

## N.Y. / Region

### Where Bill W. Got Sober

**Q.** *I heard that the birthplace of [Alcoholics Anonymous](#) is for sale. Can that be?*

**A.** Not exactly, but close. The town house at [182 Clinton Street](#) in Brooklyn Heights, which is for sale for just under \$3 million, was the birthplace and childhood home of Lois B. Wilson, and it was where she and her husband, Bill Wilson, moved back in with her parents when his drinking had left him unable to support his family.

In his speeches and writings, Mr. Wilson, known as Bill W. until his death in 1971, traced the history of the movement to 1934 and “the kitchen table at Clinton Street,” where he and a former drinking buddy discussed the principles that led to the program’s influential 12 steps to health. The Wilsons nurtured the movement’s first four years there, and it was where Mr. Wilson began preparing the book “Alcoholics Anonymous.”

The founding date of Alcoholics Anonymous is generally regarded as June 10, 1935, when Dr. Robert H. Smith, an Akron, Ohio, surgeon and the group’s co-founder, had his last drink soon after a long talk with Bill W.

A bank foreclosure forced the Wilsons to move in 1939, and in 1941 they moved to a house at 62 Oak Road on the Bedford Hills-Katonah border, which they named [Stepping Stones](#) and where they lived the rest of their lives. Lois Wilson, who founded the Al-Anon family groups at Stepping Stones, died in 1988. Stepping Stones is now a national and state landmark, and among its artifacts is the kitchen table from Clinton Street.

There is a contract to buy the Brooklyn town house but the sale has not yet closed, said Lisa Detwiler, a senior associate sales representative for the Corcoran Group. The town house is privately owned and is no longer affiliated with the Wilson family or Alcoholics Anonymous.

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*This article has been revised to reflect the following correction:*

**Correction: February 21, 2010**

*An answer in the F.Y.I. column last Sunday about some of the largest auditoriums in New York City by seating capacity, using information from the Department of Education, omitted two of the largest venues. They are the [Metropolitan Opera](#) House, with 3,800 seats, and the Paradise Theater on the Grand Concourse in the Bronx, with 3,700 seats.*