

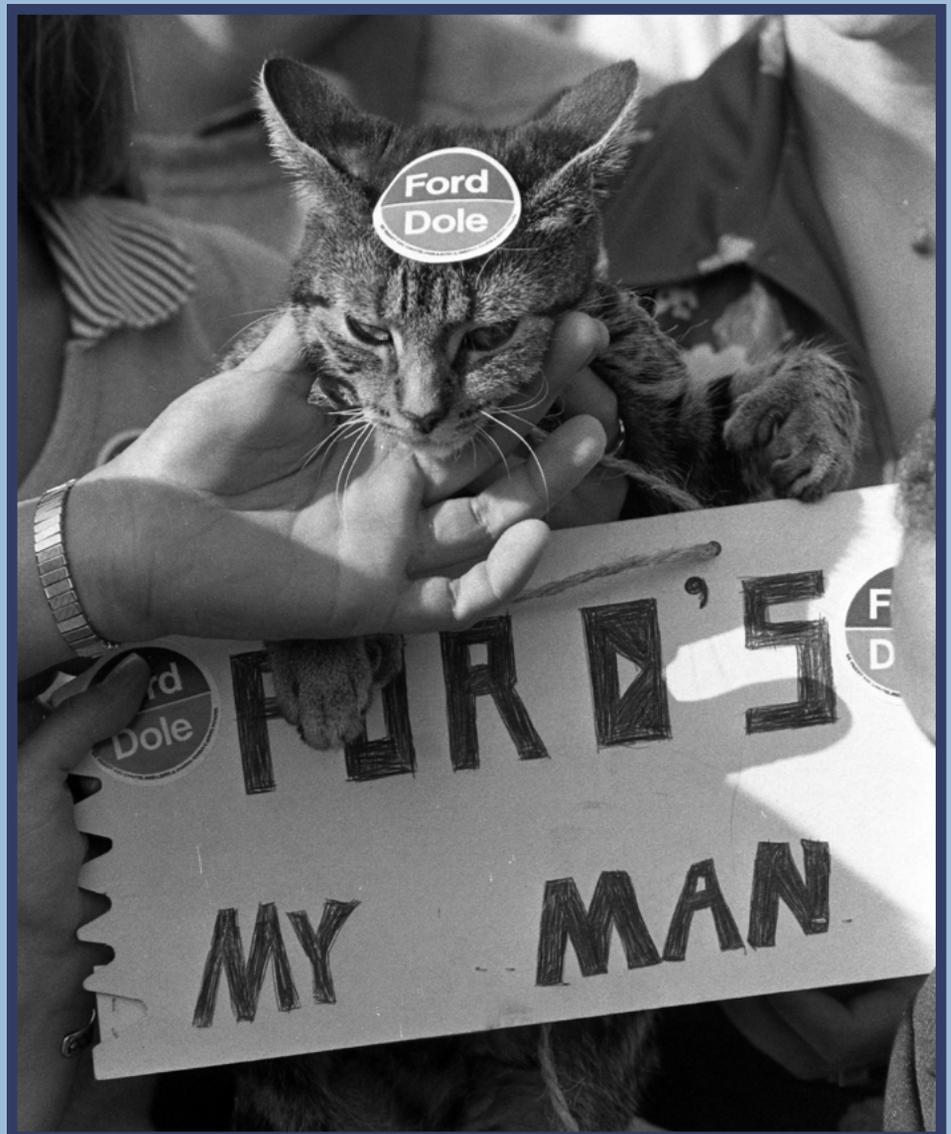
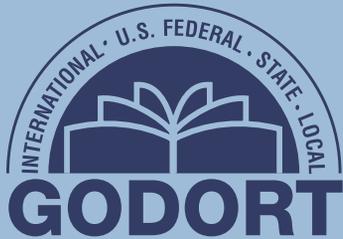
## In This Issue

- Government Information and Linguistic Minorities: A Case Study of Forest Finns in Varmland, Sweden and Hedmark, Norway
- Public Lessons from Private Laws: Take the Survey—Get on the Map!
- 'Round the Table
- Book Reviews

# DttP

## Documents to the People

Fall 2017 | Volume 45, No. 3 | ISSN 0091-2085



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Margaret T. Lane/Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award

James Bennett Childs Award

ProQuest/GODORT/ALA "Documents to the People" Award

Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award

NewsBank/Readex/GODORT/ALA Catharine J. Reynolds Research Grant

W. David Rozkuszka Scholarship

Larry Romans Mentorship Award

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## Submissions due December 1, 2017

<http://bit.ly/godortawards>



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*Recognize achievements by documents librarians, encourage professional study or publication, honor mentorship and offer a scholarship to a library science student.*

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# DttP

## Documents to the People

Fall 2017 | Volume 45, No. 3 | ISSN 0091-2085

### Columns

- 2 Editor's Corner—Elizabeth Psyck
- 3 From the Chair—Shari Laster
- 5 Documents without Borders—Jim Church

### Features

- 9 Government Information and Linguistic Minorities  
*A Case Study of Forest Finns in Varmland, Sweden, and Hedmark, Norway*  
Deborah A. Smith
- 20 Public Lessons from Private Laws  
Gwen Sinclair

### 'Round the Table

- 27 GODORT Steering Committee Minutes
- 29 GODORT Steering Reflector Minutes
- 30 GODORT Membership Meeting
- 31 *DttP* Meeting Summaries
- 34 GODORT Program Committee
- 35 Government Information for Children Minutes—  
ALA Annual Conference 2017

### Book Reviews

- 37 The Dilemma of Lawlessness: Organized Crime, Violence, Prosperity, and Security Along Guatemala's Borders
- 37 Picturing the Big Shop: Photos of the U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1900–1980

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### About the Cover:

"Cat Wearing a Ford's My Man Sign at a Campaign Rally for President Gerald R. Ford, 10/13/1976." From Gerald R. Ford White House Photographs, 8/9/1974–1/20/1977, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/27575832>.

I've been avoiding writing this "Editor's Corner" for a while because I'm in the midst of a major case of writer's block. I haven't written much of anything in a while, for work or fun, and sitting down to write this was daunting. There's a bit of irony in admitting that I'm dealing with writer's block when I rely on all of you to overcome your own version and submit papers to me, but I like to think that I'm keeping it real by being open about my own professional struggles. Writing is HARD.

It's been a busy summer at my library and in the government documents world, which I've been using as an excuse for not pushing myself to write. Locally, I'm sitting down to write this between orienting some RAs and facilitating an all staff convocation. On a national level our community is having conversations about Title 44. Oh, and I guess there's an eclipse happening or something? (Sorry to everyone who just cringed at the memory of all those requests for eclipse glasses. I heard they're the new tax forms.) On a personal note, I've just stepped into my one-year term as chair of the library faculty at my institution, which is exciting and a little terrifying. In short, there's a lot going on in the world, and that doesn't even begin to approach current events.

I'll finish this out by telling you a little bit about this issue's cover and why I chose it. Those of you who follow me on social media or have talked to me about my nonwork life for any amount of time probably know that I'm a cat owner. (My husband and I have three cats. They're all jerks, but we love them anyway.) What some of you may not know is that I live just a half mile from the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where both the President and First Lady are buried. It's a great museum that has been recently renovated and



**"I may have chosen the wrong side. That Carter fellow has a farm . . ."**

also has the distinction of being the only Presidential Museum governed by National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) that is separate from its accompanying library. (That's across the state at the University of Michigan, President Ford's alma mater.) When I saw a NARA photograph combining both Gerald R. Ford and a kitty, I knew it was fate. (I also have a really funny story about how I accidentally kidnapped my neighbor's cat when he jumped into my car and decided to rename him Ford. Luckily we got "Ford" aka Markley home to his people before the end of the day.)

Also, lest you think that cat is completely miserable, here's another photo where he or she looks a bit more relaxed. I've also included an alternate caption to our cover photo, courtesy of my husband, who I'm pretty sure doesn't actually want credit for it.

# From the Chair



## Let's Tell a Story!

Shari Laster

**A** picture is worth a thousand words." Thanks to *DttP* editor Elizabeth Psyck's recent, extensive research into cat pictures, I am taking the opportunity to write about a pair of photographs.

As a visual art, photography is a medium of transition. When we view a photograph, we see a slice of the world, frozen in time. For a moment we disappear into the image, seeing it as if we were there, with the tableau before us in its original and unmediated state. This sense of transition is a deception, or if you like, a trick of the medium. Whether the photograph was snapped at the spur of a moment, or the product of careful arrangement, or selected for its visual elements, the image is the product of an invisible other—a photographer who hovers between us and the tableau, appearing as we examine the image, and disappearing again as we are involuntarily thrust into the world it depicts.

Perhaps this is part of the reason that photography can be a keenly-honed instrument for telling stories. Our eyes tell us that the photograph documented something that has happened, and this visceral sense of presence further illuminates the elements presented in the image. When we see a photograph with a contented cat that appears to be doing its part for the campaign trail, as with this issue's cover image, we think of other cats we've seen, purring contentedly and snuggling up with a couple humans. Or perhaps we connect it with other political campaigns, slogans, and signs. As we spend more time with the photograph, our thoughts could also wander outward: we consider the political circumstances of this campaign, or imagine the happy life of this kitty who likely attended many similar rallies. Then we remember again that some unnamed person must have knelt down somewhere nearby to capture the moment.

I want to suggest that government information plays a similar role in uncovering history. There is a deceptive (or

tricky) sense of absolutism when we engage with a publication as a direct and unmediated account of government activity. We accept the intellectual content of the publication as fundamentally documentarian, and we presuppose that it presents a clear and accurate narrative: events that took place, decisions that were made, or information that was deemed pertinent to the public interest.

Yet at some level, we must also be aware that government information as a medium is not neutral. Its essence is political. That is not to say that all government information is inherently partisan, although it can be. But the content has invisible political context, including the political priorities of the administration in office and the behind-the-scenes power-brokering that is an inescapable part of the appropriations process. There are also broader social factors of power, enfranchisement, and political voice as background to governance itself. This context acts as

a force on the informational content of the document: shaping it or compressing it, perhaps deforming it, depending on circumstances.

I am not arguing here that the intellectual content of government information is fundamentally suspect and untrustworthy. Rather, the opposite: the political nature of its creation casts a shadow that deepens what we can discern from the document. With a photograph, we can consider and evaluate the aesthetic and narrative qualities that resulted from deliberate decisions and lucky happenstances on the part of the photographer. With a government document, we can identify latent characteristics that make visible the political context for the creation of that publication, website, video, or social media posting.

Librarians collecting government documents are doing more than just making an assortment of discrete objects available for future access and study. They are contributing to a corpus that, when assembled at a macro level, tells stories about the content that comprises it. This includes publications and records, but also archives, images, objects, and other forms of



Dorothea Lange, "San Francisco, California. A home is sought for kittens as owners prepare to evacuate. Evacuees of Japanese ancestry will housed in War Relocation Authority centers for the duration," Records of the War Relocation Authority, 1941–1989, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/536470>.

documentary evidence. It is imperative that we engage with those creating—and using—collections that depict human experience outside of the official narrative, particularly those representing voices systematically excluded from political and social power.

When I teach students about government information, I use the documentary trail of the War Relocation Authority as an example of the ways in which publications illuminate history. The human devastation brought by the forced relocation and internment of 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry during World War II is, for the most part, unacknowledged and unvoiced in government documents of the period. Starting with an Executive Order, moving through plans, reports, brochures, and propaganda, and concluding with the agency's own summary of its activities, these materials provide a narrow view into the enormity of the wrong that the US government perpetrated by incarcerating people indiscriminately and without due process.

When we read accounts from individuals who were forced to endure the indignity of concentration camps and the injustices of forced relocation, asset forfeiture, and incarceration, we

are immersed in narrative context. These voices are excluded from the official documentary history precisely because they testify to the racist, xenophobic politics that gave rise to the agency's existence and mission. In this sense, WRA publications depict some of the most important parts of the agency's story though their silences.

As stewards of government information, it is our work to ensure that collections of today are assembled, described, preserved, and made accessible in ways that support and encourage users in taking the transitory leap from document to context. Working in partnership with researchers, archivists, records managers, and curators, we have the opportunity to make sure that we are doing our part in enabling others to tell the stories that must be told.

**Shari Laster** (slaster@ucsb.edu), Government Information Librarian & Data Services Librarian, UCSB Library, University of California, Santa Barbara.

# Documents without Borders

## Civil Society and the Open Data Movement

Jim Church

The GODORT International Documents Task Force held a pre-conference at the 2013 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago titled “International Statistics: Helping Library Users Understand the Global Community,”<sup>1</sup> with which I was only marginally involved. But I was asked by the committee if it was worth presenting on Nongovernmental Organization (NGO) data, to which I replied it was not: most civil society organizations were not yet in the business of repurposing publicly available data or publishing their own.

