

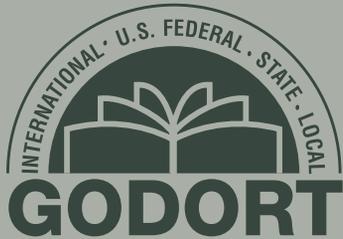
## In This Issue

- “Don’t Drink the Water”:  
The Camp Lejeune Water  
Contamination Incident
- The Municipal Reference and  
Research Center is Born
- Understanding Controversy
- Military Bands and Government  
Documents
- FOIA: Then and Now

# DttP

## Documents to the People

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# DttP

Documents to the People

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## Columns

- 2 Chair's Column—Sarah Erikson
- 3 Notice to GODORT Membership

## Features

- 4 "Don't Drink the Water"  
*The Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Incident*  
Laurel Beckley-Jackson
- 10 The Municipal Reference and Research Center is Born  
*New York's Municipal Library in the late 1960s*  
Mia Bruner
- 16 Understanding Controversy  
*Government Information on Dietary Sustainability*  
Sarah Klimek
- 22 FOIA: Then and Now  
Sami Kerzel
- 27 Military Bands and Government Documents  
Daniel E. Ray
- 32 Review

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## About the Cover:

Photograph of Socks the Cat Standing Next to the Gingerbread Replica of the White House, December 05, 1993.



## Make No Little Plans

Sarah Erikson

**W**ell it's time for the big plans: implementing reorganization of the round table.

Last winter, the GODORT working group on reorganization presented a plan on how to take the Government Documents Round Table into the next generation.

By accepting this report, the Steering Committee reaffirmed the mission of GODORT as a place that creates a community for the exchange of ideas for librarians working with government information, sponsors and supports innovative programming, acts as an advocate for government information by increasing communications with the larger community of information professionals, and contributes to the education and training of government information librarians.

Some of the recommendations have already been implemented. The report recommended that internal liaisons be eliminated. I did not appoint any internal liaisons for 2016–17.

Another of implemented recommendations was to pair down the conference schedule of meetings. This Midwinter meeting will have GODORT-sponsored meetings on two and a half days, and most committees will be meeting virtually before or after Midwinter.

The next part of the plan seems to be where it gets sticky. This is where the “Big Plans” need to be decided on and

implemented. I believe we need to provide ample opportunities for members to contribute and be active in GODORT without being bogged down with business and procedures just because they are what we have been used to.

Most groups in ALA have been going in the direction of more discrete projects done by working groups, with fewer committee appointments. People want to add to a portfolio with accomplishments. Perhaps this is not all that radical. By adjusting the tasks of the group and streamlining the structure, I hope that our outcomes match our mission and vision.

As we get ready to move this process to membership votes at Midwinter Meetings and on the ALA Election ballot, I want to emphasize that even if it seems radical, our vision is to bring documents to the people: empowering users to engage with their government through increased access and transparency, and ensure long-term access to government information. Now is a time to stand up for Government Information.

### Note

Column title: The full quotation from Daniel Burnham is “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work.” Quoted in Charles Moore, *Daniel H. Burnham, Architect, Planner of Cities*, vol. 2 (Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1921), 147.

# Notice to GODORT Membership

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## Vote to Amend the GODORT Bylaws

### General Membership Meeting, ALA Midwinter Meeting

*Sunday, January 22, 2017*

At the GODORT General Membership meeting at the 2017 ALA Midwinter Meeting, the membership will be asked to vote on the following proposed amendment to the current GODORT *Bylaws*. The underlined text will be added to Article IV (Officers), Section 8:

#### Article IV. Officers

##### Section 8.

The following special officers shall serve the Chair and the Steering Committee:

c. Virtual Meetings Coordinator. The GODORT Virtual Meetings Coordinator provides support for GODORT virtual meetings by coordinating the usage of GODORT's virtual meeting space. The

Virtual Meetings Coordinator is a non-voting member of the GODORT Steering Committee, appointed by the GODORT Chair. The Coordinator serves until either party terminates the term of office.

