

## Preserving Photographs For The Future

*(The second of a two-part article; the first part appeared in the Fall 2006 issue.)*

### Framing

Look for frames that offer acid-free mattes and frames, and UV-filtering glass. If you have framed photographs on display that are exposed to light constantly, it's a good idea to keep the negatives, or have copies made, and store these away from the light, for preservation purposes.

### Handling

Take care when touching photographs. Bare fingers contain oils that will leave indelible marks on photos and negatives. Whenever possible, sleeve the photo in plastic or wear cotton gloves when handling images, or be careful only to touch the edges of the print.

### Restoration and Conservation

Photographs can suffer all kinds of damage; they can become blighted with mold, faded, torn, crushed, wadded up, or creased. Damaged photographs like these are not always lost for good. They can often be recovered by professional photograph conservators. And in many cases even amateurs with the right equipment can produce spectacular results when restoring photographs. A photograph or scan can be taken of a damaged image, and a reprint made. Using programs like Adobe® Photoshop®, damaged photos can be cleaned up, brightened, and lines and creases can be removed. Note: in the case of any presence of mold, please consult a professional before attempting any work. Some types of mold can be extremely toxic under certain circumstances.

### Digital Photographs

These days, more and more photographs are born-digital, and many traditional prints are being scanned into digital format, as well. This wonderful technology provides countless new headaches for preservation. Unfortunately this is a huge challenge—as software and hardware become obsolete, digital photographs are often lost forever. There are several ways to help preserve these images:

- Always rename digital files with appropriate identifying information—dates, individuals, event, location. Again, this takes some time, but if you use a digital camera you probably know how difficult it is to find a

certain photograph in a huge file of images named only using a series of nonsensical numbers and letters.

- Delete the photographs you don't need. With the capacity of a digital camera, it's easy to load up a file with hundreds of images that may be out-of-focus, poorly shot, or redundant. Eliminating these makes the job of preserving the important photographs much easier.
- In general, avoid using closed, proprietary, commercial formats for saving digital images. These file formats are developed by companies that may decide tomorrow not to sell them or support them anymore, making your digital images inaccessible in the future. Instead, use non-proprietary formats like JPEG.
- Save your digital images on redundant systems. Don't just leave them on your hard drive, but burn them to CDs (or DVDs), use a USB flash drive (also known as "pens," "keys," or "sticks"), and/or another storage device.
- When burning to CD, be sure to use archival-quality CDs, which are made with much more stable components than regular CD-ROMs. Archival-quality CDs and DVDs are not that much more expensive, and are estimated to survive at least twice as long as the average office-supply-store CD. CDs are made of multiple layers of plastic and other materials, glued together, so it's easy to see why they will definitely degrade over time. Using CDs made of high-quality dyes, glues, and plastics will naturally extend their lifespan. Even so, even these will eventually degrade and the images will have to be migrated to new media.
- In some cases it makes sense just to print the digital photos on photographic paper, creating standard prints. However, quality and permanence of these can vary depending on the resolution of the photograph, the quality of the paper, and the print quality offered by your printer.



*Proper handling of slides and other archive images is key to their preservation.*

Plus, many color printers use very unstable color inks that will quickly fade and deteriorate. You may have to do some research to determine how best to print your images.

Preserving your photographs is not easy, but with time and attention, it can be done with relatively little expense. By keeping photographs stable and away from light exposure and acidic materials, your photographs can endure for decades. It is a task that will ensure that the history of A.A., including the history you are making today, will survive beyond ourselves.

For more information, consult the following web pages\*, or contact the G.S.O. Archives if you have specific questions: 212-870-3400; [archives@aa.org](mailto:archives@aa.org).

- “Care, Handling, and Storage of Photographs: Bibliography”—Library of Congress, 2005. <http://www.loc.gov/preserv/care/photobib.html>

- “Care of Photographs”—Northeast Document Conservation Center, updated 2006. <http://www.nedcc.org/leaflets/phocar.pdf>
- “Caring for Your Photographs”—American Institute for Conservation, 1997. <http://aic.stanford.edu/library/online/brochures/photos.html>
- “Information by Archival Format—Photographs: Frequently Asked Questions”—U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, updated 2006. <http://www.archives.gov/preservation/formats/photographs.html>
- “Preservation Supplies and Services”—Northeast Document Conservation Center, updated 2006. <http://www.nedcc.org/suppliers/listsup.htm>

*Note: The G.S.O. Archives has provided these articles as a resource only, and does not endorse nor affirm any of the content on these sites.*

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## One Year After Hurricane Katrina Forced Cancellation of Its Meeting, Annual A.A. National Archives Workshop Meets in Baton Rouge, Louisiana

*By David C., Area 72*

It is amazing how we in this Fellowship can rebound. A shining example occurred this past September in Baton Rouge, Louisiana—about a year after Hurricane Katrina—when the Annual A.A. National Archives Workshop had one of its finest meetings. Last year’s Workshop, which was scheduled to be held in New Orleans, was forced to cancel.