Much has changed since then, to say the least. I now have an entire website devoted to NGO data, and numeric, geo-spatial and textual data have become the coin of the realm in the social sciences. Civil society organizations routinely publish their own research data, while others ingest and repurpose publicly available data to make it more accessible to users or hold national and international organizations to account. Civil society activists are also largely responsible for the open data movement, and the web is now populated by growing numbers of open data catalogs and API lists. This is a tremendously significant development, and the topic of this column.

### NGOs and OGD

There are several definitions of NGOs so some clarification of the term may be needed. An NGO is simply an organization not established by governmental agreement, including volunteer organizations, grassroots organizations, and transnational social movements. NGOs are “durable, bounded, voluntary, relationships among individuals to produce a particular product.”<sup>2</sup> An NGO can be anything from a local gardening club to Green Peace International: it does not need to be a registered nonprofit. For the purposes of this article I concentrate on social change organizations with research agendas. While it is true that some organizations (such as the Pew Research Center) have published research data for years, the willingness to make such data open has increased as the demand for data has grown and the open data movement has gained traction.

NGOs are also closely tied to Open Government Data (OGD). Safarov, Meijir, and Grimmelikhuijsen provide an exhaustive analytical review of the OGD literature (many

articles appear in *Government Information Quarterly*),<sup>3</sup> and the number of OGD articles shows a steadily upward trend: from four in 2011 to 39 in 2015.<sup>4</sup> Uses of OGD are categorized by the authors into five broad themes: transparency and accountability, economic development, citizen participation, public services development, social value, and citizen trust. The chief uses include innovation, data analytics, decision making, anticorruption, smart cities, new services, research, and hackathons.<sup>5</sup> The categories presented below are examples the author has encountered via research consultations and personal investigation. They hopefully shed some light on the subject domains where civil society organizations have been particularly successful working with research data.

### Weapons, Crime, and Corruption

Governments routinely publish statistics on economic growth, employment, demographics, education, consumer prices, and so forth. But there are some figures governments are not so keen to reveal, and even if the data is available it may be difficult to find in official sources. Military spending and arms sales are certainly among these: good luck finding which country sold what weapons to whom and for how much over time. Fortunately, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) provides easy access to data on arms transfers, military expenditures, and arms-producing and military services companies. The original data is typically found in government reports, budgets, white papers, newspapers, and commercial military periodicals such as *Jane's Defense Weekly*.<sup>6</sup> While these sources are available to the public, the data is much easier to access on SIPRI. The organization still publishes a *Yearbook of World Armaments and Disarmament*, and for a while restricted access to its data via subscriber user id and password. Like many data providers they have since changed this policy, and now the data is free online.

The *Offshore Leaks Database* is an example of a different kind: this contains information on the offshore entities, companies, and individuals revealed in the infamous Panama Papers, Offshore Leaks, and Bahamas Leaks files. The database has information on more than 500,000 offshore corporations and trusts, as well as the names of over 370,000 people and companies linked to these entities, from more than two hundred countries and territories. The Panama Papers were originally leaked to the German Newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, but due to the size of the data (2.6 terabytes in 11.5 million documents) the newspaper sought help from the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), a nonprofit originally which focuses on cross-border crime, offshore secrecy, corruption, and the misuse of power. The ICIJ worked for months reverse

engineering the data to find relations between unlinked tables for thousands of companies and persons. The resulting public database is searchable and allows users to download data by originating country (people, companies and addresses with ties to offshore entities) and the jurisdiction of the offshore corporations and trusts. It was published under an Open Database License.

Another example with widespread academic use is Transparency International (TI) a Berlin-based NGO working to combat corruption. I first presented on this source at a conference years ago and showed a visualization of the group's *Corruption Perceptions Index*, which color-codes nations worldwide according to public perceptions of corruption. This, again, is not the type of thing governments typically investigate: how many civil servants would survey citizens about how corrupt people think the country is? Transparency International also publishes tabular data and visualizations in its *Bribe Payer's Index*, which captures perceptions about the likelihood of companies from large economies to pay bribes abroad. It also publishes research reports which can be searched and filtered by country and topic, on subjects related to transparency and corruption, from information access to youth and sport.

### Official and Unofficial Aid Data

Few economic topics have generated as much controversy as foreign aid. For years the main sources for international aid data or "Official Development Assistance" (ODA) were the annual *Overseas Loans and Grants* or "Green Book" and the OECD's *Geographical Distribution of Financial Flows to Developing Countries*. The Green Book is a freely available US government publication while versions of OECD development data have also been free for years. But this data is primarily from OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) countries, so data from India, China, Brazil and other economies is unavailable on the platform. In the past this may have been justified, but with emerging economies now comprising significant shares of the aid sector, this data can no longer be ignored.

I well remember encountering the AID Data site when it was first released—it was a revelation. AID Data was originally a partnership between the College of William & Mary, the Development Gateway, and Brigham Young University. Prior to its release most development data was aggregated at the national level and published annually: with Aid Data the user can access funding at the project level with the selected data sets geo-coded. Aid Data also reposts academic journal articles accompanied by replication aid datasets that address and at times debunk the conventional wisdom about development aid and its consequences. On the main site dashboard a search for India

reveals 422 development projects funded from 2006 to 2010, worth \$4.1 billion: project details include the name of the funding organization, the sector, the amount, and title of the project. But the data also includes other financial flows besides projects, such as Foreign Direct Investment and Remittances: for India these totaled \$167.8 billion for India from 1976 to 2012. The addition of this data provides another perspective on the nature of development assistance. There is also a new Aid Data spinoff called [China.aiddata.org](http://China.aiddata.org)—a platform for Chinese development finance to Africa. For years access to this has been problematic so this is a very welcome development. There are also new datasets not incorporated into the main dashboard, including one on Brazil's South-South Cooperation, Aid Locations During Civil Wars South of the Sahara, and historical data web scraped from the US Agency for International Development (USAID). All told the data on this site is incredibly rich.

Aid data visualization is also a big deal. One article about this posted by the UN Refugee Agency is entitled "The road to hell is paved with brightly coloured bubble maps."<sup>7</sup> This is only funny if you have been to such sites and spent hours clicking only to discover positively nothing of any import: the author speculates that some data sites are just show pieces that agencies point to when asked about open data policies. But *d-portal* (<http://d-portal.org/>) is not one of these. The site is a user-friendly visualization tool using data from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI)—an undertaking working to improve the availability of development and humanitarian data across multiple sectors. The IATI Standard is an international framework for publishing data used by governments, the private sector and national and international NGOs. Unfortunately, the IATI website is not easy to use, which is where the *d-portal* comes in. The user can select a donor, recipient, time frame, sector, and publisher, and the site returns a list of current and completed projects, some of which are sponsored by private charities. Browsing the donors and publishers displays major aid agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme, as well as smaller ones like "Lively Minds" and "Send a Cow Uganda." When downloading the *d-portal* also offers the option of taking the user the original IATI registry file, where other options are presented.

### Fake Fish

If you ever wondered if some of the data governments report was potentially misleading you were probably right: many governments overcount the good and undercount the bad. An interesting and sobering example of this is fishery statistics. The major source of world fishery data is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations which reports, among other things,

on national reported fish catches. But the official data is most likely a significant undercount of the actual fish caught due to unreported landings and discards from commercial fishing vessels. The Sea Around Us, a nonprofit based in British Columbia (whose name derived was from Rachel Carson's bestselling book) has data models that illustrate these discrepancies, suggesting that from 1950 to 2010, global fish catches were almost 50 percent higher than reported.<sup>8</sup> In 2012 the nonprofit Oceana collected seafood samples from hundreds of retail outlets nationwide to determine if they were accurately labeled. They found that one-third of the samples were bogus: particularly popular fish such as red snapper and tuna, which were mislabeled 87 and 59 percent of the time, respectively.<sup>9</sup> But the news is not all about fakery. Other environmental research organizations such as the Global Footprint Network repurpose data from international organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the UN Statistics Division, the International Energy Agency, and academic sources, to produce a National Footprint Account: a measure combining thousands of data points per country over time to calculate the ecological resource use and capacity of nations.

### Liberating the 990

In 2010, there were 1.5 million tax-exempt organizations in the United States with \$1.51 trillion in revenues,<sup>10</sup> comprising about 9.2 percent of US wages and salaries. The IRS gathers information from these organizations on Form 990, which includes financial information on boards, investments, and other factors, depending on type of the form submitted. Several institutions, such as GuideStar and the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS) at the Urban Institute historically acquired this data for a fee (PDFs on DVDs) and converted it into machine readable formats, which they in turn sold to libraries and other users via a subscription database. But for years this was certainly not open data: at best users could freely download PDFs a few at a time.

After many years of activism and a lawsuit filed by Carl Malamud, in June 2016 the IRS released this data in ASCII, JSON, and XML formats onto Amazon cloud servers.<sup>11</sup> Since then things have been happening fast. A Github repository, "Open Data for Non Profit Research," was released by researchers at Syracuse University,<sup>12</sup> and the files uploaded into a *Nonprofit Initiative for Open Data* dataverse; Charity Navigator created a toolkit that allows users to clone the IRS dataset as a relational database; and the National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute opened their historic IRS data files onto a *National Center For Charitable Statistics Data Archive*.<sup>13</sup> The files are in CSV format and accompanied with

data dictionaries and a helpful user guide. While great kudos is due to data activists like Karl Malmud, the Aspen Institute, and Jesse Levy and Nathan Grasse at Syracuse University, these formats present challenges to novice users. Recognizing that preparing and maintaining open data in an easy-to-use formats for citizens has costs, hopefully our best minds will continue to find ways to make civil society data even easier to use and access in the future.

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# Government Information and Linguistic Minorities

A Case Study of Forest Finns in Varmland, Sweden, and Hedmark, Norway

Deborah A. Smith

This paper examines government, library, and archival resources available in a national minority language in two provinces that border each other in Sweden and Norway. Finn's Forest (Finnskogen), a forested area within the borders of Varmland, Sweden and Hedmark, Norway, was populated through immigration in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by an ethnic and linguistic Finnish minority (figure 1). The Forest Finns (Skogfinner) minority population became the target of centuries-long forced linguistic and cultural assimilation practices by the Swedish and Norwegian governments.

In the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, harsh “Swedification” and “Norwegianization” policies directed at the Forest Finn minority banned use of the Finnish language and authorized destruction of homes and imprisonment of individuals who read books written in Finnish.<sup>1</sup> Members of other minority and indigenous groups in the two countries were subjected to forced sterilization, inclusion in secret police registries, organized chases with plans for extermination, incarceration, and genocide.<sup>2</sup> The last known native speakers of Forest Finnish died in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, a cultural revitalization movement began among Forest Finn descendants, primarily in Scandinavia. This movement has resulted in an annual cultural festival in Norway known as “Forest Finn Days” with a temporarily self-proclaimed autonomous republic that rejects Norwegian rule for the duration of the festival and seeks to preserve the linguistic, ethnic and cultural heritage for the minority’s now assimilated descendants through a “Republic Finnskogen.”<sup>4</sup>

Today, Forest Finns are one of five officially recognized ethnic/linguistic minorities in Norway and Sweden.<sup>5</sup> The two countries began to offer national minority status to Forest Finns and other historically persecuted minorities only in the 1990s, following adoption of the United Nations’ Declaration on the



Figure 1. Finnskogen Areas: Hamar, Norway, and Karlstad, Sweden

Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities.<sup>6</sup>

There are private initiatives that seek to provide education about the Forest Finns.<sup>7</sup> This paper focuses on government, library, and archival access in Norway and Sweden in light of historic state-sponsored persecution of the Forest Finn linguistic minority. First, how are Swedish and Norwegian national

and local governments serving modern Forest Finn descendants who reside in Sweden and Norway (and by extension, the global diaspora of these descendants) as relates to the option for Finnish-language service in daily government interaction? What services are accessible in the Finnish language (such as voting; registering marriages, divorces, and births; registering children for education; obtaining government benefits and tax information, etc.)? Second, how do archives and libraries that hold government and cultural heritage materials related to Forest Finns make those documents available—are archival holdings related to Finnish and Forest Finns searchable in languages other than the dominant cultural language (i.e., Swedish and Norwegian)? The first questions may be assumed to indicate the level of service available to current citizens while the last addresses long-term cultural preservation of a national minority linguistic heritage. Finally, the ready accessibility of English translation services at Norwegian and Swedish institutions highlights what is a comparative lack of e-government services in the national minority languages (and Finnish in particular), which symbolizes ongoing issues with the rectification of historical persecution.