RATIONALE: The GODORT Bylaws [Article IV, Section 8] provides for “Special Officers,” who serve the GODORT Chair and Steering Committee. Special Officers are appointed by the GODORT Chair (with the approval of the Steering Committee). They are non-voting members of the Steering Committee during the entire term of their appointed service.

As part of an initiative to provide more opportunity for GODORT units (Task Forces, Committees, and Discussion Groups) to hold virtual meetings in lieu of meeting face-to-face, the GODORT Chair and Steering Committee propose to amend the Bylaws to include a “Virtual Meetings Coordinator,” as a Special Officer, to facilitate meetings by virtual means.

The Virtual Meetings Coordinator will support GODORT virtual meetings by coordinating the usage of GODORT's virtual meeting space. This individual may be asked to be available for GODORT meetings held on this platform. More specifically, the Coordinator will create and administer accounts, troubleshoot technical issues with the platform, serve as a resource for members of GODORT, who wish to take advantage of the features offered by GODORT's virtual meeting space, and provide training or guidance for meeting coordinators.

# “Don’t Drink the Water”

## The Camp Lejeune Water Contamination Incident

Laurel Beckley-Jackson

From 1953 until 1987, an estimated one million Marines and their families at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, were exposed to drinking water contaminated with several volatile organic compounds (VOCs) known to cause cancer and other serious health conditions.<sup>1</sup> From the time of detection in 1980 until a Congressional mandate in 2007, the Marine Corps made little to no effort to notify the affected veterans and their families of the potential for health problems, and failed to fully disclose the true extent of the contamination.

The story of the Camp Lejeune water contamination incident is told through government and civilian documents made available largely by the dedicated efforts of a small group of Camp Lejeune veterans and their children. For government documents librarians and researchers, this offers guidance in researching the laws and regulations around water contamination incidents.

### Background

Established in 1941, Camp Lejeune is the largest Marine Corps base in the United States. In addition to the military commands, training centers, motor pools and disposal dumps, the base has day care centers, schools, nine family housing areas, gyms, libraries, administrative offices, a shopping center and a hospital. Until 1985, it had eight water systems fed by more than one hundred wells.<sup>2</sup>

Drinking water standards beyond water clarity and general sanitation weren’t federally mandated until the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (P.L. 93–523), which set maximum allowable standards for twenty-eight different substances. In 1979, due to new research on the harmful effects of VOCs, an interim standard to the Act was issued requiring testing of all community water sources for a VOC called trihalomethane (TTHM).<sup>3</sup> The Department of Defense tried to get an exemption to the new requirement, claiming inadequate resources to conduct the tests. They were denied.

On October 1, 1980, an official with Navy Facilities Engineering Command, Atlantic Division (LANTDIV), took samples from all eight Camp Lejeune water treatment plants, combined them into one sample and sent it to a private lab for testing.<sup>4</sup> Another sample was drawn October 21, 1981. Instead of finding TTHM or better yet, nothing, accurate readings of TTHM were obscured by high concentrations of one or more unknown VOCs. These interfering VOCs turned out to be: trichloroethylene (TCE), a solvent usually used in metal degreasers; tetrachloroethylene (PCE), used in dry cleaning solvents; and benzene, a fuel component. At the time of detection, neither TCE nor PCE were federally regulated, but each had well known health risks.<sup>5</sup>

The source of the VOCs was slowly narrowed down to two water treatment systems: Hadnot Point (located near a waste dump and underground storage tanks) and Tarawa Terrace (located at the northern edge of Camp Lejeune).<sup>6</sup>

According to the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO) 2007 report, “Activities Related to Past Drinking Water Contamination at Camp Lejeune,” in the 1970s and 1980s the Tarawa Terrace water system (established 1952) served an annual average of 5,814 people and the Hadnot Point system (established 1942) served an annual average of seventy-one people, in addition to schools, an industrial area, recreational areas, and the base hospital.<sup>7</sup> From 1942 until 1971, Hadnot Point also provided water to the Holcomb Boulevard Residential Area.<sup>8</sup>

