



## A History

The history of our local ACRL Chapter begins in 1953, when a group of librarians from the Pittsburgh area petitioned the ACRL Board of Directors to authorize “a chapter in this (Pittsburgh) Tri-State area.” The minutes from the ACRL Board of Directors Meeting on June 12, 1953, state that “Twenty-one members of ACRL signed the petition and over 50 people attended that meeting at which the petition (limited to ACRL members) was signed. Fifteen other people who could not attend signed cards indicating they favored the chapter (all but 7 are ACRL members). The group has yet to complete its organization. It intends to draw from a natural radius around Pittsburgh which will extend at least a little into northern West Virginia and eastern Ohio. Signers of the petition include John B. Nicholson (State Representative from Ohio) and Gilbert Fites (State Representative from West Virginia).” This Tri-State Chapter, as it became known, was one of only a handful of ACRL Chapters. Other local chapters included Missouri (1952), New Jersey (date unknown), Illinois (date unknown) and the Philadelphia Area Chapter (1952).

The officers of the new chapter were E. Hugh Behymer (Bethany College), – President; John B. Nicholson, Jr., (Kent State University) – Vice-President/ President-Elect; and Mabel C. Kocher (Westminster College) – Secretary/Treasurer. The first meeting was held at Bethany College in May 1954.

In 1969, the Philadelphia Area Chapter changed its name to the Delaware Valley Chapter. A few years later, in 1981, the Ohio Chapter of the ACRL was formed, splitting Ohio off from the Tri-State Chapter. In a letter dated March 6, 1981, Carol Marty Smith, the ACRL Chapters Liaison, points out that because of the formation of the Ohio Chapter, the “Tri-State” only covers two states and, therefore, needs a new name. It appears that the Tri-State Chapter became inactive but didn’t receive a name change.

In 1987, Susan Neuman (University of Pittsburgh) wrote a letter to ACRL inquiring about starting a local Western Pennsylvania chapter. In ACRL's response to her, they stated that the Tri-State chapter disbanded in August 1983 but they sent her information from that chapter, including the bylaws, a list of officers and information on the disposition of the chapter funds. In December 1987, Ms. Neuman and Barbara Richards (Carnegie Mellon University) sent ACRL a formal petition to establish the Chapter, sending along the signatures of twenty-eight local librarians supporting the idea.

In February 1988, Cathleen Bourdon, ACRL Deputy Executive Director, wrote to Ms. Neuman and Ms. Richards to notify them that the ACRL Board of Directors had approved chapter status for Western Pennsylvania. This was the 39<sup>th</sup> ACRL Chapter.

By 2001, documents in the Chapter’s archive show the addition of West Virginia to the chapter but exactly when or why that happened has been harder to figure out. If you have any information on the history of the Chapter, recent or ancient, let us know!

Compiled by Hilary Fredette, West Virginia University.

Sources: *American Library Association Archives*. Located at the Archives Research Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.