

The Craighead Building Era

1947—1951



The Craighead Building is located at 927 1/2 East Main Street, but the 1940's address was 925 1/2. The three rooms of the *Drop-In-Center* provided small but adequate space for the many activities for its members, plus a small detoxication room.



How it started: Bill Meier (Serenity Sam's father) was an excellent piano tuner, who, when sober, often did work for music store owner, Bob Hood's customers. Mr. Hood, who owned the Craighead building next door, had often helped Bill get back on his feet after his prolonged drunken sprees. He rented Bill three rooms above this store, 925 1/2 Main Street, for \$22.50 a month in hopes that a proposed alcoholic *drop-in Center* would help Bill stay sober, as well as the alcoholic community at large. This was possibly spring or summer of 1947.

The idea caught on; as Bob Murphy (DOS 1950) reported, there were soon twelve to fourteen sober members traversing the stairs staying sober! Well, for the most part! Regular 8:00 pm meetings were started on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, but the members stayed around much later. Sam Meier was not an AA member at this time, but he spent much time with his father, who was the center's live-in manager. Sam reports that the club stayed busy all week long and on weekends members stayed to all sort of late hours. He tells of Dan Fitzpatrick, who waited for the bars to close, then walked down the street to nearby Jennings' all-night hamburger café; there he would attempt to 12-Step the late night booze hounds! It would certainly seem Mr. Hood's venture had become a roaring success!

Sam tells that there was always some sort of soup on the stove and eggshell coffee. Bill Meier, being a heavy-handed sort, would never allow the anyone to wash the coffee pot. He had learned this flavor enhancement precaution from his 'hobo jungle' days. On more prosperous times they might sport the special 'full-of-air' doughnuts from the Golden Dawn bakery down on north E street. Along with the eats there was near-continual card playing, a wind-up phonograph with a big horn, 78 rpm records with doubtless Doris Day, Bing Crosby, Diana Shore, Bix Beiderbecke and of course, Frank!

Literature reading during the regular Sunday and Wednesday evening meetings was dominated by the *Big Book*, The *Little Red Book*, which was greatly approved by co founder Dr. Bob.