Samples continued to be taken from the Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point water treatment plants from 1980 until 1984. Pointed warnings from the labs were issued and disregarded by Camp Lejeune officials, including one from March 9, 1981, stating, “Water highly contaminated with other chlorinated hydrocarbons (solvents)!”<sup>9</sup> This memo was the fourth warning to officials. Based on recommendation from LANTDIV that further data was needed from the TTHM testing and a planned Naval

Assessment and Control of Installation Pollutants (NACIP) study, no corrective action was taken.<sup>10</sup>

Monthly samples were collected from April 1982 until August 18, 1982, when Camp Lejeune officials inexplicably changed to quarterly samples, the Department of Defense standard. In the same month, the base commanding general received a memo from the base chemist expressing health concerns over the water quality, based on the initial October 1, 1980, sample.<sup>11</sup>

Compounding problems, readings from the water treatment plants were wildly erratic. These inconsistent results, where a sample would be high as 1,400 parts per billion (ppb) TCE one month and plummet to 5 ppb in the next, was later attributed to the rotation of wells that mixed and diluted contaminated wells with uncontaminated wells.<sup>12</sup> The variances made finding a baseline of contamination challenging.

In July 1984, individual wells were finally tested for contamination, as part of LANTDIV’s Naval Assessment and Control of Installation Pollutants (NACIP) Confirmation Study. When the results returned, ten of the forty tested wells were contaminated: eight at Hadnot Point and two at Tarawa Terrace tested positive for both TCE and PCE, and all wells at Hadnot Point had some level of benzene.<sup>13</sup> The highest benzene contamination, at well HP-602, read 380 ppb—incorrectly written as 38 ppb in subsequent reports.<sup>14</sup>

The ten contaminated wells were removed from rotation from November 30, 1984, to February 8, 1985, as a result of the July 1984 tests. However, the wells were used intermittently through 1987 to supplement low water levels.<sup>15</sup> By 1987, the contaminated wells at Hadnot Point and Tarawa Terrace were permanently closed. Unfortunately for Camp Lejeune residents, the closure was only the beginning.

## Public Notification and Initial Studies: 1985–99

Seven months after the initial closure of the wells in 1985, nine-year-old Janey Ensminger succumbed to her three-year battle with leukemia in a Pennsylvanian hospital. Her father, Marine Jerry Ensminger, was in shock. Neither his nor his wife’s family had a history of childhood leukemia, and his three other children were healthy.<sup>16</sup> There seemed to be no rhyme or reason for Janey’s illness and death.

The public first learned of issues with the water system in a June 1984 base newsletter titled, “Environmental Study Kicks Off,” which announced the beginning of the NACIP Confirmation study. This article, like several released at the time, downplayed the extent of the exposure, stressing that officials “did not expect to expose anyone to any contaminants.”<sup>17</sup>

In April 1985, base residents were notified ten wells had been closed as a precautionary measure due to the discovery of “trace amounts” of contaminants.<sup>18</sup>

These notifications were limited to those Marines and their families stationed at Camp Lejeune, and to local media reports. Families who had moved out of the area would wait decades for official notification. Some would watch Dan Rather’s 1997 newscast regarding the contamination. Jerry Ensminger was one of those watching the reports, and he reported that it was as though the ceiling caved in—Janey had been conceived and born on Camp Lejeune.<sup>19</sup> Ensminger began to hunt for answers, which were not easily forthcoming.

Misinformation wasn’t just limited to the public. Camp Lejeune, LANTDIV, and Department of the Navy officials doled bits and pieces to various state and federal officials. Upon request from Camp Lejeune officials, the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development conducted an investigation into a suspected off-base pollutant of the water supply. This 1985 report determined that the source of Tarawa Terrace’s PCE contamination from ABC One-Hour Cleaners, an off-base dry-cleaners. It had been in operation since 1953, slowly polluting three wells in the Tarawa Terrace water supply system.<sup>20</sup> Uninformed of the actual extent of the contamination and thinking it had been discovered in 1984, the head of the North Carolina Water Supply branch stated, “Camp Lejeune should not worry about getting bad drinking water. I think we kind of caught it at the beginning. It’s not something that has been running for two or three years.”<sup>21</sup>