## Literature Review

### E-government and Website Usage

In a 2016 article, “Where do the Nordic Nations’ Strategies Take e-Government?” Shaji Joseph and Anders Aydic compared the e-government strategies of four Nordic nations: Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark.<sup>8</sup> Because these nations have been leaders in the implementation of e-government, the article compares the focus of e-government strategies in the four countries through tables showing categories of service reforms, development practices, and laws. An appendix shows each country’s classification of e-government documents by category. The article concludes that Nordic e-government is primarily focused on public sector reform.

In an article on e-government service and website quality in 2012, researchers found that the ease of use of websites has a strong correlation with whether those websites are actually used: “effort expectancy has a strong effect on use intention.”<sup>9</sup> Websites where the same information in the dominant language is available in translation require less effort of minority language speakers to access. Multilingual website design also increases trust. In 2009, Roy Segovia and colleagues found that websites with paralingual design in areas with a high percentage of bilingual users increased the trust that minority speakers experienced with both the information and website.<sup>10</sup> Countries with multilingual populations and high internet usage are increasingly aware of the need for translation options for

government websites.<sup>11</sup> This need is perhaps even more acute at a local level, given that local government websites may be the first place that residents seek information during an emergency.<sup>12</sup>

Multilingual websites have grown exponentially in the past 15 years since a 2002 global e-government survey found that 43 percent of websites surveyed were multilingual, with features that allow access to non-native speakers.<sup>13</sup> At the time of the 2002 survey, Norway and Sweden were ranked within the top quarter of 198 countries surveyed in terms of quality of e-government. Notably for that time, 91 percent Sweden’s websites surveyed had foreign language translation features while none of Norway’s did. Meanwhile Finland, a neighbor of both countries, had a rate of 100 percent.<sup>14</sup>

### National and Linguistic Minorities

National minorities in Sweden and Norway are the subject of a growing body of scholarly work. In a study of national minority languages in Sweden, Lena Ekberg noted that Sweden is a signatory to the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages and recognizes five official languages.<sup>15</sup> Of these, Finnish is the second largest language in use, with about 250,000 speakers. As of 2000, three of the five national languages are in use in the judiciary and in administrative districts which are inhabited by traditional speakers of the language. As of 2010, however, a new law notes that residents can use the three languages outside of regional areas to communicate regarding government services *if* there are skilled staff available in that language. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Ekberg noted that the number of Finnish speakers is decreasing in Sweden, as is bilingual education in Finnish. She also highlighted negative societal attitudes towards non-Swedish language usage.

In 2009, Kaisa Maliniemi described work by the National Minorities in Public Records in Norway project.<sup>16</sup> This project found that hundreds of documents written in non-Norwegian languages (Kven and Sami) from the late-nineteenth century were stored in public archives but had not been labeled or catalogued in any way. As Maliniemi notes, “minorities and marginalized groups frequently are unaware that public archives contain relevant records to them, even in their own languages.” Both the Kven and Sami are two of Norway’s largest ethnic minorities and were subject to mandatory state-directed assimilation practices. In 1999, Norway ratified the Council of Europe’s Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, which aims to protect and give minorities the right to preserve and develop the language, culture, and religion of their populations.<sup>17</sup> Although Norway has five protected national minority groups, only the Sami—an indigenous ethnic and linguistic population—currently has its own archives.

In 2001, the Norwegian government produced a white paper stating that items related to national minorities should become visible in Norwegian archives, libraries, and museums. However, Maliniemi found both that Norwegian government ministries practiced systematic and durable inequalities regarding materials related to national minorities and that barriers to access at municipal archives, where most of the documents related to minorities are stored, were burdensome and discouraged access, even in areas with sizeable minority populations. Many records related to the Kven and Sami people also disappeared from archives following WWII. Maliniemi concludes that “knowledge of minorities and marginalized groups in the past and present can make them more visible . . . and facilitate their participation in discussions concerning themselves and their interest in a society which has marginalized them for many hundreds of years.”<sup>18</sup>

Further afield from Scandinavia, Nadia Rubaii-Barrett and Lois Recascino Wise examined American state websites in 2006 for their study, “Language Minorities and the Digital Divide: A Study of State 3E-Government Accessibility.” Perhaps unsurprisingly, the authors found evidence that ethnic minorities prefer websites in their own languages but linguistic minorities “stand as isolated pillars . . . and may be faced with organized opposition in their quest of access to public services” while also being placed at economic disadvantage due to lack of language representation.<sup>19</sup> The authors found that American states tended to provide more non-English services when they have a large non-English speaking population and that approximately one half of the variation in states’ non-English language services could be explained by partisan political factors.<sup>20</sup> The authors note that the complexity of information that is provided in translation as well as the materials deemed suitable for translation can be influenced by perceptions of language minorities as social dependents rather than economic actors. They conclude by noting that this bias can put public agencies and officials in the undesirable position of “violating essential civil rights.”<sup>21</sup>

Discrimination against use of Finnish was nationwide within Sweden. A 2010 article on minorities and minority rights in Sweden revealed that until the twentieth century, government supported libraries in the Tornedal region of Sweden, where the population primarily spoke Finnish, were not permitted to provide literature in Finnish.<sup>22</sup> More recently, in 2009 the country passed a Swedish Language Law which notes a *special obligation* of Swedes to use and develop Swedish.<sup>23</sup> In the same year, Sweden’s act on National Minorities was passed with the intention of promoting opportunities to preserve and develop minority culture in Sweden.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, a 2011 study by Joacim Hansson found that public libraries in Sweden have limited services for national minority groups. Hansson concluded that there was “no interest at all in Sweden’s public libraries to prioritize the national minorities when planning and carrying through cultural activities” and further, that “when it comes to . . . introducing, presenting and discussing (national minorities) . . . as parts of the Swedish self-image and Swedish cultural heritage . . . this is being done practically nowhere.”<sup>25</sup>

## E-Government: Comparison of National and Local Services

### Background

Sweden is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy with twenty-one counties. The executive branch is led by a prime minister and the judicial branch has a tiered system with a supreme court at the highest level. The legislative branch consists of the unicameral Riksdag, a 349-seat legislature formed through proportional representation by direct vote. Ninety percent of the population were estimated to use the internet in 2015.<sup>26</sup>

Norway, which was formerly a part of Denmark and then Sweden, achieved political independence in 1905. The country is a parliamentary constitutional monarchy with nineteen administrative districts (*fylker*). The executive branch is led by a prime minister and the judicial branch is a tiered system with a nineteen-member supreme court appointed by the monarch. The legislature is a unicameral parliament, the Storting, with 169 members elected through proportional representation by direct vote. As of 2015, 97 percent of the population is estimated to use the internet.<sup>27</sup>

Norway and Sweden border each other; they also each share a border with Finland. Norwegian and Swedish are Germanic languages, like Danish and English. While different, they share enough similarities in vocabulary and structure to be mutually intelligible. In both Norway and Sweden, Finnish is spoken by a small percentage of the population. Finnish is not a Germanic language but belongs to the Uralic language family, which includes languages like Estonian and Hungarian.

Both Sweden and Norway have a large percentage of their populations who speak English as a second language.<sup>28</sup> They are also countries that have a history of heavy outbound migration to the United States and a large ethnic diaspora in proportion to their total current populations.<sup>29</sup> Government information in Norway and Sweden is both accessible by and accountable to the global community since English is an official language of the United Nations and understood by hundreds of

Table 1. Comparison of National-Level Government Websites—Sweden

Government Entity	Website Accessed	Language Translation Available?	Languages Served?	Finnish Available?	Parity of Finnish Translation with Information in Swedish
Legislative branch	<a href="http://www.riksdagen.se">http://www.riksdagen.se</a>	Yes	22+ Swedish	Yes	No; document search is only offered in Swedish
Executive branch	<a href="http://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/prime-ministers-office/">http://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/prime-ministers-office/</a>	Yes	16+ Swedish	Yes	No; a 17 page pdf in Finnish outlining how the government works is available. A direct embedded Finnish translation of the pages of the Prime Minister's office is not available—this information is available in English.
Judicial branch (highest court)	<a href="http://www.domstol.se/Funktioner/English/">http://www.domstol.se/Funktioner/English/</a>	Yes	4+ Swedish	Yes	Mixed. The site has embedded translation in the national minority languages of Finnish, Sami, and Meankieli as well as a google translate link on the menu bar. However, the top navigational bars remain in Swedish only.
National Archives	<a href="https://riksarkivet.se/startpage">https://riksarkivet.se/startpage</a>	Yes	3+ Swedish	Yes	Mixed. Finnish available for main page navigational areas but material in the digital collections in the National Archives Database is searchable only in Swedish and English.
National Library	<a href="http://www.kb.se/english/">http://www.kb.se/english/</a>	Yes	13+ Swedish	Yes	No. Catalog search is available in Swedish and English.

millions of people globally. Many government websites at both the local and national levels have a robust English language option. The high level of English-language services in Sweden and Norway both for government and private functions should not be understated.

## Evaluation of Services

In Sweden and Norway, where the vast majority of the population uses the internet, web presence for this study is considered to proxy for actual bricks and mortar institutions and is viewed in many ways as a more essential service, given that the two countries were both early adopters of e-government and e-government services can be more efficient for the public to use.<sup>30</sup> Both Norway and Sweden enable a high degree of e-government for their residents. This study examines the websites of national and regional governments, archives, and libraries to determine the extent to which e-government related services are available in Finnish, a minority language in each country.

An evaluation of Finnish availability at the main national government websites for each country was made for legislative, executive, and judicial branch entities (tables 1 and 2). To compare national services with regional services in traditional Forest Finn settlement areas, municipal websites were then selected representing the administrative regions of Hedmark, Norway, and Varmland, Sweden, and were similarly evaluated for services in Finnish (tables 3 and 4).<sup>31</sup>

When a Finnish language translation option was available on a website, that option was selected and the site was evaluated via clickthroughs to see if the information presented on pages in the majority language was presented similarly in Finnish. For this paper, translation parity between the dominant language (Swedish in Varmland and Sweden; Norwegian in Hedmark and Norway) and Finnish was judged to exist when a website presented an embedded language option which, when selected, offered the same webpage layout, information, links, and other data as offered in the dominant language or in English. Translation parity was deemed to positively exist if a user could access the website, select a Finnish language option, and then navigate through the site in a similar manner as available in English. Translation parity was deemed mixed when some information on a website was available in Finnish but other aspects of the website design or information were included only in the dominant language or English (for example, menu headers and navigational links). Parity was also judged to be mixed if some static information was available in Finnish or if a link was easily identifiable for a translation option but was not fully embedded (i.e., Google Translate).<sup>32</sup> Translation parity was deemed negatively present when no Finnish translation option was available in embedded or linked form on the site.

## National-Level Websites

As table 1 shows, while Finnish translation is available for descriptive areas of all websites assessed in Sweden, only the

Table 2. Comparison of National-Level Government Websites—Norway

Government Entity	Website Accessed	Language Translation Available?	Languages Served?	Finnish Available?	Parity of Finnish Translation with Information in Norwegian
Legislative branch	<a href="https://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/">https://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/</a>	Yes	3 (English plus Norwegian Bokmal and Norwegian Nynorsk)	No	No. E-brochures describing the parliament are available in multiple languages however e-brochure in Finnish are not available.
Executive branch	<a href="https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/id875/">https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/id875/</a>	Yes	2+ Norwegian	No	No. Fully embedded language translation options are Norwegian, Sami, and English.
Judicial branch (highest court)	<a href="https://www.domstol.no/en/Enkelt-domstol/-Norges-Hoyesterett/The-Supreme-Court-of-Norway-/">https://www.domstol.no/en/Enkelt-domstol/-Norges-Hoyesterett/The-Supreme-Court-of-Norway-/</a>	Yes	2+ Norwegian Bokmal and Nynorsk	No	No. Fully embedded language translation options are Norwegian Bokmal, Norwegian Nynorsk, Sami, and English.
National Archives	<a href="https://www.arkivverket.no/eng/The-National-Archives">https://www.arkivverket.no/eng/The-National-Archives</a>	Yes	Norwegian and English	No	No. Notably, information about the Sami Archives linked via the National Archives is available only in Norwegian and English.
National Library	<a href="http://www.nb.no/English">http://www.nb.no/English</a>	Yes	Norwegian and English	No	No. The catalog does have options to return results in four languages: Norwegian Bokmal, Norwegian Nynorsk, Sami, and English.

