  
Men's and Women's  
Robes and Suits  
Flowers and Set Pieces for all occasions furnished on short notice.  
Monumental Work of Every Description.  
Telephone Connections.  
Manchester Center, Vermont

**MARRIED**

MATTHEWSON - FOX -- In Manchester Center, June 19, 1928, Miss Lavinia Fox and Byron E. Matthewson.  
PEABODY-NOYES--In Manchester, June 20, 1928, by Rev. D. Cunningham-Graham, Miss Harriet F. Noyes of Manchester, and Carroll W. Peabody of Goffstown, N. H.

**DIED**

LINCOLN--In Manchester Depot, June 14, 1928, Robert J. Lincoln, aged 32 years.

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS**

**FOR SALE**

FOR SALE--The Peter Fisher home at Manchester Depot. Ten rooms, including attic. Good condition. Large barn. Apply Harry Sidney, Manchester Depot, Vt. 11-1

FOR SALE--Goose feather pillows, quilts, tools, some furniture, large cauldron kettle. Elmer E. Duff, Manchester Center, Vt. 11-2

FOR SALE--Top brass, square piano, kitchen cabinet, leather book-lamps and other articles of furniture. Telephone 142-J, Mrs. F. E. Fish, Manchester Center, Vt. 11-3

FOR SALE--Dresses: See notices, Jersey's Beauty, The Graces, Champagne, U. S. A., Frocks of California, Gladys Sherwood, Ambassador and many others. Mrs. C. E. Beckwith, Manchester Center, Vt. 11-4

AA History is seldom as black and white as one might suppose. Apparently, from this newspaper article, the actual first landed took place in June of 1928, and the official Manchester Equinox Airport opening is dated on the Fourth of July, 1928. The pilot's name was W. C. Billings. This airport is no longer in existence, however a street sign remains indicating its past location. Thanks to Ron F. for the article.

Excerpt from second column →

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Please note a different version of the first landing story at the Manchester Equinox Airport on the *Edwin Throckmorton Thacher* page in this book (7th page).