With the discovery of an off-base scapegoat, the other contaminations—TCE and benzene—at Tarawa Terrace and Hadnot Point fell to the wayside. Later reports determined the TCE had seeped into wells located within one hundred meters of equipment dumping grounds.<sup>22</sup> The 1988 discovery of a massive leak within underground fuel tanks, at a rate of 1,500 gallons per month (creating a 1.1 million gallon gasoline lake on top of the Camp Lejeune groundwater), caused a moment of alarm.<sup>23</sup> These fuel tanks were dangerously close to several Hadnot Point wells and were the source of the high levels of benzene in HP-602. The fuel spill and resulting benzene contamination quickly became supplanted in Marine Corps press releases by reports of the ABC One-Hour Cleaners’ contamination of the Tarawa Terrace wells.

Federal agencies stepped in to deal with the clean-up of the contaminated areas. In 1988, the Department of the Navy requested that the recently formed Agency for Toxic Diseases and Registry (ATSDR) conduct a public health assessment (PHA) on ABC One-Hour Cleaners and Camp Lejeune. The

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) placed Camp Lejeune on the National Priorities List in 1989, designating it as a Superfund Site. TCE and PCE became regulated under the 1989 and 1992 Safe Drinking Water Act amendments, respectively.<sup>24</sup> Little progress was made on any study or clean-up throughout the early 1990s, mostly due to Marine Corps stonewalling and the ATSDR's lack of funding from the Department of the Defense.<sup>25</sup>

The ATSDR's much delayed Camp Lejeune PHA was published in 1997 and formed the basis for numerous studies, Congressional hearings, federal reports and an EPA-led criminal investigation. This report listed the VOC contamination of TCE and PCE as second of three past public health hazards at Camp Lejeune. It failed to address the extent of the benzene contamination at Hadnot Point. Most damningly, the 1997 Camp Lejeune PHA stressed the unlikelihood of adverse health effects on adults and children exposed to TCE and PCE.<sup>26</sup>

The 1997 PHA did stress a concern for the potential of damage to developing fetuses exposed to the VOCs, however. In the 1998 document, "Volatile Organic Compounds in Drinking Water and Adverse Pregnancy Outcomes," the ATSDR analyzed the birth certificates of 11,970 children born at Camp Lejeune to determine possible correlations between mean birth weights and VOC exposure.<sup>27</sup> Not surprisingly, the agency found that birth certificates contained little information. The agency decided to conduct another study, one that would contact families directly for information. There was a problem: the names resided with the Marine Corps, who had proven reluctant to provide timely information.

The resulting notification was the first individual notification of the exposure—limited to those families with children born on the base between 1968 and 1985.<sup>28</sup> One of these children was Mike Partain, who had been diagnosed with male breast cancer. When he learned of his possible exposure, everything clicked into place. Through his own research, Partain found Ensminger and joined his advocacy group, The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten (TFTPTF).

In response to increasing demands from the public—particularly the TFTPTF—the Commandant of the Marine Corps convened a Blue Panel in 2004 to investigate. This report reiterated what had become the official Marine Corps story: in keeping with federal drinking water regulations at the time, Camp Lejeune officials closed the wells upon discovery of the contamination.<sup>29</sup>

"Trying to pin down the truth with the leadership of the Marine Corps is like trying to nail Jell-O to a wall," said Partain.<sup>30</sup> The dispensing of information was limited to highly edited reports provided on Marine Corps and ATSDR websites.

This lack of information led Ensminger and Partain to conduct their own research, submitting numerous Freedom of Information Act requests to the Marine Corps, ATSDR, EPA, National Academy of Sciences, LANTDIV and other federal agencies. They also reached out to former residents, urging them to write to their Congressmen to demand action.

