

Learning the History of AA – Recommended Books to Have in Your Library  
-by the Bob L., Archives Chair; June 2025

- 1) “Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers”, AAWS  
*Excellent starting read about the history of AA*
- 2) “Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age”, AAWS  
*Very good history but a bit boring as it is more of speeches from 1955 AA Convention*
- 3) “Not God”, Ernest Kurtz  
*Ernie’s PhD Thesis although the history part is the best that was available years ago*
- 4) “Bill W. My First 50 Years”  
*Good reading on Bill’s early history and development*
- 5) “Pass It On”, AAWS  
*Good history of Bill and the development of AA*
- 6) “Ebby, The Man Who Sponsored Bill W.”  
*Good history of Ebby Thacher and his problems*
- 7) “Lois Remembers, Memoirs of the co-founder of Alanon”  
*A good piece on the history of Alanon and AA*
- 8) “The Lois Wilson Story, When Love Is Not Enough, Biography of the 4 Cofounder of Al-Anon”, William G. Borchet  
*Very good history of Alanon*
- 9) “Bobby B. The Untold Story of A.A.’s “Fantastic Communicator”  
*Very good book on the development of the “Foundation Office” (GSO) and her work with creating A.A. in Australia in the 40’s*
- 10) “Sister Ignacia, Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous”  
*Very good book on how she was such a great piece of AA History and treatment programs*
- 11) “Key Players in A.A. History” Gary Neidhardt  
*Good book on all the people that had an effect of AA from before AA*
- 12) “Father Ed., The Story of Bill’s Spiritual Sponsor”, Gary Dawn Eden Goldstein  
*Great insight into the man who brought the spirituality of long sobriety to AA*
- 13) “Grateful to have been there, My 42 Years with Bill and Lois and the evolution of Alcoholics Anonymous”, Nell Wing  
*Autobiography of Bill’s secretary in the earliest days of AA*

\*Note: Not all these books are AAWS approved, but books about the history of AA recommended by Bob L., Archives Chair, NorCal Intergroup. There is no formally disapproved literature in AA; each group is autonomous and can study any books they choose. June 2025

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- 14) "The Akron Genesis of A.A." Dick B.  
*Great introduction to the development of AA in Akron and Cleveland*
- 15) "A Marriage that Changed the World" Tom and Joy Adam's  
*Excellent look at the effects alcoholism had on the lives of Bill, Bob, Lois and Anne.*
- 16) "Changed by grace: V.C. Kitchen, the Oxford Group and A.A.", Glenn Chestnut  
*Early Oxford Group prime reading interpretation including its effect on A.A.*
- 17) "King Charles of NYC", Gary Neidhardt  
*Biography of Charlie Towns of Town Hospital where Bill W. met Dr. Silkworth*
- 18) "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Rockefeller connection", JD Moore  
*Moore follows the life of a driven, genius stock analyst brought to the brink of insanity by alcohol. A second thread traces the story of a physician humbled and bewildered by the same struggle.*
- 19) "Soul of Sponsorship: The Friendship of Fr. Ed Dowling, S.J. and Bill Wilson in letters" by Robert Fitzgerald S.J.  
*Outstanding read about the history of Fr. Ed and his relationship with Bill*
- 20) "Believing In False Gods: I Was a Pagan" V.C. Kitchen  
Early Oxford Group book
- 21) "The Oxford Group and AA: A Design for Living That Works" Dick B.  
*The origins, principles, practices and contributions to Alcoholics Anonymous*
- 22) "The Common Sense of Drinking", Richard Peabody (1930)  
*A best seller in the 30's that Bill most likely read that led to many parts of the program*
- 23) "When Man Listens:" Cecil Rose  
*A well-used Oxford Group book that led to many aspects of the A.A. program and the steps*
- 24) "A.A. Meetings in Akron and Cleveland 1938-1942" Glenn Chesnut  
*This book describes how meetings were held (citing eyewitness accounts from that time) and what was being taught in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in Akron and Cleveland during the formative period that stretched from 1938 to 1942.*
- 25) "Bill W. A Different Kind of Hero", Tim White  
*A short book about Bill. Good to have in your library.*

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- 26) "Changed by Grace: V.C. Kitchen, the Oxford Group and A.A.", Glenn Chesnut  
*A good piece regarding the early Oxford Group and it's gift to A.A.*
- 19) "King Charles of NYC", Gary Neidhardt  
*Biography of Charlie Towns of Town Hospital where Bill W. met Dr. Silkworth*
- 20) "Alcoholics Anonymous and the Rockefeller connection", JD Moore  
*Moore follows the life of a driven, genius stock analyst brought to the brink of insanity by alcohol. A second thread traces the story of a physician humbled and bewildered by the same struggle.*
- 21) "Soul of Sponsorship: The Friendship of Fr. Ed Dowling, S.J. and Bill Wilson in letters" by Robert Fitzgerald S.J.  
*The book explores the relationship of Bill Wilson and his spiritual advisor and friend.*
- 22) "Believing In False Gods: I Was a Pagan" V.C. Kitchen  
*An early read by the future members of A.A. when involved with the Oxford Groups*
- 23) "The Oxford Group and AA: A Design for Living That Works" Dick B.  
*Good read about the relationship with the Oxford Groups*
- 24) "The Common Sense of Drinking", Richard Peabody (1930)  
*Describes alcoholism and a method for its cure*
- 25) "When Man Listens" Cecil Rose  
*When man listens, God speaks, when God speaks, men are changed, Early Oxford Book*
- 26) "A.A. Meetings in Akron and Cleveland 1938-1042" Glenn Chestnut  
*This book describes how meetings were held (citing eyewitness accounts from that time) and what was being taught in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in Akron and Cleveland during the formative period that stretched from 1938 to 1942.*
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