Table 3. Comparison of Provincial-Level Government Websites in Traditional Finnish-Speaking area of Varmland, Sweden

Government Entity	Website Accessed	Language Translation Available?	Languages Served?	Finnish Available?	Parity of Finnish Translation with Information in Swedish
County Administration Board	<a href="http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/varmland/Sv/Pages/default.aspx">http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/varmland/Sv/Pages/default.aspx</a>	Yes	5+ Swedish	Yes	Yes.
Provincial Archives	<a href="http://www.regionvarmland.se/varmlandsarkiv/">http://www.regionvarmland.se/varmlandsarkiv/</a>	No	Swedish; English summary page available	No	No. Catalog search in Swedish only.
Provincial Library	<a href="http://www.visitvarmland.se/en/do/city-library-28625">http://www.visitvarmland.se/en/do/city-library-28625</a> and <a href="http://karlstad.se/">http://karlstad.se/</a>	Yes	English, Bosnian, Arabic, Persian, Kurdish, Somali and Swedish	No	Mixed. Google translate link available with Finnish as an option on navigational bar.

judicial branch offered embedded translation options in Finnish via a Google translate tool. Notably, search functionality was restricted on all sites to Swedish and English language options. However, Swedish websites for the legislative and executive branches as well as the National Library presented descriptive information in a variety of world languages.

Finnish translation was not available for descriptive areas of any of the websites assessed in Norway. The Norwegian legislative, executive, and judicial websites assessed provided embedded translations in English and Sami in addition to Norwegian. However, the National Library and National Archives, which are presumably tasked with preserving cultural heritage materials regarding all citizens, only offered access in English and Norwegian.

### Regional-Level Websites

Next, an assessment of language translation at the administrative district level was conducted within two regions of central Scandinavia that were heavily populated by Forest Finns. The Norwegian *fylke* of Hedmark (figure 2) and the Swedish province of Varmland (figure 3) lie contiguous to each other within the south central area of the Scandinavian peninsula. Hedmark and Varmland function similarly to the state level of government in the United States. Within the boundaries of these provinces is the cultural area known as Finn's Forest (figure 1).

As tables 3 and 4 show, the regional government, libraries, and archives in Hedmark and Varmland did not serve the Finnish-speaking population better than the national entities. A claim could be made that, as they are provided by institutions

Table 4. Comparison of Provincial-Level Government Websites in Traditional Finnish-Speaking area of Hedmark, Norway

Government Entity	Website Accessed	Language Translation Available?	Languages Served?	Finnish Aavailable?	Parity of Finnish Translation with Information in Norwegian
Municipal Administration	<a href="https://www.fylkesmannen.no/en/Hedmark/Municipal-administration/">https://www.fylkesmannen.no/en/Hedmark/Municipal-administration/</a> and 2) <a href="https://www.hedmark.org/Om-fylkeskommunen/Nyttig/English">https://www.hedmark.org/Om-fylkeskommunen/Nyttig/English</a>	Yes, Yes	3+ Norwegian Bokmal and Norwegian NyNorsk; Norwegian + English	No/No	No; No.
Provincial Archives	<a href="http://www.arkivverket.no/eng/The-National-Archives/Hamar">http://www.arkivverket.no/eng/The-National-Archives/Hamar</a>	Yes	English + Norwegian	No	No. The regional archive is part of the National Archive website
Provincial Library	<a href="https://www.hamar.kommune.no/category2363.html">https://www.hamar.kommune.no/category2363.html</a>	Yes, via Google translate tool link	Google translate language options + Norwegian	Via Google translate tool only	Mixed. Google translate tool available.

located in traditional Finnish linguistic areas where there may be a reasonable expectation of translation availability, these websites were less helpful to Finnish speakers than the national services. Hedmark and Varmland provinces constitute much of the Finnskogen area, yet only the county administration board in Varmland and the provincial libraries in Varmland and Hedmark offered any form of Finnish translation service (the latter two via a Google Translate link). In Hedmark, neither the provincial authority nor the archives had Finnish translation options. This discovery was unexpected as these regional entities are presumed the most likely to have materials of interest and relevance to both their local population—which likely includes descendants of Finnish speakers—as well as a global audience that could include Finnish speakers and descendants who reside outside of the country. These local institutions are also the entities most likely to advocate for preservation of locally relevant Finnish language cultural heritage materials and documents.

## Analysis

There are many factors that affect the representation of minority cultures in traditional archival settings, including the fact that minorities do not always choose to participate in producing the type of historical records of interest to genealogists and other researchers. In the United States, the Dawes Commission census rolls of Native Americans are incomplete because many individuals feared that being counted by the government would lead to persecution.<sup>33</sup> A history of persecution and stigmatization has also dampened participation by members of the Romani national minority with an educational initiative aimed at better educating Norwegians about Romani culture.<sup>34</sup>

There are many reasons why cultural heritage materials for national minorities may not be available. Given a history

of linguistic and ethnic persecution, these individuals experience less opportunity to own or farm land. This in turn results in fewer government and institutional records available (i.e., absence of land or tax records).<sup>35</sup> Poverty can also dampen an individual's ability to access services that incur a cost, for example registering a marriage or birth.<sup>36</sup> Finally, there is the dilemma that at even a most basic level, social attitudes among the majority population can discourage preservation of materials related to minorities, which leads to an absence of information for future generations. Genocidal practices such as those pursued against Jewish and Romani populations during World War II have led to current efforts to document victims' names for posterity.<sup>37</sup> But descendants of national minority groups who suffered less severe forms of state discrimination and persecution, or were "successfully" assimilated via government policy into a majority population, may find less information available. In the case of the Forest Finns, a surreptitious census was conducted of the population in the 1800s and there were clear efforts to preserve the culture and language of the group.<sup>38</sup> The Finnish researcher Carl Axel Gottlund recorded names of Forest Finns in an early 1820s work which has been used to reconstruct family surnames (Sweden and Norway used patronymic naming traditions while the Forest Finns used fixed surnames, which were not recorded in government censuses). The presence of the Gottlund census suggests that other Finnish language and Forest Finn cultural materials may be available.

If fewer resources relating to minority cultural heritage have been collected and preserved, there is an argument that local library and archival institutions have a responsibility to actively discover and make such information available, especially information that extends beyond what may serve

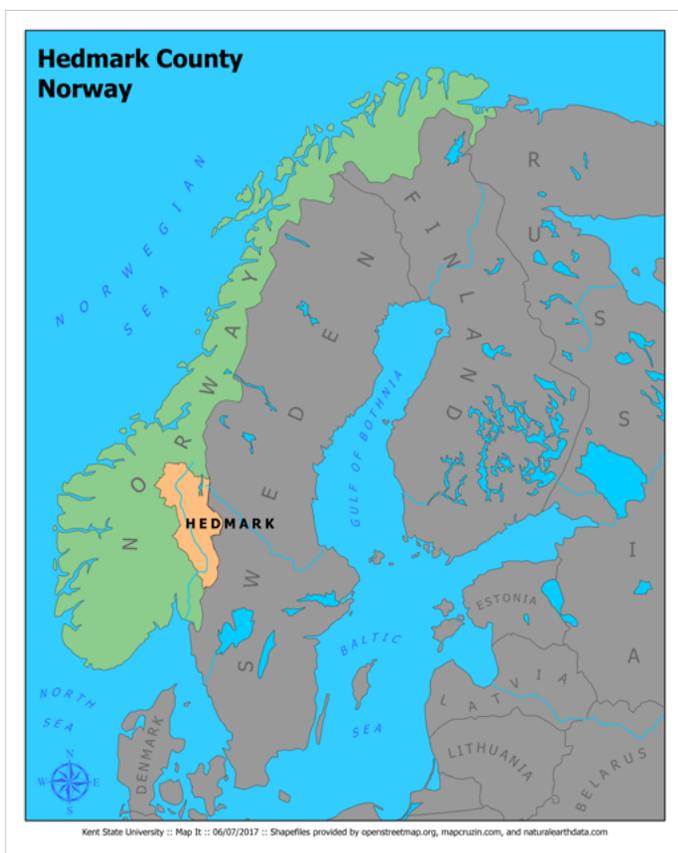


Figure 2. Hedmark County, Norway

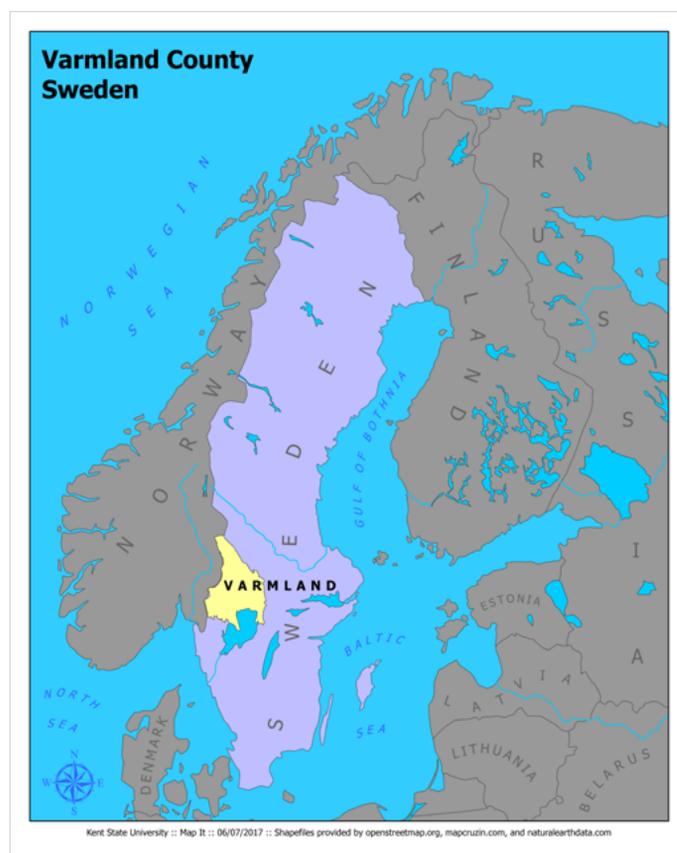


Figure 3. Varmland County, Sweden

the state's interests (i.e., tourism services) or that was written in the minority language and provides the direct voice of members of the minority group. In an age of e-government, when information is increasingly accessible only via electronic means, governments that legally require their citizens to use electronic means to access services have an obligation to prevent the loss of digital access to newly-created cultural heritage materials and to digitize older materials. One of the measures of how invested a government is in making information available to linguistic minorities can arguably be whether that government provides the same information in the minority language as it does in the dominant language for its primary communications vehicles. As Segovia, Jennex, and Beatty discovered, full parity in website translation can increase the trust that members of a bilingual population feel toward their government, a sentiment that would seem of even greater importance when there has been a history of linguistic persecution. Similarly, one can get a sense of how invested a community is in providing access to government services for linguistic minorities by whether information is available at libraries and archives in the minority language.

As table 1 shows, the website for Sweden's National Archives presents descriptive information in three languages.

While Finnish translation was available for main page navigational areas, material in the digital collections in the National Archives Database is searchable only in Swedish and English. At Sweden's National Library, catalog search is only available in Swedish and English. At the regional level in Varmland province, the county level administrative website offered full parity for Finnish with Swedish. However, the regional archives offered catalog search only in Swedish; the regional library offered a mixed level of parity due to a Google translate link option.

Finnish translation was not available for descriptive areas of any of the Norwegian websites assessed for this project. The Norwegian National Library and National Archives, which are presumably tasked with preserving cultural heritage materials regarding all citizens, only offered access in English, Sami, and Norwegian. At the regional administrative level in Hedmark, no parity for Finnish was found. Similarly, no parity was found at the regional archival level (the regional archives in Norway are administered via the National Archives and therefore the regional website is linked to the national site, which does not offer Finnish translation). At the regional library level, as for neighboring Varmland, Hedmark achieved only a mixed rating due to the presence of a Google Translate tool.

## Conclusion

While Sweden and Norway are both signatories to Council of Europe and UN recommendations on national minority languages, in practice their level of commitment to providing digital information in those languages at a national level seems minimal at best. At the regional level, where the bulk of materials and users are presumably concentrated, this commitment is also lacking. For two countries that are noted leaders in e-governance initiatives, these results suggest that there is further work to be done to ensure adequate access of government services and information to national language minorities. Such efforts are even more pressing considering that in 2015 it was revealed that more research has been conducted on recent immigrants to Norway than on national minorities.<sup>39</sup>

The lack of Finnish-language translation at libraries and archives at both the national and regional level should be of concern. As information is increasingly born digital, there is the possibility that governments create a monopoly on available information regarding national minorities. As James A. Jacobs wrote in a study of born digital information in the United States, “when the underlying information resource is not available for preservation outside the government, preservation of the resource is also left to the whims of government and to the subjective determination of government alone of what is worth preserving.”<sup>40</sup> In addition, libraries have a special duty of care because “it is a strength of libraries to be able to select information for their designated user communities and build collections that fit the needs of these communities. If libraries rely only on issuing agencies to preserve their own information, they will be relinquishing to those agencies the decision as to what is worth preserving.”<sup>41</sup> In particular, the lack of Finnish language translation options at the Norwegian national library suggests that there is an expectation that Finnish speakers are not using the library, which raises concerns about the extent, representativeness, and comprehensiveness of Finnish language material in the collection itself.

The Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities is intended to allow for linguistic freedom, promote conditions regarding preservation of culture, religion, language and traditions, and prohibit forced assimilation.<sup>42</sup> As countries that have been paving the way in e-government, Sweden and Norway serve as examples for other governments around the world. If the availability of minority language translation services in national and regional government, library, and archival websites in these two countries is an accurate indicator of the availability of minority language materials and inclusive e-government outreach to members of national language minorities, it would

seem both have more work to do and there is cause for concern elsewhere in the world.

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# Public Lessons from Private Laws

Gwen Sinclair

A casual glance at a volume of *Statutes at Large* reveals that the laws are presented in two sections: public laws and private laws. While most documents librarians are familiar with public laws, so named because they have general applicability, private laws may be less familiar. A private bill, according to Hinds' *Precedents*, is "a bill for the relief of one or several specified persons, corporations, institutions, etc., and is distinguished from a public bill, which relates to public matters and deals with individuals only by classes."<sup>1</sup>

The main reason for the low profile of private laws is that they do not have general applicability; they only apply to a particular individual or defined group, although some private laws have been precedent-setting. However, they are useful for a variety of research topics. This article will explore the most important types of private legislation, discuss the various Congressional committees that have considered private bills, review the legislative process, and provide some examples of private bills to illustrate examples problems that required private legislation in order to be resolved. The information value of reports on private laws and House and Senate records related to private laws will also be explored.

## Categories of Private Legislation

We've all heard the saying, "It takes an act of Congress to . . ." accomplish some seemingly simple task. The thousands of private laws considered and passed by Congress are evidence that yes, in many cases, it does require an act of Congress to right wrongs, settle claims, convey title to property, resolve immigration problems, and bring about a wide variety of other actions.

## Pensions, Military Honors, Promotions

Numerous private laws have been passed to grant pensions to former government employees, members of the armed services, and their survivors. A remarkable example is that of a pension awarded to Mary Lord Harrison, widow of President Benjamin Harrison. While pensions had been granted to many presidents' widows, Mrs. Harrison's case was controversial because

she became the former president's wife after his term of office had ended and five years before his death in 1901. Nevertheless, the bill was passed over the objection of Senator Walsh, who argued that the \$5,000 annual pension was excessively generous.<sup>2</sup>

Congress has passed private laws to grant military promotions, decorations, and pensions throughout its history. After the Civil War, many private laws were passed to correct military service records, award pensions to surviving spouses, and even to restore political rights to former rebels.<sup>3</sup> An unusual case was that of George A. Armes, who was the subject of several private laws introduced to rectify his Army service record. Armes, a second lieutenant, was court-martialed in 1870 based in large part on what was later determined to be unreliable testimony. A private law was introduced that year to grant him an honorable discharge. Under another piece of private legislation, in 1878 he was retrospectively granted the rank of Captain. He was forced to retire at the rank of Major in 1883. Further legislation was introduced in 1901 to retrospectively grant him the rank of Brigadier General under the argument that if he had not been forced to retire in 1883, he would have continued up the ranks. This bill was not successful, and a later bill introduced in 1914 (also unsuccessful) only would have granted him the rank of Colonel.<sup>4</sup>

It may be surprising to some that Congress has the power to award military honors, since that responsibility would appear to lie within the sole jurisdiction of the executive branch under the president, who is commander in chief of the armed services. Nonetheless, many private laws have been passed to award military honors. In the cases of Merchant Mariners James Thomas Lantz, Jr., David D. Bulkley, and Arthur J. Abshire, Congress passed a law in 1978 awarding them various decorations and awards for their service during World War II.<sup>5</sup> Evidently, the men had not applied for the medals within the statutory limitations. Congress has also passed laws enabling Americans to receive foreign military honors. This was necessary because acceptance of an honor from a foreign government would

normally be prohibited under the Emoluments Clause of the US Constitution.<sup>6</sup>

## Land Titles and Access

Private legislation has been used to transfer title from the federal government to private owners, quiet title in cases where the federal government has an ownership interest, or grant access to privately owned parcels through federal land.

An interesting example of a claim made long after the fact involved President George Washington's estate. Washington had purchased parcels of land in Ohio in 1779 under a law that enabled Revolutionary War veterans to obtain military warrants. Washington believed that the warrants had been properly registered with the State of Virginia. However, the warrant and surveys should have been registered with the War Department. Joseph Kerr, a deputy surveyor with the Virginia military district of Ohio, took advantage of this oversight and fraudulently obtained warrants for Washington's parcels. Washington's heirs failed to take advantage of opportunities to remedy the fraud and settle the matter during the nineteenth century. Several private bills were introduced between 1908 and 1919 to authorize payment to the Washington estate's claim for the value of the land. Evidently, none of the bills passed.<sup>7</sup>

Private bills to quiet title have sometimes been needed to resolve cases where documentation is lacking. In one instance, private bills were introduced to quiet title on parcels in the District of Columbia as the result of an investigation into property that was on a federal property inventory but not actually in the possession of the United States. In 1924, Senate Bill 3053 was introduced to quiet title for a parcel, now the site of an office building at 1919 M Street NW, that had been conveyed by the United States to George H. Walters in 1867. However, no deed from the United States to Walters was found, so a law to settle the title was the necessary remedy.<sup>8</sup>

An unusual situation involving government property concerned a faulty US government survey. Private Law 516 of the 75th Congress (52 Stat 1311) enabled the US government to sell a 1,700-acre parcel of land to the Nicolson Seed Company of Utah, since the existing law that would enable such a sale applied only to parcels of 160 acres or less. The private legislation was needed because the alfalfa farmers who had originally purchased the parcel from the State of Utah learned through a resurvey that a dry lakebed that they had improved was in the public domain and was no longer theirs.<sup>9</sup>

In other cases, private legislation conveyed US government property to states or territories, although this has also been accomplished at times through public legislation. Private laws were also used to permit the transfer of land to residents

of Indian reservations.<sup>10</sup> Laws were also passed to provide for ingress and egress through federal property to reach private property, as in the case of Roscoe L. Wood, who was granted an easement through federal property in Cabin John Park (now Cabin John Regional Park), Maryland in 1947.<sup>11</sup>

## Relief of Liability of Government Employees

Private legislation has sometimes been needed to abrogate the liability of government employees for the misdeeds of other employees or to absolve them of responsibility for thefts. In particular, postmasters were held responsible for the theft of funds by postal employees. In one instance, Honolulu Postmaster D. H. MacAdam was held liable for funds embezzled by employee William C. Peterson. The Postmaster General felt that MacAdam was liable because of his lack of oversight over Peterson. However, the House report on the bill identified an extenuating circumstance that would justify reimbursing MacAdam for the embezzled funds charged against him. The circumstance? Employees in the post office were "Chinese, Japanese, Hawaiians, and Portuguese, many of whom understood and spoke the English language to a very limited extent." It was argued that Peterson took advantage of the employees' lack of facility with English to embezzle funds from money orders and other remittances. Thus, MacAdam was relieved of responsibility for the theft.<sup>12</sup>

Loss of funds due to robbery was also chargeable to the postmaster, resulting in private laws such as one to relieve Martin A. King, postmaster in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, whose post office was robbed of \$410.53 in 1934. The private law releasing him from liability for this loss was passed in 1948.<sup>13</sup>

## Claims against the US Government for Damages

Another important category of private legislation has been bills introduced to authorize the settlement of claims against the government. Claims may be made for pension benefits, damage caused by members of the armed services, or to right other wrongs caused by employees or agents of the US government. Claims committees were established early on in both the House of Representatives and Senate to review claims and to make recommendations on private legislation on claims. Records of the various claims committees in the House are quite voluminous. Table 1 lists the main House committees that have existed to consider claims.<sup>14</sup>

In contrast to the House's ten claims committees, only a few Senate committees exclusively heard claims because many claims were referred to a variety of other committees such as

Table 1. Claims Committees in the House of Representatives

Name of Committee	Dates of Operation	Types of Claims Heard
Committee on Claims	1794–1946	All types
Committee on Pensions and Revolutionary War Claims	1813–25	Claims relating to the Revolutionary War
Committee on Military Pensions	1825–11	Pensions for military service; invalid pensions
Committee on Invalid Pensions	1831–1946	Pensions for disabled veterans
Committee on Revolutionary Pensions	1831–80	Military pensions relating to the Revolutionary War
Committee on Pensions	1880–1946	Pensions of all wars other than the Civil War
Committee on Revolutionary Claims	1825–73	Claims originating in the Revolutionary War
Committee on War Claims	1873–1946	Claims arising from any war, mostly Indian war and Civil War claims
Committee on Private Land Claims	1816–1911	Private land claims
Committee on the Judiciary	1813–1968	Claims not falling under the specialized claims committees

the Committee on the Judiciary or the Committee on Military Affairs based on subject matter. Table 2 lists the Senate committees that exclusively considered claims.<sup>15</sup>

The Court of Claims was created in 1855. Prior to its establishment, claimants had to apply to the Treasury Department for relief and, if a claim was not settled, the claimants could petition Congress for relief.<sup>16</sup> Following the Civil War, hundreds of private laws on claims were passed. While most laws benefited a single individual, some, like 23 Stat 552, An Act for the Allowance of Certain Claims Reported by the Accounting Officers of the United States Treasury Department, and for Other Purposes, awarded claims to hundreds of persons.

The Bowman Act of 1883 (22 Stat 485) and the Tucker Act of 1887 (24 Stat 505) were attempts to increase the powers of the Court of Claims and thereby divert to it some of the volume of claims, but these measures were only partly successful. The Court of Claims rendered decisions on the claims referred to it and reported them back to the Committee on Claims. These reports can be found in the US Congressional Serial Set.<sup>17</sup> They are of interest to researchers because they describe in detail the losses claimed by individuals as well as the Court of Claims' rationale for upholding or denying each claim.

Frequently, decades elapsed between the incident for which a claim was made and the time a report was issued by the Court of Claims. For example, a report on the claims of the heirs and assigns of the owners and insurers of the ship *Pattern*, which had been seized by the French privateer *Trompeuse* in 1796, was referred to the Committee on Claims on December 10, 1915.<sup>18</sup> Later, the Committee on Claims passed general legislation permitting the Court of Claims to dispose of all of the French spoliation claims (claims by Americans against the French government for illegal seizures of property).<sup>19</sup>

Many, many private laws have been passed to authorize payment to individuals and businesses for losses sustained as

a result of the actions of government employees. A few private laws were passed to enable the owners of vessels damaged in collisions with US government-owned vessels to sue for damages in the US District Court acting as an admiralty court. Thus, Private Law 161 of 1925, passed in the 68th Congress, second session, authorized the owners of the *Ceylon Maru*, a Japanese vessel damaged in a collision near France with the American steamship *Jeannette Skinner*, which was being operated by the War Department, to bring suit against the United States.<sup>20</sup> Without such legislation, the District Court did not have jurisdiction to hear an admiralty case.

Humans were not the only subject of claims. *Trixie*, a Tennessee walking horse owned by J. Rutledge Alford of Tallahassee, Florida, died from drinking water contaminated by seepage from a laundry at a nearby federal prison. Congress approved the payment of \$450 in settlement of Alford's claim.<sup>21</sup>

## Other Claims

Private legislation is sometimes the only mechanism available to remedy a clear injustice. The First Baptist Church of Paducah, Kentucky found a sympathetic ear in Congress in its quest for justice. The Senate Committee on the Judiciary recommended in 1978 that the church be paid \$207,740 in settlement of claims against the US for its failure to follow through on a planned condemnation of church property, first announced in 1964. The amount was reduced by the House to \$171,990, still far more than the General Services Administration's offer of \$47,725.<sup>22</sup>

Less commonly, private legislation was required to reimburse individuals for fines or fees for which they were deemed not liable, as the case of Elwood L. Keeler illustrates. He was convicted in 1941 of attempting to sell industrial diamonds to Japan in violation of the law, sentenced to prison, and fined \$5,000. In June 1945, President Truman pardoned him, but

Table 2. Claims Committees in the Senate

Name of Committee	Dates of Operation	Types of Claims Heard
Committee on Claims	1816–1946	All types
Committee on Private Land Claims	1826–1921	Private land claims
Committee on Revolutionary Claims	1832–1921	Pensions and other Revolutionary War–related claims

because he had not appealed his sentence, he was not entitled to a refund of the fine, thus necessitating private legislation to enable his reimbursement.<sup>23</sup>

## Immigration Cases

If you've seen the film *American Hustle*, you've encountered one type of private legislation related to immigration. In the film, which was loosely based on true events in the Abscam scandal, members of Congress accept bribes offered by FBI operatives in exchange for sponsoring private legislation to enable individuals from the Middle East to become US citizens. Although no private laws were actually introduced into Congress by the corrupt officials nabbed in the Abscam sting operation, thousands of private bills have been introduced to resolve a variety of immigration-related cases.<sup>24</sup> Private bills on immigration can be divided into four categories: bills to permit the entry of adopted alien children, bills to permit entry by statutorily excluded aliens such as people with criminal histories or mental or physical disabilities, bills to relax citizenship requirements, and bills to grant permanent residence to aliens.<sup>25</sup>

Following World War II, thousands of private laws were introduced in Congress to deal with myriad immigration problems. A common scenario involved soldiers or sailors who became engaged to or married women abroad who were not eligible to immigrate to the United States because of racial exclusion laws, in the case of Japanese and Korean women, or because national origin quotas had been filled. In such cases, private laws were introduced to enable these individuals to be admitted to the US. Many of these bills were never acted upon, but in thousands of cases, private legislation enabled the wives and children of service members to immigrate.