## Congress Steps In

Slowly, Congress began to move. A bipartisan amendment to the 2007 Defense Authorization Act directed the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a study evaluating the strength of the link between TCE and PCE exposure and adverse health impacts for prenatal, childhood and adult exposures at Camp Lejeune.<sup>31</sup> Frustrated over the Marine Corps' failure to notify all possibly exposed Camp Lejeune residents, Senator Jeffords ensured the bill ordered the Marine Corps to begin official notifications.<sup>32</sup>

Following intense lobbying by TFTPTF, official hearings on the contamination began in 2007. "Poisoned Patriots: Contaminated Drinking Water at Camp Lejeune" concentrated primarily on two reports, the ATSDR's 1997 Camp Lejeune PHA and a freshly released GAO investigation. The latter report took much of its data from the flawed 1997 PHA, a fact repeatedly stressed by Ensminger at the hearing.<sup>33</sup> Due to this, the benzene contamination, which had dropped from media attention and most official reports, was not mentioned. Little resulted from the hearing beyond an ATSDR feasibility study on cancer and adverse health effects in exposed adults and children.<sup>34</sup>

Suddenly, in 2009, the ATSDR announced they had stumbled across documents they claimed were previously undisclosed by the Marine Corps (proved untrue by multiple early versions of the 1997 Camp Lejeune PHA).<sup>35</sup> These documents revealed the real levels of benzene detected at well HP-602, which Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus admitted had been "erroneously transcribed" without "intentional misrepresentation."<sup>36</sup> As a result of the benzene rediscovery, the ATSDR cancelled the 1997 Camp Lejeune PHA, the first time a PHA had been withdrawn since the agency was founded in 1986.<sup>37</sup>

The benzene reveal opened the door for another hearing on September 16, 2010, before the House Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight of the Committee on Science and Technology: "Camp Lejeune: Contamination and Compensation, Looking Back, Moving Forward." Confronted with overwhelming evidence presented by the members of TFTPTF, the ATSDR and other agencies, the Marine Corps finally admitted responsibility after years of stonewalling. "It is astounding some of the things that happened, and I think they

happened for a number of reasons,” said Marine Major General Payne. “I think we were ignorant, quite frankly, of some of the implications. I think we were lulled into a sense of complacency or at least a lack of urgency by the fact that we were not out of compliance. And I am not trying to excuse what happened. I think that there were many, many errors made on behalf of the Marine Corps.”<sup>38</sup>

To date, no single person has been charged with connection to the contamination or the delayed closure of the wells.

## Compensation

Veterans and their families had been submitting claims to the Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) seeking care and reimbursement for medical conditions that seemed to stem from their time in Camp Lejeune since the late 1980s. By September 2010, only twenty of more than two hundred claims had been approved by the VA, with the majority of the disapprovals stemming from a lack of substantiation that Camp Lejeune’s water had caused the condition.<sup>39</sup>

To provide some compensation and force the VA to quickly admit exposed veterans, S. 1518 “Caring for Camp Lejeune Veterans Act of 2009” was introduced by Senator Richard Burr on October 21, 2009,<sup>40</sup> while the House introduced H.R. 4555, or “The Janey Ensminger Act,” on February 2, 2010.<sup>41</sup> Neither S. 1518 nor H.R. 4555 was passed into law. A third bill, H.R. 1627, was introduced on 15 April 2011.

On August 6, 2012, twenty-five years after the final closure of the contaminated wells at Camp Lejeune, H.R. 1627 became PL 112-154. Active duty veterans and their families who served at Camp Lejeune for more than thirty days from January 1, 1957, until December 31, 1987, became “eligible for hospital care and medical services” through the VA for fifteen conditions, “notwithstanding insufficient medical evidence to conclude that the illness or condition is attributable to such service.”<sup>42</sup>

## Conclusion

The story doesn’t end with PL 112-154. Although the law acknowledged that the mysterious illnesses plaguing Camp Lejeune veterans and their families was not random, it did not erase the five years of inaction and subsequent decades of silence from the Marine Corps. Many veterans felt a deep sense of betrayal from an organization that stresses, “No Marine left behind” and “Semper Fidelis,” Latin for “always faithful.” Additionally, every former resident or employee at Camp Lejeune from 1953 until 1987 lives with the consequences of their exposure—the healthy will forever wonder when their turn will come.

