

Prelude

AA lore has it that Mary Jane B. was impressed by the now-famous 1941 Jack Alexander *Saturday Evening Post* article, which mentioned that over two-thousand alcoholics had found recovery from alcoholism via a recently formed spiritual program called Alcoholics Anonymous. She eventually convinced her alcoholic husband, Bob, to seize upon this hopeful opportunity. **Bob B.** was the owner of a downtown business, *Sergeant's Paint and Wallpaper Store* (613 Main Street). To Mary Jane's chagrin her paint-store husband was spending most evenings painting the town red!

They were acquainted with a business associate from Philadelphia who was a recovered alcoholic, Jim Burwell. Jim had been sober since 1938 and had started AA in that city. Jim's story, *The Vicious Cycle*, had been published in the Big Book. After some urging by Mary Jane, Bob eventually took a train to Philly, allowed Jim to take him through the 12 Step process, and returned home sober! This event probably took place just after the Second World War in 1945.

Bob immediately began attending meetings at the beautiful old mansion-turned-clubhouse at **405 Oak Street** in Cincinnati; and the **Monument Street Meeting**, in Dayton (This was in a funeral parlor horse and buggy stable – imagine!), and also the **Sunday Breakfast Meeting** in the **Severin Hotel** in Indianapolis. Just envision staying sober and being the only sober AA member in Richmond where your business is surrounded by watering holes of all sorts. However, Bob remained sober, albeit periodically, for most of his life. He died with many years sobriety at age 83, in 1993.



Severin Hotel

The Oak Street Clubhouse opened during the early 1940s and is still in operation with many meetings every day.

The Breakfast meeting is no longer located at the Severin Hotel.