Another class of individual requiring private relief included members of the armed services who were not US citizens, some of whom were not in the US legally. A number of private laws were passed to grant citizenship to such individuals (e.g., An act to provide for the naturalization of certain United States Army personnel—Yugoslav fliers, 61 Stat 1004).

Private legislation has been used to allow the adopted children of US citizens to enter the US, as in the case of *Natividad Casing* and *Myrna Casing*, two Filipino women who, along with their younger siblings, were adopted by Winston A. and Pacita Ashford. The legislation classified the women as children

under the Immigration and Nationality Act (i.e., treated them as if they were under the age of fourteen) so that they could be admitted.<sup>26</sup>

Immigrants who had not entered the United States legally were sometimes granted legal status through private legislation. Frequently, individuals who had overstayed student or tourist visas or who had sneaked in were beneficiaries of private legislation. An unusual case was that of teenager Joseph Ochrimowski, who entered New York from Poland as a stowaway in 1946. He had escaped from a German slave labor camp near Essen and had been adopted as a sort of mascot by the 84th Infantry Division of the 334th Infantry, which had transported him to the United States in hopes that he would be granted admission. A private law, passed over the objection of the Attorney General, stipulated that he should be treated as if he had been lawfully admitted even though it was not possible to admit him administratively due to the overwhelming demand for slots within the Polish immigration quota.<sup>27</sup>

Private laws also benefited individuals who were not eligible for admission to the United States. Reasons for ineligibility included having voted in a foreign election or having been convicted of a crime. In several cases, women who had lost their citizenship by marrying an alien who was ineligible for US citizenship and who lived abroad petitioned members of Congress to sponsor private legislation to enable them to return to the United States.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, private legislation has been introduced to allow immigration by individuals with sought-after skills. One of the more eyebrow-raising examples was the case of Basque sheepherders who were permitted to enter the United States under eighty separate private laws introduced between 1949 and 1957.<sup>29</sup>

## Procedures

Procedures and rules for handling private legislation have changed many times over the years. Currently, when members of Congress are contacted by constituents or advocacy groups about situations that could potentially be remedied through a private bill, the member takes steps to see if there are administrative remedies that could resolve the matter. If a private bill is determined to be the only possible remedy, the matter is referred to the relevant subcommittee such as the Subcommittee on

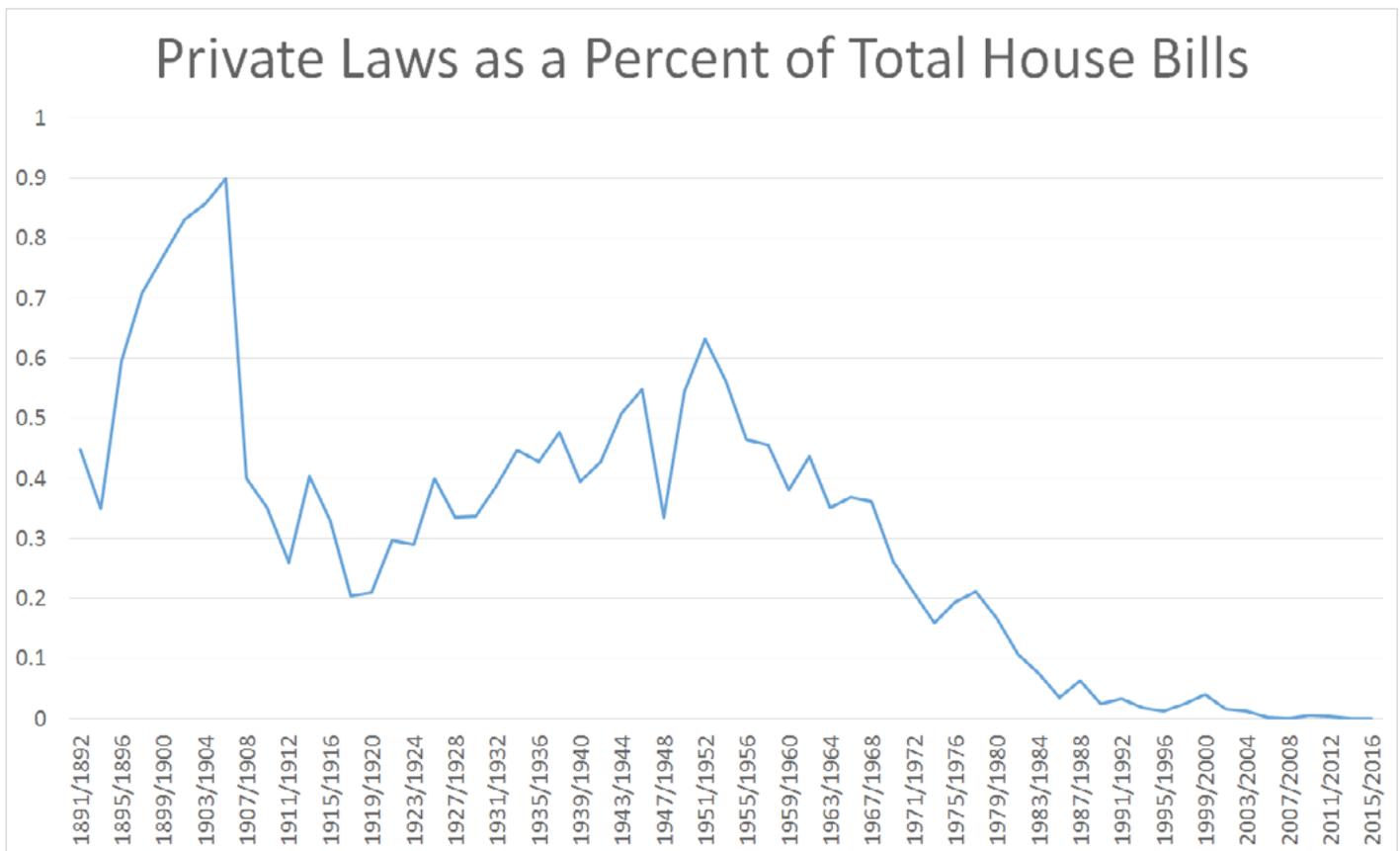


Figure 1. Private Laws as a Percent of Total House Bills. Compiled from “Comparative Statement, Work of the Fifty-Second to the One Hundred Fourteenth Congress, Inclusive, House of Representatives,” in *Calendars of the United States House of Representatives and History of Legislation*, 114th Cong., 1st sess., 2016, 19–52, [bit.ly/2s2PLjy](http://bit.ly/2s2PLjy).

Immigration for further review. Legislation may be drafted by the member’s office or by the Office of Legislative Counsel in the House or Senate. The member typically provides a letter outlining the facts of the matter to the relevant subcommittee.<sup>30</sup>

The majority of private bills are introduced in the House. In contrast to public bills, a companion bill is not usually introduced in the other chamber. Most bills are referred to the Committee on the Judiciary of either the House or the Senate. In the House, most private bills are considered on the Private Calendar, while in the Senate, private bills are handled like any other piece of legislation.<sup>31</sup>

If a bill has not been excluded after being reviewed by a subcommittee, reports from relevant executive branch agencies may be requested, usually by the chair of the House or Senate Judiciary Committee. The subcommittee reviews the information provided by the executive branch agency, then if it decides to take favorable action on the bill, it is submitted to the full Judiciary Committee. If the full committee votes favorably on the bill, it issues a report and is scheduled for consideration by the full chamber. It is uncommon for a private bill to be amended once it has been reported out by the Judiciary Committee.<sup>32</sup>

Private bills, once passed by Congress, appeared to have enjoyed great success when submitted to the president, for there are few recorded vetoes of private legislation. Presidential vetoes of private legislation have only rarely been subject to override measures.<sup>33</sup>

## Publications and Records Related to Private Legislation

Bill files in the records of the House and Senate at the National Archives contain original petitions and memorials with supporting documents. They are of interest not only to genealogical researchers but also to researchers interested in a particular type of claim, such as claims denied by the Southern Claims Commission, which heard the claims of Southerners who remained loyal to the North during the Civil War.<sup>34</sup>

House and Senate reports on private bills may include the full text of the bill or excerpts from legislation, letters from the federal agencies involved, letters of support for the claimant, and even transcripts of field hearings and testimony. Congressional papers of representatives and senators contain case files related to private laws they introduced.

## Recent Developments

Congress has drastically reduced the volume of private legislation by leaving it up to the Executive Branch to resolve most immigration matters, claims, and property transfers. Figure 1 (Private laws as a percent of total House bills) shows the decline in House bills on private legislation as a percent of all laws passed from peak periods around the turn of the twentieth century and following World War II. Most private laws originate in the House, so viewing House bills on private legislation as a percent of the total legislation considered in the House gives a good picture of how their prevalence has fluctuated.

In the past few Congresses, only a handful of private bills have been introduced, mostly for immigration cases, but they almost never become law.<sup>35</sup> One persistent case is that of Ibrahim Parlak, a Kurdish native of Turkey who was granted asylum and entered the United States in 1991 but was later subject to deportation proceedings. Michigan Rep. Fred Upton has introduced private legislation in Congress each year since 2005 to grant Parlak permanent residency, but as of this writing the legislation has not advanced.<sup>36</sup>

Notwithstanding Ibrahim Parlak, private legislation is mostly a thing of the past, primarily of interest to genealogy researchers and historians. Congress has passed rules to greatly restrict the use of private legislation, and most of the situations that could formerly be remedied by Congress are now under the exclusive jurisdiction of the executive branch.<sup>37</sup>

## Conclusion

This discussion will conclude with a word about the information value of reports and documents related to private legislation. While some patrons may request documents related to a particular private law that concerns their own family history, reports on private legislation also reflect various social movements, historical events, and legal trends. For example, knowing that Congress considered many private bills making claims for injuries due to accidents caused by Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) vehicles in the 1930s might suggest to a researcher that a number of the CCC drivers may have been inexperienced or unskilled, or the roads they used were dangerous. At times, there has been a clear causal relationship between the volume of private laws introduced and changes in statutory law. As noted above, private legislation on claims resulted in several acts that changed how claims were handled. Maguire has documented many instances where Congress has amended public laws related to immigration because the abundance of private laws have exposed flaws in existing statutes.<sup>38</sup>

The subject matter of private legislation is also a reflection of historical events and trends. Following the Civil War, thousands of claims for damage caused by troops were made and later became the subject of private legislation. In addition, private laws awarded thousands of pensions to Civil War veterans and their survivors well into the twentieth century. In the early twentieth century, immigration bills increased in response to restrictive immigration laws, and after World War II, claims and immigration cases formed the bulk of private bills. This brief article cannot begin to detail the astonishing range of cases brought before Congress for private relief. To truly get a sense of the human dramas behind private legislation requires a plunge into the *Statutes at Large* and *U.S. Congressional Serial Set*. Careful, though—you may never want to come out!

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# GODORT Steering Committee

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Monday, June 26, 2017 1:00–2:30 pm, Palmer House, Clark 05

Committee Chair: Sarah Erikson; Secretary: Laura Sare

## Welcome, Introductions

Sarah Erikson welcomed everyone and asked for amendments to the agenda.

## Adoption of the Agenda

Susanne Caro asked for an action item to be under the Task Forces section of the agenda for the Federal Documents Task Force. Andrea Severson moved to approve the agenda and David Utz seconded.

Approval of Minutes from 2017 Mid-winter Conference Steering I and II, Steering Committee Conference calls and Steering reflector (posted to the wiki). Laura Sare moved to approve the minutes, Andrea seconded and the minutes were approved.