The committee under the leadership of Bobby B. and Jimmy H., along with Greg H., Leslie H., and Otis S., put on one of the best Workshops to date. I have gone to eight of these gatherings, in addition to hosting the event in Seattle in 2000, so I know how hard it is to put one together. The people of Louisiana did a great job putting on the 10th Annual gathering, and I won’t forget it for a long time.

We began the four-day event with a Q&A session on Thursday night, following the first of many spectacular feasts put on in the hospitality room, with crayfish as the main course.

Friday found us, as usual, at the Preservation/Conservation session hosted by Bob W. of Little Rock, Arkansas. I think everyone who attended took away a new understanding of archival techniques for preserving documents and paper. That evening we were once again treated to local cuisine, this time gumbo from New Orleans.

Afterwards there was a talk by Amy Filiatreau, G.S.O. Archivist. She told us of her desire to bring the NAW and G.S.O. closer, and she shared with us that A.A. archivists are unique in that there are perhaps no groups of active, passionate, volunteer archivists like this anywhere, and

none that come together and share annually as we do. Her talk was followed by a wonderful Long Timers Panel.

Saturday started our breakout panels, with topics like “Oral History Retrieval Methods” and “Funding an Archives Committee.” There was a brilliant talk on “Trademarks and Copyrights,” something all archivists need to know.

After lunch, we took in talks on “What to Keep and What to Dispose Of,” and “Retrieval and Storage of Group Histories.” All the breakout topics were well received, and we walked away having learned many new things. In the late afternoon, Amy from G.S.O. hosted a Q&A session. We learned from her that she wanted to update the Archives Workbook and to look at the archives pamphlet again, with a thought to adding more material pertinent to local archives. She suggested working with local committees and area delegates to develop support for new ideas and proposals.

On Saturday night, the kind people of Louisiana hosted a seafood feast beyond compare. Afterward, we were treated to a PowerPoint presentation by Gail LaC. from Akron, Ohio, on the 10-year history of the National Archives Workshop. It was brilliantly presented and was followed by Rick F. and his presentation on the history of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Next year’s Workshop will be in Phoenix, Arizona. Each and every year this National Archives Workshop gets better and better. In coming months you can find out more about next year’s workshop at: [www.aanationalarchivesworkshop.com](http://www.aanationalarchivesworkshop.com)

The 10th National Archives Workshop was a resounding success, which goes to show, “It works if you work it.”

## In Search of the Final Resting Place of Bertha Bamford, Bill W.'s First Love



*The grave site of Bertha Bamford, Bill W.'s high school sweetheart, whose sudden death in 1912 greatly affected him. Bill was a pallbearer at her funeral.*

*By William W., New Albany, Indiana*

I was reading in *Pass It On* about Bertha Bamford, Bill W.'s high school sweetheart, whose sudden death in 1912 plunged him into what Bill later described as “a tremendous depression.” It was then that the following sentence from Bertha’s funeral notice jumped out at me: “the remains will be placed in the receiving vault, to be taken on to Jeffersonville, Ind., ...for interment.”

Jeffersonville, Indiana? I have lived and worked in this area for most of my life, yet I had never heard of this connection to Bill W.

The death announcement, which ran in the Manchester (VT) Journal on November 21, noted that William W. was one of the pallbearers. Although it was still more than two decades before A.A.’s founding, Bertha nevertheless had a profound influence on his life. He had declared himself “ecstatically in love,” and her shockingly unexpected death affected him greatly.

For some reason, I had to find the resting place of Miss Bamford. The only clue I had was that she was buried somewhere in the town where I work and attend many of my meetings.

After a couple of hours of Internet searches and dozens of dead ends, I found a listing for Bertha Bamford in Walnut Ridge, Jeffersonville’s largest cemetery. The birth and death dates matched. I now knew where she was buried.

I had to visit the grave. Had anyone from A.A. ever done so? It would certainly be understandable if none of us ever had. She passed away more than two decades before the dawn of our Fellowship. Nevertheless, she was a connection to Bill W., and that was enough for me.

I found two directories for the cemetery. One was based on research that a local woman had done a few years ago, where she apparently went row-by-row, indexing all the headstones. Over 3,000 names were on that listing. A second listing contained over 16,000 names based on all recorded burials in the cemetery dating back over 200 years. Miss Bamford’s name appeared on this larger directory, but the precise location of her grave was unclear. I had to go anyway. I don’t know why. I just know I was drawn to the cemetery.

