

# Reflections on Turning 40: The Ottawa Valley Health Libraries Association/ l'Association des bibliothèques de la santé de la vallée de l'Outaouais History Project

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The Ottawa Valley Health Libraries Association (OVHLA)/ l'Association des bibliothèques de la santé de la vallée de l'Outaouais, originally the Ottawa-Hull Health Libraries Group, dates back to 1974. The Association was one of the first chapters of the Canadian Health Libraries Association/ Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada. The objective of this project was to collect, organize, and share our historical documents, and to create a timeline of the Association's important moments.

## Methods

- Past and present OVHLA members were solicited to contribute historical records.
- Issues of the *Journal of the Canadian Health Libraries Association* (JCHLA) and *Bibliotheca medica Canadiana* were scanned to identify relevant information.
- Historical documents and artifacts — including meeting minutes, chapter reports, membership lists, treasurer records, and photographs — were reviewed and prepared for archiving.
- Questionnaire-based interviews were conducted via email with six past-presidents and one long-standing OVHLA member to gather their reflections.
- Both the historical records and the interview responses were analyzed to develop a narrative review and timeline of the Association's significant moments.

## Results

- Outcomes from the OVHLA history project include:
  - A narrative review of the Association's history, published in JCHLA.
  - A timeline of OVHLA's key achievements and submission of OVHLA's records for deposit in the Archives and Special Collections of the University of Ottawa.
  - A new history section on the Association's website, featuring important historical documents, a list of past executive members, and the timeline of achievements.

## Conclusions

This project highlights OVHLA's rich history and has made the Association's records accessible to members, as well as anyone interested in the heritage of health librarianship in the Ottawa Valley region.

## Quotes

**"...The energy, professionalism, and collegiality of the group today are as vibrant and strong as ever!"**

-Deborah Scott-Douglas (President 1998-2001, 2011-2013)

**"Joining the Association was a great opportunity to understand the variety and depth of the health library field."**

-Becky Skidmore (President 2001-2004)

**"What stands out most for me was the willingness and eagerness of our fellow librarians [and] information specialists to collaborate and share knowledge."**

-Melissa Severn (President 2013-2014)

**"I feel that OVHLA's most significant accomplishment has been the networking, social, and continuing education opportunities it provides to its members."**

-Paola Durando (long-standing member)

## OVHLA Timeline

ABSC = Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada; CHLA = Canadian Health Libraries Association; OHHLA = Ottawa-Hull Health Libraries Association; OHHLG = Ottawa-Hull Health Libraries Group; OVHLA = Ottawa Valley Health Libraries Association; UNYOC = Upstate New York and Ontario Chapter.

<b>1974</b> First informal meeting.	<b>1982</b> Annual membership fee introduced (\$10).	<b>1994</b> Amalgamation of OHHLA and the Ontario Hospital Association Region #9 Hospital Libraries Group. Constitution and bylaws revised.  Name changed to OVHLA/ l'Association des bibliothèques de la santé de la vallée de l'Outaouais.	<b>2003</b> New executive position introduced: Continuing Education Program Coordinator.	<b>2011</b> Constitution and bylaws revised, including changes to institutional membership privileges.
<b>1975</b> Mabel C. Brown elected as first Chair.	<b>1984</b> "Survival" meeting, at which future of Chapter was voted upon.  Decision to continue as a Chapter, but with fewer meetings.  Constitution and bylaws revised. Social events introduced.	<b>1998</b> 22nd CHLA/ABSC conference in Hull, June 5 to 10.	<b>2004</b> Joint UNYOC/OVHLA annual meeting held in Ottawa, October 13 to 15.	<b>2012</b> Joint UNYOC/OVHLA annual meeting in Cornwall, October 10 to 12.
<b>1976</b> Henriette A. Schmidt nominated as the group's first secretary.  First edition of <i>Union List of Serials in Ottawa-Hull Hospital Libraries</i> produced.	<b>1988</b> Name changed to OHHLA.	<b>1999</b> Electronic version of the <i>Union List of Serials</i> made available on the Chapter's first website.	<b>2006</b> Some members of the inactive Kingston Area Health Libraries Association join OVHLA.	<b>2013</b> OVHLA Journal Club launched.
<b>1977</b> Name OHHLG/ Groupe des bibliothèques de la santé d'Ottawa-Hull officially adopted.	<b>1989</b> 13th annual CHLA/ABSC meeting in Ottawa, May 27 to 31.		<b>2007</b> 31st annual CHLA/ABSC conference in Ottawa, May 28 to June 1.	<b>2015</b> OVHLA Mini-Symposium. OVHLA history project begins.
<b>1978</b> First constitution and bylaws drafted.  CHLA/ABSC chapter status granted.			<b>2008</b> Full day OVHLA mini-conference at the Royal Ottawa Hospital.	
<b>1979</b> Third annual CHLA/ABSC meeting in Ottawa, June 13-14.				