## Announcements

Deadline for submission of meeting summaries for *DttP* 7/7/2017.

Deadline for submission of thank you letters (for event sponsors and committee/task force speakers) 7/21/2017.

**Treasurer's Report**—There is no update from the report since the Membership meeting. The question about the Freedom to Read Foundation will be taken care of after ALA.

**GODORT Councilor report**—Bill Sudduth said that today council Keith Michael Fields last day as executive director. Council passed the resolution on libraries as responsible spaces. The Committee on Organization changed the Website Advisory Committee to

the Information Advisory Committee to broaden focus beyond website. The Policy Committee found an error in the policy. In 2000 wording was approved to ensure the executive director should have a Library Master's degree and this was never put in the policy. It was voted for but it was finally added to the policy manual. Bill was going to provide hand-outs for federal library advocacy—he will have them scanned and put online. For those going to the Hillary session, Bill gave an update on how to get to the room and go through security.

Jill suggested Counsel be told that when big people show up like Clinton members need to know when they are making their travel arrangements. Many people are missing Clinton because they can't change reservations. She also asked if meetings are recorded and where to find them. Steve explained that GODORT programs were recorded. Probably need to contact the sponsor of the program to ask if they can forward recordings on to you.

## Task Forces/Committees (Chairs)

Andrea Morrison reported for Cataloging—Cataloging standards are changing and they want linked data categories like sponsoring or contracting bodies to be part of the standard. Also, there are no identifiers for Government Accession numbers. They need to get these in by April and to please send any concerns to them quickly so it can go through the bureaucracy.

Susanne Caro for Federal Documents Task Force (FDTF) moved to change the status of FDTF from a task force to an interest group, now Federal Information Interest Group (FIIG). This was approved by membership in yesterday's meeting. David seconded. FDTF Membership voted to send it to Steering.

**Discussion**—Shari wants to finish the reorganization and include how task forces are run. She hoped FDTF would wait to move forward until the State and International Task Forces had their needs met regarding moving to interest group status so they could all do it together, specifically the PPM implications of this change so that we can streamline everything for all the groups. Jill Long felt that all three groups do not have to be organized the same. Andrea also thought that once size does not fit all. David said we will have both Task Force and Interest group categories so the groups do not need to be all one or the other. Hallie liked Andrea's assessment that FIIG is a good pilot project and thought having an Interest Group would help with conference restructuring issue. Both Task Forces and (standing) Committees are dissolved by the GODORT Steering Committee, at the request of the membership of any particular group. In the case of both a Task Force, or a Committee, the members of the group vote to request Steering to dissolve them. The difference is that, while Committee members can vote to make this request, the entire membership of GODORT needs to vote for this action by Steering in the case of a Task Force,

because all GODORT members constitute the membership of a particular Task Force.

Sarah called for a vote that had 2 no's 2 abstentions, the motion carried.

Vicki said that FIIG needs to come up with a new purpose for the next steering meeting.

International Documents Task Force had a virtual meeting before Annual. Kris Kasinovitz requested a thank you letter for those speakers.

**Legislation**—Hallie Pritchett reminded everyone about the motion to co-endorse with MAGIRT the USGS Libraries to the Washington office. The Legislative survey will go out on the wiki in the next week or so.

Andrea asked for someone to announce when *DttP* is published online. Robbie (Publications) said they are working on a solution for this.

**Development**—Andrea stated that in the next month or two she will provide a motion to send out a letter of solicitation of funds because email they tried was not successful.

### Old Business

Membership voted to create a bylaws coordinator. Andrea moved to abolish

the bylaws committee and David seconded, the motion carried.

**Virtual meetings**—Steering's goal was to implement virtual meetings with Adobe Connect. Sarah said it has been successful and available to all groups. Samantha Hagar is the coordinator and can help you.

Stephen Woods can be a backup but thinks that it needs to be more formal so Samantha can mentor someone to be backup and asked the Chair to send a message to get a volunteer backup. Rachel Dobkin was looking at cost assessment with Zoom and Stephen was going to work with Samantha to give a report to Steering about cost.

Rachel Dobkins wanted a discussion about how we archive and share information from virtual meetings. Sarah said that ALA Connect is making some changes and was going to ask for ALA to host a meeting to train us on the ALA Connect software (not GODORT's Adobe software). Stephen said that the Archivist needs to put our materials in ALA's repository.

### New Business

Sarah talked about the Conference remodel—The goal was to make ALA annual more manageable and reduce campus size and put programs into subject tracts and increase sustainability.

Programs and discussion groups will be in the convention center. The biggest change is that there are going to be juried programs for those who want to do extra programming beyond the two we do get. Submissions have been opened and end in August for 2018 Annual. Sarah posted this to ALA Connect. We will need to make a decision about discussion groups soon if they want to have programs. Hallie said that virtual meetings have been successful and we can go that route as well. Simon asked if we could promote a "government information" stream in the new track system.

Shari had to take over Nominations and thanked David's help and all the other people who helped or volunteered to fill positions. Shari sent out a list. Shari moved to have a friendly amendment, her list was to have correct returning to voting on the appointments and that the list will be updated to correct a few problems. The motion carried to accept new memberships and appointments.

Hallie thanked Sarah for her leadership this year and thanks to Stephen Woods for his work too, and extended congratulations to Shari as new Chair.

Shari moved to adjourn, Vicki seconded.

# GODORT Steering Reflector Minutes

## January–June 2017

The Membership Committee started the process of investigating the use of Zoom videoconference software.

The Bylaws Committee created an amendment to the bylaws to create a Bylaws Organization Coordinator—we are replacing the bylaws committee with the Bylaws Coordinator—an elected position with membership on Steering and Exec. It can be read here: [http://wikis.ala.org/godort/images/f/f5/GODORT\\_Bylaws\\_Addendum\\_Bylaws\\_and\\_Organization\\_Coordinator-%283%29.pdf](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/images/f/f5/GODORT_Bylaws_Addendum_Bylaws_and_Organization_Coordinator-%283%29.pdf).

Government Information Online (GIO)—The Government Information Online (GIO) service began in 2008 as a partnership between the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), which coordinated the service, and the Government Publishing Office. It provides a virtual reference service for questions that originate on the GIO home page (<http://govtinfo.org/>) or that are forwarded from

the AskGPO (<https://www.gpo.gov/askgpo/>) customer management system by GPO. Project coordinator John Shuler of UIC passed away in 2016, and UIC requested that another library assume responsibility for GIO. As a result, the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) is now coordinating the service. UIC had been operating under a Memorandum of Agreement whereby GPO reimbursed UIC for the subscription cost of the QuestionPoint software used to manage and respond to questions on GIO. However, due to a recent change in GPO's acquisitions practices, GPO is no longer able to provide reimbursement for the software. UHM had intended to migrate the service from QuestionPoint to Springshare's LibAnswers.

However, UHM is unable to assume responsibility for the subscription cost for LibAnswers. Therefore, unless another library or group of libraries agrees to cover the cost of the platform, GIO will sunset on June 30,

2017. Questions received by GPO that were formerly forwarded to GIO will be referred elsewhere. GODORT Steering is investigating if this service is something GODORT can facilitate. Tom Adamich and Susan Paterson volunteered to work with UHM to develop a proposal. In the meantime, UNT has stepped into to pick up the service and move it to a Springshare platform so the service will not lapse until Steering can make a decision.

Valerie Glenn of the Publications Committee made a motion for Steering to approve the agreement to house GODORT's *Documents to the People (DttP)* issues from 1972–2002 be housed in the Stanford repository. This is to provide an official agreement. (Note that 2003 to the present content is currently housed in ALA's OJS instance—<https://journals.ala.org/index.php/dttp>). This vote passed Steering.

# Membership Meeting

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The Membership Committee hosted GODORT 101 on Friday June 23. A standing-room-only crowd of forty was thrilled to learn about GODORT's mission and work from Committee Chairs Sarah Erekson, Vicki Tate, Robbie Sittel, Laura Sare, Karen Hogenboom, Hallie Prichett, Lucia Orlando, Siu Yu Min, Suzanne Caro, Andrea Sventon

and Tom Adamich (by phone, thanks to Samantha Hagar), The fun continued at GODORT's Happy hour, at Miller's Pub, sponsored by Hein Online. Kudos to the Membership Committee: Julia, Frankosky, Rebecca Hyde, Renee Bosman, Stephen Woods, Jessica Torrance, and Rachel Dobkin.

**Rachel Dobkin** (govinfosig@gmail.com; gov-info.tumblr.com @gov\_infoSIG), LIS-GISIG Gov Info/Dothe cs Student Interest Group.

# DttP Meeting Summaries

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The GODORT Awards Committee congratulates the winners of its 2017 awards ([http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Announcing\\_the\\_2017\\_GODORT\\_Awards\\_Winners](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Announcing_the_2017_GODORT_Awards_Winners)):

- James Bennett Childs Award: Judith Russell
- ProQuest/GODORT/ALA “Documents to the People” Award: Florida State University Libraries Government Documents Depository and Mohamed Berray
- Bernadine Abbott Hoduski Founders Award: Philip (Phil) Yannarella
- Margaret T. Lane/Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award: Sarah Potvin and Laura Sare
- NewsBank/Readex/GODORT/ALA Catharine J. Reynolds Research Grant: Hayley Johnson and Sarah Simms
- W. David Rozkuszka Scholarship: Stephani Rodgers
- Larry Romans Mentorship Award: Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe

This was the inaugural presentation of the Larry Romans Mentorship Award, which is jointly administered with the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT).

The committee was highly impressed by the work with government information being done not only by our winners, but by all who were nominated. The committee encourages GODORT members to recognize colleagues’ outstanding efforts by nominating them for an award. Information on individual awards can be found on the GODORT

wiki at <http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/AboutAwards>.

—Kirsten Clark and Kelly Smith, Co-Chairs

## Cataloging Committee

There were three vendors’ updates, they are GPO, MARACIVE and HathiTrust. Andrea Morrison, the CC:DA liaison gave an update on the recent CC:DA meeting, mostly on Cataloging rules. The committee reported the updated PPM and is now posted on the GODORT wiki. A working group was formed to update the content on the cataloging toolboxes. The committee agreed to extend the meeting time for thirty minutes longer during the mid-winter meeting to allow more time for discussion on committee business. The annual meeting time will continue to be one hour in length.

—Siu Min Yu

## Development Committee 2016–17

The Development Committee met virtually several times over the year. Both in 2016 and 2017 we held the annual auction of properties, courtesy of Readex, and raised \$2000+ each time. In 2017 we also used the ALA Development Office for an email fund solicitation. This was less than successful. A large part of that has to do with the fact that most folks have opted out of email communications from ALA so the list is not robust. The committee will consider a (snail mail) letter campaign in the fall, and also getting ads in *DttP*.

—Andrea Severson

## Education Committee

The GODORT Education Committee met once at ALA Chicago 2017.

The Committee determined that this is the current committee charge and five year goals:

### *Education Committee Charge*

In order to increase the knowledge and awareness that the library community [needs? Requires?] about government information, the Education Committee shall monitor needs and issues of government information users both inside and outside the library profession, create resources and programs to help meet these needs and resolve these issues in coordination with other organizations working on similar goals.

### *Five Year Goals:*

1. Revise the Government Information Competencies before ALA Midwinter 2018 in order to clarify which competencies are appropriate for generalists and in order to include e-government, local government, and competencies that are relevant for public librarians.
2. Once the competencies are revised, raise awareness of them in the library profession over the following two years, including in library schools, by publishing information about them in *DttP*, on ALA Connect, and speaking about them in forums that are open to non-specialists in government information. Success will be measured by a steady increase in views of the Government Information Competencies

on the GODORT wiki as measured by Google Analytics.

3. Propose at least three programs at ALA Annual over the next five years aimed at educating nonspecialist librarians, in order to raise their awareness and knowledge of government information in their own areas of specialty. These programs should be cosponsored by other groups within ALA if possible.
4. Cultivate connections with other parts of ALA by using the affiliations of committee members to propose joint programs and to promote the Competencies.
5. Monitor the educational offerings of other organizations, like the North Carolina Library Association's Accidental Government Information series and GPO's FDLP Academy, in order to provide complementary programming rather than duplication.
6. After the competencies are revised, thoroughly review the GODORT Exchange, archiving dated content and soliciting new content. All sections of the Exchange should be current before ALA Annual 2019.
7. Once the GODORT Exchange is updated, committee members will promote the Exchange by monitoring GOVDOCL for questions that can be answered using the Exchange and replying with a link to the Exchange. Success will be measured by a steady increase in use of the Exchange, monitored using Google Analytics.