I wound up making three trips to the cemetery. Twice I returned home to my computer for more information. Armed with charts giving me the surnames of surrounding families and their specific locations, I zero in on the precise location of the Bamfords.

Finally, I find Bertha’s parents. Rev. Walter H. and Julia R. Bamford have a dual headstone. They outlived their daughter by decades. But I look on both sides and Bertha is not to be found.

I stand there for a few minutes, and say a prayer for a family that I never met and then start to leave, glad to have found the general location, but sad that there is no apparent marker for Bill’s high school sweetheart. With a sigh for a mission only half accomplished, I start back toward my car.

Then I see it in the next row back, as if she were looking over her parents’ shoulders. Bertha has a beautiful marker in the shape of a cross. The inscription simply has her name, the dates of her birth and death, and the inscription R.I.P.

I touch the marker, find a smile and a tear at the same time, offer another prayer of thanks to God and to her for bringing a brief happiness to our beloved Bill.

### Share Your Archives Experience — *Second Notice!*

Again, we invite you to share your experiences about your archives so that we can update the “Shared Experiences” section of the Archives Workbook. Write up a brief story of your archives successes, projects, activities, and treasures.

The “Shared Experiences” section of the workbook (pp. 29-31 in the current workbook, which you can find online at [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)), is meant to give guidance and inspiration from A.A. archivists to others who may be facing similar situations.

Please send your stories to us by January 1, 2007. You can email them to [archives@aa.org](mailto:archives@aa.org), fax them to 212-870-3003, or send them by mail to: GSO Archives, Grand Central Station, P.O. Box 459, New York, NY 10163.

## ICYPAA Donates Its Archives to G.S.O.



*This photo of the first International Young People in AA Conference, which was held April 1958 in Niagara Falls, New York, is among the ICYPAA archives materials donated by the organization to the G.S.O. this October.*

In October of this year, the International Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (ICYPAA) formally donated its archives materials to the General Service Office Archives, to better preserve and offer access to these historic documents. We are creating an exhibit of some of the treasures in this collection, which will be on display at G.S.O. for several months beginning in December. We will continue to work with ICYPAA in the coming years to ensure that important ICYPAA archives being created today will survive for the future. The GSO gratefully acknowledges the work of the ICYPAA Council in helping to coordinate this contribution.

**A.A. members and groups regularly donate material to the G.S.O. Archives. The following is a partial list of items received this year:**

### **FEBRUARY 2006:**

A 1925 pamphlet written by Charles B. Towns titled "Hospital Treatment for Alcohol and Drug Addiction."

### **APRIL 2006:**

Area history booklet: AA in Moore County, 1947–2005.

### **MAY 2006:**

Greater Louisville Groups pamphlet written and edited by members of the Greater Louisville Groups of AA.

### **JUNE 2006:**

Copy of the 1942-1952 visitors' register for a group in Santa Fe.

The Lighthouse Group, Rego Park, New York booklet.

### **JULY 2006:**

Account book for the St. Paul by the Lake Group, from 1986 to 2003.

### **AUGUST 2006:**

Historical documents were received from a June 2006 trip to Trinidad that includes a convention booklet, "Alcoholics Anonymous [Trinidad and Tobago] 50 Years and Growing: 1956 - 2006: Golden Jubilee Convention", "Pumpkinville" booklets (Jubilee Edition: 1956-2006; 2005; 2003; 1996; 1992; 1991; 1989), a National Directory, a 2006 membership survey, and the by-laws of the General Service Board of Trinidad and Tobago.

### **NOVEMBER 2006:**

Film recording of the recollections of Dr. Earl M.

## We Invite You to Reserve for Your Use Our New Traveling Archives Display

Would you like to showcase A.A. history and archives at an upcoming area event or convention? The G.S.O. Archives has recently updated its traveling archives display, and we invite you to reserve it for your area events. The early history of A.A. comes to life in this colorful and informative exhibit.

The display fits on a standard-size office table, and is about 71" across by 48" tall. Two people working together can erect it in about half hour (depending on how handy you are!). There is no cost to use the display, though we do require that anyone to whom we send it pay to have it shipped (tracked and insured) back to the G.S.O.; we will take care of the shipping costs out to you. The display weighs about 50 lbs and comes in a rolling case that makes it easy to transport. If you're in the New York area and prefer to pick it up and drop it off, you're welcome to do that.

To request the display, email Noela Jordan at [jordann@aa.org](mailto:jordann@aa.org), or call 212-870-3400, ext. 4724. Please make your request as far in advance of the event as possible.

