

Miracles Happen 

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The Birth of
Narcotics Anonymous in
Words and Pictures



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Narcotics Anonymous World Services, Incorporated
Chatsworth, California

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ISBN 1-55776-341-0 English 6/02

WSO Catalog Item No. EN-1120

Preface

This book represents, through words and pictures, moments captured in time during the first three decades of Narcotics Anonymous development. Over the years, many efforts have been made to write the history of NA, and we may expect those efforts to continue. It is clear that our membership is hungry for information about our roots. Collectively, we seem to long for a story of our beginnings, and this collection does recount a “history” of our fellowship’s early beginnings based upon material from the World Service Office archives. But it does not seek to be a comprehensive, “official” history of those early days. Such a complete and definitive history may indeed be written one day, but this collection does not intend to approach the kind of scrupulous detail that any book purporting to be an official NA history book ought to possess.

This book, instead, is a kind of NA scrapbook, like a collection of old photos, letters, and picture postcards one might find in the attic in some dusty old trunk. No one could mistake such keepsakes for a history of the lives whose sundry moments those pictures and letters have chanced to capture. Similarly, this book is simply a collection of mementos, stilling certain moments in time of the tireless efforts of our founding members to bring increase to our fellowship.

At the same time, this collection does seek to help our members—newcomers and old-timers alike—to gain a deeper sense of the hardships and triumphs of our early development. Seen today from the distance of nearly fifty years, the difficulties faced by our earliest members make our beginnings seem all the more miraculous. This collection aims to help us all see a bit more clearly the truly awesome power contained within our steps and traditions, evidenced by the rapid growth of our fellowship as our message has spread across the globe, bringing freedom to once-hopeless addicts.

And it aims to help us gain a more profound respect for the members who came before us, those who laid the groundwork, not only for the program itself, but also for our local NA communities. For their perseverance in the face of many hardships, for their implicit belief in the hope our program could give to suffering addicts, and for their

action in starting Narcotics Anonymous meetings even when others told them that no one could stay clean in NA, we owe those early members a debt beyond measure.

One member, however, deserves special recognition. In the name of the many people whose lives and efforts have contributed to this collection, this book is dedicated to the memory of Jimmy K. His tireless efforts in the early years of our formulation and growth laid the foundation for our movement. Those who knew him well said that from the time he got clean and for as long as he lived thereafter, he never rested in his effort to carry the message to the still-suffering addict. Today, his efforts live on among the members of the worldwide Fellowship of Narcotics Anonymous.

The pre-1953 information in this book is presented to offer the reader some publicly held perceptions about drugs and addiction. This information is extracted from various referenced sources or paraphrased from public documents. None of this material reflects the opinion of NA.

We hope each reader finds the gratitude we found for those that came before us in their perseverance so that we all could find a way to live free from the horrors of addiction.



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