The ATSDR and other agencies continue to study the adverse health effects of by victims who lived and worked at Camp Lejeune. In 2014, the ATSDR completed the “Evaluation of mortality among Marines and Navy personnel exposed to contaminated drinking water at USMC Base Camp Lejeune: A retrospective cohort study,” which found “an increased risk of death in the Camp Lejeune cohort for several causes including cancers of the cervix, esophagus, kidney, and liver, Hodgkin’s lymphoma, and multiple myeloma.”<sup>43</sup> Another ATSDR study in 2015 reluctantly linked 64 instances of male breast cancer—including Mike Partain—to the water contamination.<sup>44</sup>

Jerry Ensminger, Mike Partain and the rest of TFTPTF continue to advocate for the rights of Camp Lejeune victims. Despite facing set-back after set-back, they proved that ordinary citizens can find justice and compensation against environmental and health contamination. Thanks to their diligent Freedom of Information requests, interviews and extensive research and head-hunting, their website, [thefewtheproudtheforgotten.com](http://thefewtheproudtheforgotten.com) remains the best source of information regarding the contamination. In 2011 TFTPTF produced a documentary chronicling the contamination.

Overall, the Department of Defense owns 141 Superfund sites on the EPA’s National Priority List for contaminated areas, making it the largest polluter in the United States.<sup>45</sup> Camp Lejeune, one of the worse drinking water contamination incidents in United States history, is just the tip of the iceberg.

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# The Municipal Reference and Research Center is Born

New York's Municipal Library in the late 1960s

Mia Bruner

Recently the news site *Democracy Now!* featured a story titled “NYPD Surveillance Unveiled: City Claims to Lose Docs on 1960s Radicals, Then Finds 1 Million Records.”<sup>1</sup> The segment describes Baruch College professor Johanna Fernández’s efforts to access records of New York Police Department (NYPD) surveillance of radical organizations in the 1960s and 1970s. In the early 2000s, Fernández began her search for this material but encountered a major obstacle when the city of New York claimed it had lost them. Sixteen years later, the city contacted Fernández to inform her that these documents were in fact not lost and had been found with more than 520 boxes of related materials in a warehouse in Queens. Upon hearing this, reporter Juan González asks “how does somebody lose and then suddenly find 500 boxes? I mean, where were these boxes? Where were they supposed to be, and how did they suddenly come up with them?”<sup>2</sup> As anyone familiar with the Municipal Library knows, missing municipal records are not uncommon. Due to huge losses of space and severe staff cuts, New York’s Municipal Library contains thousands of uncatalogued records that are meant to be available to the public. This article will examine changes in the Municipal Library’s administrative structure during the late 1960s to consider how it became what it is today.

The collection and storage of NYC’s municipal documents has a long and largely undocumented history.<sup>3</sup> In 1913, William Prendergast, the city’s comptroller, established a municipal reference library to be a depository of publications by city agencies.<sup>4</sup> Prendergast, along with members of New York City’s business community, hoped it would serve city employees, and the public as a government “fact center.”<sup>5</sup> However, from its beginnings, the Municipal Library has had difficulty achieving this. Administrative, political and public confusion around the purpose of the library is in large part responsible.

This is documented particularly well in New York Times articles: in 1911, “City Hall Library to be Made Useful”; in 1948, “O’Dwyer In Drive On Useless Files”; in 1976 is “Dungeon-Like Subbasement Yields Dusty Municipal Past”; and in 2014 “A Library Where a Hush Is Over Its Very Existence.”<sup>6</sup>

Administrative organization has always been a challenge for the library. This is in part because of its dual affiliation with city government and the New York Public Library (NYPL). New York’s Municipal Library was initially an agency of the Department of Finance; however, a year after it opened its doors, city officials transferred the library to NYPL.<sup>7</sup> This article will discuss the organizational structure of New York’s Municipal Library fifty-five years later in the late 1960s: a period when it was undergoing significant changes. In 1968, as part of a massive reorganization of city government, Mayor John Lindsay transferred the library out of NYPL and into the Municipal Service Administration (MSA). Changes made during this transfer were foundational in shaping not only the Municipal Library’s structure and function but also the overall management and handling of municipal documents in New York City. Despite the significance of this period, there is a particular gap in research about the library during the 1960s and 1970s. I will address this gap by examining the circumstances leading up to the transfer of the library. This will center on two critical issues: requests from city agencies for departmental branch libraries and the library’s relationship to the Municipal Archives in the late 1960s.

