

AA

In post-Prohibition 1930s America, it was common to perceive alcoholism as a moral failing, and the medical profession standards of the time treated it as a condition that was likely incurable and lethal. Those without financial resources found help through state hospitals, the Salvation Army, or other charitable and religious groups. Those who could afford psychiatrists or hospitals were subjected to a treatment with Barbiturate and Belladonna known as "purge and puke" or were left in long-term asylum treatment.

The Oxford Group was a Christian fellowship founded by American Christian missionary Dr. Franklin Buchman, a Lutheran minister who had a conversion experience in 1908 in a chapel in Keswick, England. As a result of that experience, he founded a movement called A First Century Christian Fellowship in 1921, which had become known as the Oxford Group by 1931.

In his search for relief from his alcoholism, Bill Wilson, one of the two co-founders of AA, had joined The Oxford Group and learned their teachings. While Wilson later broke away from The Oxford Group, their teachings influenced the structure of Alcoholics Anonymous and many of the ideas that formed the foundation of AA's suggested twelve-step program. Later in life, Bill Wilson gave credit to the Oxford Group for saving his life.

As AA grew in size and popularity from over 100 members in 1939, other notable events in its history have included the following:

>1944 in June, AA Grapevine magazine was published containing first-person stories of AA members. Its slogan "an AA meeting in print" was adopted after receiving supportive letters from AA members in overseas military.

>1945 AA adopted the AA Grapevine as its national journal. In 1946 in April, AA Grapevine first published the Twelve Traditions as Twelve Points to Assure Our Future. They were derived by Wilson from group letters to AA headquarters asking how to handle disputes over such issues as finance, publicity, and outside affiliations, and were intended to be guidelines on group conduct and avoiding controversy.

>1949 AA Grapevine became the international journal of AA.

>1949 A group of recovering alcoholics and AA members founded Hazelden Farm, a Minneapolis refuge and treatment center. Since then, 93 percent of alcohol rehabilitation clinics use AA concepts in their treatment.

>By 1950, there were about 100,000 AA members.

>1953 The Twelve Traditions were published in the book *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

>1953 Narcotics Anonymous received permission from AA to use the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions in its own program.

>1955 estimated 150,000 AA members.

>1971 Bill Wilson died. His last words to AA members were, "God bless you and Alcoholics Anonymous forever."

>2001 estimated 2,000,000 or more members in 100,800 groups meeting in some 150 countries around the world.

>2010 The TV movie *When Love Is Not Enough: The Lois Wilson Story* portrays the story of Lois and Bill Wilson, founders of Al-Anon and Alcoholics Anonymous. [http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Alcoholics_Anonymous]

