

*Sharing successful experience from Northern Illinois Area 20 Archives, this survey has been utilized since 1998 for Area 20's Group History Project. The blank questionnaire is distributed to DCMs, GSRs, and District Archive Committees, along with the introduction explaining its purpose---it's not only an opportunity to search a Group's roots but the chance to record what the Group does TODAY. Submitted in fellowship, Area 20 Historian, Fall 2002 with the assistance of the NIA web site.*

## **Your Group's History---What, When, Why, How, and to Where**

Any Group's history can uncover facts and recollections that will strengthen its foundation, when viewed in the context of experience and local A.A. history. The facts can be relevant, humorous, eye-opening, and significant to a number of places: 1) to your Group itself 2) to your District Archives 3) to your Area Archives, and 4) to our Archives at GSO. Assembling a group history is easier than what a regular AA home group member might think it would take to complete. Most of all, take your time and enjoy putting it together.

As a GSR or home group member, you can collect the facts---your group treasurer, longtime members, or secretary (not too many groups have one anymore) can participate in the research. Setting up a roundtable meeting to answer the eighteen questions in this archives project has good possibilities for success, and does not need to be completed in one session.

Some Districts do not have an Archives, but your Area 20 Archives has District records where your group history can be held. Your NIA Archives will photocopy your work and pass it on to the GSO Archives. These histories will add to the many items that preserve the facts, the experience, and the vital history that might otherwise become lost and get replaced by myths and half-truths.

Note: the Date of Origin (D.O.E.) field on the white sheet update forms, sent annually from GSO for the U.S. Directories, is the record of when your Group first registered with A.A. World Services. 1977 marked the first computerized list for every AA Group. So, if your group was formed before 1977, directories, reports, District Minutes, and U.S. Directories will help on your search for early dates. The information has been included on the Group update forms since 1992, through an effort by the GSO Archivist and the Trustees Archives Committee. It's one place to start from. Check with your District Secretary or D.C.M., or call the GSO Records Department direct: 212-870-3400.

The subjects of this history survey are about "where" your Group meets, "how" your meeting structure developed, "who" are the core members who gave direction to your current Group life, and "what" your group does today, when included with the earliest recollections you can find.

Your general service Area 20 Archives thanks you for your effort to preserve our past and present! Your response to this Group History Project will make a difference to the still suffering alcoholic who finds recovery and fellowship with an A.A. Group, who might also find this record years from now. Remember, this history record is considered confidential and "for A.A. use only."

*This questionnaire can be easily printed---if there isn't enough space for the replies, use more paper! Contact for any questions and for the actual address to send your Group History:*

[historian@aa-nia.org](mailto:historian@aa-nia.org) [archivist@aa-nia.org](mailto:archivist@aa-nia.org)

or, deliver it your District Archives Committee---they will know where to send it.

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Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_ NIA District: \_\_\_\_\_

Location (town, state):

A.A.W.S. Group identification number (if known):

- ▷ The estimated date the Group started meeting:
  
- ▷ The Place, Day, and Time of first (or earliest) Meetings, and the number of members:
  
- ▷ Did your Group separate from another Group, and why?
  
- ▷ The type of meeting---Speaker-led, Closed Discussion, Open, Big Book Study, Step Meeting, Traditions Meeting, etc. Has the format changed over the years? please describe:
  
- ▷ Has the Group held any public Open Meetings?
  
- ▷ The Place, Day, and Time of your Group meetings today, and the number of members:
  
- ▷ How many times has the Group moved? To what different sites, and under what circumstances?
  
- ▷ Early members, “founders,” trusted servants---their recollections, or your Group’s recollections of them:

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- ▷ Have any Group members rotated forward to District service? To Area Service?  
Did / does your group assist with any general service committee work?
  
- ▷ What kinds of growing pains, problems, or any “feuds” happened, and what were the solutions? Did any particular member lead the Group out of difficulties toward any resolutions?
  
- ▷ How did / does your Group cooperate with outside agencies---Treatment Centers, Courts, Probation and Parole Boards, for example---has this changed over the years?
  
- ▷ Did / do you ever assign sponsors? Temporary contacts (from a volunteer list or Bridge the Gap list)? How did / do you welcome first-timers?
  
- ▷ Could any Group members maintain contact with each other in between meetings?  
Did / do you have a list of members’ phone numbers available? Is / was there any linkage to your District’s answering services?
  
- ▷ How did / does your Group celebrate anniversaries, for both individuals and also the Group? Any annual dinners, picnics, or special events over the years?
  
- ▷ Did / do you count off to break for discussion tables? How did / do you change the jobs for set-up (making coffee, setting out literature) and cleanup? How did / do you change who chairs the meetings? Did / do you have “greeters” at the doors? Treats or snacks at the meeting?  
Do you take a smoke break?

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- ▷ Your Group's Seventh Tradition practices: have the 'passed basket' contributions changed over the years? Do you give away any books? Any fundraisers or special collections (events like holiday parties, picnics, weekend Conferences, AA Forums)? Describe the amounts of contributions... What amount of rent did / do you pay? Did / does your Group support the expenses of your GSR and other trusted servants?
  
- ▷ On our Seventh Tradition of sharing funds---how did / do you contribute to District, Intergroup (if your location has one), Area 20, and GSO (AAWS)? 60-30-10%?
  
- ▷ Did / do you contribute literature to any libraries, hospitals, jails, or treatment centers? What percentage of literature purchases is in your Group's spending? What items and pamphlets are in your Group's packets for newcomers?
  
- ▷ Your business meetings---how were / are your trusted servants elected or selected (your GSR, Treasurer, Secretary, Greeters, and so on) and how often? Outside of the regular finance discussion and votes, are current District, Area, and General Service Conference agenda items discussed for a Group consensus at your business meetings?
  
- ▷ Generally, what has been your Group's linkage to A.A. as a whole (with District, Intergroup, Area, and AAWS)?

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