

RE: World Unity Day discussion that focuses on Narcotics Anonymous history. Specifically, in those who have participated in history projects.

1. How are you preserving NA history?

I approach preservation with the mindset of an Archivist: my goal is to gather, digitize, and organize materials related to the history of Narcotics Anonymous without interpretation or bias. This includes early literature, flyers, meeting lists, audio recordings, personal letters, and other artifacts that document our fellowship's evolution. I categorize people interested in NA history into 3 categories: Collectors, Historians and Archivists. Each have their own motives and there can be overlap. Creating a user-friendly website that presents these artifacts in a clean, intuitive format, making it easy for members from around the world to explore our history – so that anyone can explore our history directly, without needing someone to interpret it for them.

2. How have these efforts contributed to unity in the fellowship?

Preserving and sharing our history helps remind us of our common roots. When members from different regions or generations see the same foundational documents, hear the same voices from the past, and recognize the shared struggles and triumphs, it builds a sense of connection. The archive doesn't promote any particular viewpoint – it simply presents what was. That neutrality allows members to engage with the material on their own terms, fostering unity through experience rather than persuasion. Many of our recovery ancestors faced enormous challenges—lack of literature, resistance from institutions, or even skepticism within the fellowship. Their persistence in forming groups, holding meetings, and staying committed despite setbacks is deeply inspiring. These struggles, while difficult, ultimately led to deeper understanding and stronger unity. I've seen members from opposite sides of the world inspired by the same thing.

3. How have these efforts fostered gratitude for our recovery ancestors?

When we see the handwritten notes from early service committees, the early meeting formats, the raw audio of members sharing their experience before NA was widely known, it becomes clear how much love, labor, and courage went into building this fellowship, often sparking deep appreciation. Many of our recovery ancestors worked tirelessly – often anonymously – to create something that could save lives. By preserving their contributions, we give newer members a chance to feel that gratitude firsthand. It's one thing to hear that NA has a rich history; it's another to see it, read it, and feel it. These moments remind us that our recovery is built on the dedication of those who came before – and preserving their work helps us honor that legacy. This effort is ongoing in Narcotics Anonymous communities across the globe.

4. Have there been any surprises or unexpected discoveries from your work?

Absolutely. One of the most surprising things has been the sheer diversity of voices and approaches in the early days of NA. There wasn't a single blueprint – there were many experiments, passionate debates, and a lot of trial and error. I came across a letter between early members discussing how to structure service committees – raw, heartfelt, and full of uncertainty. These kinds of finds reveal just how grassroots and dynamic our growth was. Most were not what we'd call “Old Timers.” They were young people battling addiction, focused simply on making it through another day clean. Another surprise has been discovering how often groups nearly dissolved or fractured, only to regroup and thrive. I've also discovered unknown documents that shed light on pivotal moments in our development. Sometimes, it's the smallest things – a scribbled note, a newspaper article from a city you didn't know had NA at the time – that opens up whole new chapters of understanding. It's also been surprising to see how much material was nearly lost – saved only because it was filed for decades and found by another recovering addict.

5. What else would you like to share with the fellowship?

I'd encourage members to see archival work as a form of service. If you have old flyers, recordings, or documents tucked away, consider contributing them to the archive. And if you're curious about where we came from, spend some time exploring it – we're all stewards of this legacy. Preserving our history isn't just about nostalgia – it's about understanding how we got here, so we can better strengthen our foundation and continue serving the fellowship.

I'd also like to suggest that our fellowship's priorities will continue to evolve over generations. Right now, a high priority is translating or providing literature so communities can hear our message in their native languages. This may not always be our highest priority. Perhaps one day, our history will have more support, and additional resources will be provided for our archives. I encourage those who are passionate about this work – now or in the future – to consider handing over their archives including those they digitized, to the fellowship when that time comes.

I'm grateful to be part of this effort, and I hope it inspires others to preserve and protect the legacy we've inherited.

Kur