

The statement "...an organization similar to A.A. which operates among addicts" comes from a book entitled Alcohol, Science and Society (page 472) and was contained in a question directed to Bill Wilson speaking at Yale University in 1944. We do not know anything about this organization; however, this statement points out something very important about our history. A fellowship for addicts is a logical and natural outgrowth of the A.A. fellowship and has probably occurred independantly many times. I'm sure we will never know about most of these groups because very few were documented or survived for any length of time. The ones we know about either died out or merged with what we now know as Narcotics Anonymous.

Dorothy Berry, a Major in the Salvation Army, began working with addicts in about 1946, this in itself is not particularly significant. However, she was associated with two other people who were directly involved in starting something called NA in 1948; they were Daniel Carlsen and Mrs. Rae Lopez. These three people (all now deceased) were involved in the 40's and 50's in campaigning (successfully) to have all public supported hospitals in New York city accept addicts as patients. Major Barry is credited for starting Styvestant Square Narcotics Treatment Facility for Women. It is unclear what kind of relationship Major Berry had with Carlsen and Lopez; they may have been friends, colleagues, or Major Barry may have helped Carlsen and Lopez in their own recovery.

Daniel Carlsen and Mrs. Rae Lopez did prison work (possibly as part of or in conjunction with Major Berry's personal ministries, and/or the Salvation Army). In 1948, Carlsen and Lopez started a group called Narcotics Anonymous within the New York prison system. The date comes from Daniel Carlsen's book, The Addict (Rae Lopez was a contributor) and confirmed by Father Dan Egan who wrote the book The Junkie Priest. The name Narcotics Anonymous is attributed to Charles (Chuck) McGee, who is last known to be alive and working as a night manager of a Marriott hotel near Washington, DC.

According to Father Dan Egan, the first NA meeting held outside prison walls occurred about 1950 on a wednesday night at the YMCA on 23rd street, NYC. An issue of the Salvation Army's War Cry, of that period, contains an article and photo of a member celebrating his second anniversary; in the same article Mrs. Rae Lopez is referred to as the "Director" of NA.

Information and documentation about this NA continues to trickle in and we will surely learn much more about it in the future. What we now know, from references in books and magazines published in the 1950's, suggests that this NA was very different from the NA we know. It was probably an offshoot of the Salvation Army rather than of Alcoholics Anonymous. They had 13 steps, no traditions, and a structure similar to the Salvation Army's; including officers such as Captain, Director, and Chaplin. They are reported to have had chapters in Chicago, Cleveland, and Lexington; and there is even a reference to a possible chapter in California, but it is not clear which NA this refers to since they existed coincidentally for a number of years. Our fellowship has known about this other NA since the early days but it is not known how much contact there was between the two organizations.

Daniel Carlsen is reported to have died in 1956 and the Narcotics