There was discussion on the concept of "goals." The committee agreed that something measurable objectives should be determined. Conversation will continue between conventions. If you would like

to participate in that conversation, please contact Education Committee Chair Gwen Sinclair.

We briefly discussed the pedagogy of Threshold Concepts as it relates to government information research.

—Jill Vasalakos-long

### International Documents Task Force

The International Documents Task Force held a virtual meeting on June 20, 2017, in lieu of an in-person meeting at ALA Annual.

The recording of the entire meeting is available via Adobe Connect, <http://ala.adobeconnect.com/p1u4zfz1zoof/>. (Please note, you need to download the Adobe Connect app to view.)

Minutes from the meeting as well as the Agency Liaison Report are available via the GODORT IDTF wiki page: [http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/International\\_Documents](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/International_Documents).

A panel from the UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library joined us for the full hour. Thanos Giannokopoulos, Chief Librarian, and Bojan Grozdanic, Digital Library Coordinator, provided an overview of the UN Digital Library that just launched in May, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/>. There is a YouTube video that provides an overview <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HUuM44pkklU>.

Ramona Kohrs, Outreach and Depository Library Coordinator, went over the results from the UN Depository Library Training Needs Assessment Survey. Most of the respondents would like some type of online training modules or

webinars. There is interest in training on UN research tools, UN Documentation, statistical tools, subject based training (i.e., human rights, refugees and migration). The hope is for some type of training (webinar for example) to happen by the end of 2017.

—Kris Kay and Susan Paterson

### Legislation Committee

The Legislation Committee met twice during Annual. Saturday's session was a joint meeting with the ALA Committee on Legislation's Government Information Subcommittee (COL-GIS). The first part of the meeting was devoted to updates from GPO by David Walls, Preservation Librarian. Next, Gavin Baker, the new Assistant Director in the Office of Government Relations at ALA Washington Office, introduced himself and gave an update on the Washington Office's recent activities. As these updates took up the majority of the meeting time, it was determined that GODORT would schedule a webinar featuring Baker in early fall to discuss advocacy and how to effectively advocate for issues of interest to our members.

Sunday's meeting was devoted to discussion of the results of the brief survey the Legislation Committee issued in June. Committee members and meeting attendees went through the survey responses and identified common themes, which will help inform the Committee's work in the coming years. The survey results and common themes identified at this meeting will be posted on the Committee's page on the GODORT wiki (<http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/Legislation>).

—Hallie Pritchett

## Preservation Working Group

With the dedicated work of the Preservation Working Group, GODORT was able to present two programs at Annual 2017.

The first one, “Government information preservation: collections and collaboration,” was cosponsored by the Federal Documents Task Force and featured discussions about collaborative approaches to collecting and preserving government information in all formats. Susanne Caro moderated the discussion, and Anne Harrison (FEDLINK), Roberta Gebhardt (Montana Historical Society), Robbie Sittel (University of North Texas), and James R. Jacobs (Stanford University) presented on projects at the state and national levels.

The second program, “Government publications preservation in action: how it works and what it costs,” explored

digitization projects and the Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet) and was moderated by Bernadine Abbott Hoduski. The program featured presentations by Barbara Sagraves (Dartmouth College), “A Case History on the Readex and Dartmouth Serial Set Digitization Project”; Benjamin Walker (University of Florida), “Centers of Excellence at the University of Florida: Preserving and Digitizing the Panama Canal papers”; and Kate Tallman (University of Colorado–Boulder) “Preservation stewardship in the Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet).” GODORT also hosted a reprise of its successful Research Round Robin, an informal meeting for sharing and discussing research with government information, and the management of these collections to support emerging research.

—Shari Laster

## State and Local Documents Task Force (SLDTF)

The State and Local Documents Task Force discussed the possibility of updating and expanding the State Depository Systems on the GODORT Wiki: [http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/State\\_Depository\\_Library\\_Systems](http://wikis.ala.org/godort/index.php/State_Depository_Library_Systems). We discussed the possibility of expanding it to include any government documents groups in the state library associations (or outside of them), as well as any state or local listservs for government information. We also discussed the need to recruit government documents librarians for GODORT committees and activities. This will be particularly important when we do any projects, as we will need volunteers to help us.

We also welcome Jane Canfield as the new SLDTF Coordinator.

—Sonnet Ireland, SLDTF Coordinator

# GODORT Program Committee

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of North Texas), and James R. Jacobs (Stanford University) presented on projects at the state and national levels. The second program, “Government Publications Preservation in Action: How it Works and What it Costs,” explored digitization projects and the Federal Information Preservation Network (FIPNet) and was moderated by Bernadine Abbott Hoduski. The program featured presentations by Barbara Sagraves (Dartmouth College), “A Case History on the Readex and Dartmouth Serial Set Digitization Project”; Benjamin Walker (University

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# Government Information for Children Minutes— ALA Annual Conference 2017

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## Chicago

Saturday, June 24, 2017

### Meeting Details

#### *Government Information for Children*

Agenda: fosters an awareness of the value of government information as a lifelong resource for living locally, regionally, nationally, and globally.

Time: 8:30–10:00 a.m.

Location: Palmer, Burnham 4

Contact: Tom Adamich, Chair

Email: [toma@mitinet.com](mailto:toma@mitinet.com)

Attendees: Siu Min Yu, Greg March, Debbie Abilock (NoodleTools—guest), Dwight Fouts (LC—guest), Rich Gause, Connie Williams, Tom Adamich

### *Meeting Summary*

Discussions were very productive and interesting as the GODORT Government Information for Children (GIC) Committee met in Chicago to talk about current projects and identify new initiatives.

One of the most interesting topics focused on the continued development of the GIC Clearinghouse—<http://guides.ucf.edu/gic>. The University of Central Florida (UCF) is hosting the GIC Clearinghouse as a group within their LibGuides content.

The mission of the GIC Clearinghouse is as follows:

The GIC website is created and maintained by members of the Government Documents Round Table [GODORT], the Government Information for Children [GIC] Committee, and current/future ALA Emerging Leader Cohorts. We are a group of government documents librarians and K-12 school librarians who meet up and share the best information for students (of all ages) that comes from government sources. The project was originally conceived as a promotional tool for the value of government documents to K-12 students and teachers in addressing the requirement to integrate Constitution Day into public school curricula. We welcome new members.

Rich Gause, UCF LibGuides administrator, will authorize each page individually for editors. Jane Canfield (Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico) and a cohort of students will be adding Spanish language government documents to a designated Spanish language documents page starting in fall 2017.

Started by longtime GIC member Connie Williams, the National History Day (NHD) liaison program continues, with several new projects. One of those projects is the NHD/GIC questions support effort, led by Greg March (University of Tennessee Knoxville). Working with noted school library expert Debbie Abilock (NoodleTools), March developed and reviewed details relating to the NHD/GIC questions beta test (which began in April, 2017 and was slated to

end following the conclusion of the ALA Annual Conference).

Additional NHD/GIC activities included the NHD liaison role transfer from Williams to March, strategic planning for future NHD/NoodleTools GIC Questions (workflow and questions transfer), discussion of GODORT-wide participation with NHD (GIC in particular) Plans were to create an awareness webinar with details forthcoming. The suggestion was to place the webinar on YouTube.

Another longtime GIC project is the Constitution Day Poster Contest. There was an inquiry as to which GIC Committee member would like to continue contest advocacy now that Tom Adamich has stepped down as Chair. There was also an inquiry from retired depository librarian Martha Childers to contact a company called Constitution Quest that produces a Constitution board game to see if possible programming could result or prompt development of a new Constitution-related GIC activity/contest.

Current Constitution Day Poster Contest promotion activities were reviewed and Williams asked if project restructuring be recommended to Constitutionfacts.com, with a possible connection to the Letters About Literature Project (Library of Congress Center for the Book: <http://www.read.gov/letters>) as a result? Adamich stated he would discuss restructuring with the publisher of Constitutionfacts.com, Keir Walton.

Williams also suggested that additional school listservs be added as recipients of Constitution Day Poster Contest e-mail blasts.

Incoming chair Liza Weisbrod discussed briefly the new GODORT five-year plan introduced by Stephen Woods. It was discussed that GIC becomes a taskforce, and Abilock recommended attending

“Libraries Foster Community Engagement,” Sunday, June 25, 2017, Hilton Chicago Lake Ontario, 8:30 a.m.–10:00 a.m., as a prompt for further group strategic planning.

As mentioned earlier, the idea of creating GIC webinars was discussed, with Williams and March mentioning interest in creating a NHD/NoodleTools webinar.

Weisbrod pointed out that both the ALA (<http://www.ala.org/godort/webinars>) and GPO (<https://www.fdlp.gov/about-the-fdlp/fdlp-academy>) both have webinar infrastructures available to use.

—Tom Adamich, Outgoing Chair, GIC (June 28, 2017)

# Reviews

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*The Dilemma of Lawlessness: Organized Crime, Violence, Prosperity, and Security Along Guatemala's Borders.* Ralph Espach, Daniel Haering, Javier Meléndez Quiñonez, and Miguel Castillo Giron. 2016. <https://purl.fdlp.gov/GPO/gpo77414>.

This book presents the reader with both facts and conclusions drawn from three case studies. Authors Ralph Espach, Daniel Haering, Javier Meléndez Quiñonez, and Miguel Castillo Giron focus on the lack of security along Guatemala's borders and the serious narcotics trafficking, execution-style mass murders, and other severe public security issues that have developed as a result. This research looks closely at the effects of criminal organizations and illicit trafficking within the three particular border municipalities of Guatemala—Sayaxché, Gualán, and Malacatán. The three areas are compared demographically and economically, and through which a deeper analysis is developed on creating better border control through the behaviors of the local communities themselves.

In eighty-six pages, the reader is given some historical context and narrative timeline that explains exactly how and why these borders have been taken advantage of over time. Those that come to this book knowing little on the subject learn right in the introduction that towns close to these borders do not have access to any public assistance or authority such as a health clinic or police, thus creating ideal platforms for crime to ensue.

Readers who have more background knowledge will be impressed by the notable tables, maps, and photos throughout.

Statements are drawn from interviews by area residents to really do some strong telling. The book also includes an interesting postscript written five years after the initial research, a supportive bibliography, and a helpful index.

Scholars interested in crime, security, cultural studies, along with public government and works will find *The Dilemma of Lawlessness* a worthy read.—Emily M. Alford ([alfordem@indiana.edu](mailto:alfordem@indiana.edu)), *Social Sciences Librarian and Head of Government Information, Maps and Microform Services, Indiana University*

*Picturing the Big Shop: Photos of the U.S. Government Publishing Office, 1900–1980.* Washington DC: US Government Publishing Office, 2017. <https://permanent.access.gpo.gov/gpo77951/picturing-the-big-shop.pdf>.

*Picturing the Big Shop* features approximately two hundred captioned photographs from the Government Publishing Office historical photo collection to show “the working life” of the GPO. In focusing on primary sources, it offers a different perspective than that provided in *Keeping America Informed* (US Government Printing Office 2011, revised 2016), the “official sesquicentennial history” of the GPO. The popularity of the photographs in *Keeping America Informed*, in fact, led to *Picturing the Big Shop*'s creation.

Rather than arranging entries chronologically, *Picturing the Big Shop*'s chapters look at one specific aspect of the GPO and its changes over time. For example, chapter 5 focuses on the Superintendent of Documents and FDLP Libraries, while chapter 3 highlights the steps involved with binding materials.

Each chapter begins with a text summary of the major topic. Each page within a chapter features a photograph and a descriptive caption, which varies in length and depth as needed. For example, historical information for a building is more in depth than the brief description of a particular step in a process.

Some chapters will mostly interest librarians or government historians, such as chapters 5 and 6. However, other chapters cover topics of wider historical interest. Chapters 2 and 3, for instance, document changes in printing technology from the Industrial Revolution. Chapter 4 highlights various types of jobs at GPO and the impacts of racial and gender inequality. In these cases, the snapshot of the GPO offers a glimpse to the overall history of American industry.

The book's primary weakness is a lack of organization. There is no index for individual photographs or for major subjects pictured. There are also two sections not included in the table of contents that use multiple photographs to highlight a specific topic. Chapter 2 details the history of a particular Linotype machine (“General Pershing,” 54–61). Chapter 4 offers an in depth look at the Apprentice Program (171–97), even featuring an additional descriptive page like those found at the beginnings of chapters.

Despite the above, the strengths of the book far outweigh its negatives. The images are appealing, the text illuminating, and the collection as a whole offers unique insight into the GPO's history.—Elizabeth A. Sanders ([elizabeth.sanders-3@selu.edu](mailto:elizabeth.sanders-3@selu.edu)), *Reference/Instruction Librarian, Sims Memorial Library*