

## THE ORIGIN AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF AA IN WESTERN NEVADA COUNTY

By  
Clayton G. as told to his Wife Edna

AA started in the Western Nevada County area, in Grass Valley, in 1949 with what is now the Original Gold Quartz Group.

The first AA meeting in Nevada City was started by Tom Osborn who had moved up from Southern California. He held meetings at his home in Nevada City on Tuesday nights at 8:00 P.M. As he recruited new members, they took turns using their homes.

In 1956(Nov. 24th) at Clayton G.'s first meeting there were six people: Tom Osborne, Lloyd Cunningham, Deacon Parsons, John Milnerrich, Bob Rice and Ty Taylor.

In 1957, they started meeting in Ty Taylor's business office in Nevada City.

There was also a meeting on Friday night in Grass Valley in 1956. The meetings were held at the Woman's Improvement Club, which was an arm of the Congregational Church. At the Improvement Club, there were rows of wooden benches and, as the members were called on to speak, they would go to the front of the room to a podium and give their story from there.

The meetings were open, but only AA members were called on to speak. Wives, Alanons, were supposed to furnish birthday cakes for all the AA birthday meetings plus making and serving coffee and washing up after the meeting. At the non-birthday meetings, one of the members brought doughnuts to each meeting. Clayton G. brought them for many years.

At Clayton's first meeting, in Grass Valley, there were five local members and six members from Roseville. Floyd Bowers from Roseville brought a car load of members to the Grass Valley meeting almost every Friday night for years. The Secretary of the group in 1956 was Earl Vincent from Alta. He had been Secretary, at this time, for three years. His sponsor was Floyd Bowers of Roseville. Earl had been driving over from Alta, rain or shine, snow banks or storms. Many times having to dig his way through snow banks and chop down fallen trees on the road. His great pride was he had never failed to get through and open the meeting on time. He kept asking for members to take over the meeting, but to no avail. He was secretary for three more years after Clayton came in 1956.

Then Clayton became Secretary in 1959 and he was Secretary for two years before a new volunteer took over. The two groups had not had a new

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member stay sober for one year, so Clayton was the pride of both groups.

Clayton did not understand the principle of Attraction rather than Promotion, so he would walk the streets of Grass Valley telling everyone he knew, or anyone who would talk to him about AA and how he loved his sobriety. Soon Clayton started getting calls from troubled relatives about their family members who were in trouble with alcohol. He would go see the person or call the person on the phone. Within his first year of sobriety he had two new members. Within his first three years, he had recruited six members in one way or the other and many failed attempts, also. He would take a car load of his new babies to out of town meeting twice a week: to Marysville, Citrus Heights, Group 3 in Sacramento, Auburn or Roseville. The Group in Grass Valley began to grow rapidly.

In 1960, Clayton's baby Harry C. came in and within a year he started our first speaker meeting in this area. It was a great success. At one of these meetings, Harry got Chuck Chambers to speak. He was a great AA speaker who had spoken at the first AA World Conference and received a standing ovation. Chuck, after hearing Clayton's account of how he had gotten his babies; i.e., one from a city dump, one from a parking meter in town, one from a phone call and all of the other strange ways he had of getting babies; named Clayton the "Cadaver Grabber", which a few old timers still remember.

Clayton's wife, Edna, started the first Alanon meeting in Nevada City in 1959. The Alanons were relegated to the Parson's office.

Another of Clayton's babies, in 1962, started the first closed meeting in Nevada City. He did not appreciate meeting with anyone who was not an AA Member. The Grass Valley Meeting remained open.

I do not recall the year members with one year sobriety were given chips, which they would leave in a box and turn them over to display their names and the year. The longest sober members were on the top of the board and newer members at the bottom. This box was displayed at each Friday night Meeting.