## Early Municipal Reference Libraries

Federal regulations that ensure consistency in depository libraries neglect to mention local government documents, leaving these collections to develop individual histories of their own.<sup>8</sup> The concept of municipal reference libraries became popular in

the United States in the early 1900s as part of a movement to reform city governments.<sup>9</sup> Cities were largely unable to respond to growing populations and the period was characterized by negligent law enforcement, exploitation of public utilities, and government corruption.<sup>10</sup> Civic leaders demanded changes to deficient government structures such as the election of councilmen, reductions of state influence in city affairs, and increased municipal ownership of utilities.<sup>11</sup>

This spirit of reform invoked a vibrant time for libraries. The period saw the establishment of both the American Association of Law Libraries and the Special Libraries Association.<sup>12</sup> Charles McCarthy, an early advocate of American legislative libraries, first proposed the idea of a municipal reference library to the National Municipal League in 1894.<sup>13</sup> He presented these special libraries as a tool to ensure the success of reforms to city government.<sup>14</sup> McCarthy also pitched these collections as a business investment: a way for corporations to address corruption in city government and to gain access to information relevant to them.<sup>15</sup> Baltimore founded the first municipal reference library in 1907; Philadelphia, Chicago, Honolulu, Milwaukee, and New York followed suit. There is little consistency in the structure of these libraries because they were established in affiliation with different city agencies. Baltimore opened a municipal reference library within the Department of Legislative Reference; Chicago established a library within the Bureau of Statistics. In Cleveland and Detroit, municipal reference libraries operated as branches of the public library.<sup>16</sup>

The Municipal Reference Library of the City of New York was opened in 1913 in the New York Department of Finance.<sup>17</sup> Only a year later, the Board of Estimate passed a unanimous resolution which transferred the library from the Department of Finance to the Circulation Department of NYPL.<sup>18</sup> As a branch of the NYPL, the Municipal Library directed its operations as an independent division while building a relationship with local government that varied as administration and politics changed.<sup>19</sup>

## The Municipal Library in the 1960s

Like the progressive era, the mid to late 1960s present a period focused on reforming city government. Economic, social, and political issues put a spotlight on deficiencies in city services. Just as it had in the past, failures in city government began to strain its relationship to the public. As a mechanism of transparency and communication for the city, the library's functionality came into question. Two major points of concern were the Municipal Library's relationship to the Municipal Archives and requests from city officials for departmental branches of the library.

## Departmental Libraries

In the early 1960s, the Municipal Library began to develop department specific collections to accommodate the growing government.<sup>20</sup> By 1963, the Municipal Library oversaw nine branches.<sup>21</sup> There was a growing conversation in city government about a need for more immediately accessible materials to assist the work of city agencies. A report from 1964 quotes an appeal from the Chair of the City Planning Commission for a branch:

We have found that we require a large volume of working material in our office. Often material we need from your library is not available for immediate use. . . . Because of these demands we have had to acquire much of our own library material which is duplicating the planning material you have in your collection. We feel this is inefficient and a waste of City funds. Our mechanism for handling this constantly growing body of material is only improvised, is getting out of hand, and is inadequate for our pressing needs.<sup>22</sup>

Without increased budget from the city or NYPL, the library could rarely accommodate requests from city officials.

Often branches were established to provide services to government departments that had already begun independent collections. These collections came to the Municipal Library inconsistently classified, inefficiently circulated, and sporadically documented. In many cases, the library did not have the capacity to rectify this problem and the collections remained chaotic and improperly cared for. An excellent example of this is the library developed by the New York City Planning Commission. From 1938 through the 1950s, the Planning Commission had attempted to establish a library but could not obtain funds to hire a librarian. A staff member tried to run a library himself resulting in a "fiasco": "unorthodox processing and circulation procedures were adopted and things increasingly got out of hand."<sup>23</sup>

In 1961, the City Commissioner and the Director of NYPL tentatively assigned library staff to establish a simple classification scheme. But the staff member, who had no background or experience overseeing libraries, rejected this scheme "in favor of a weird geographical scheme he felt more effective." Three years later, little progress had been made. Staff from NYPL had increased to two but most of the collection was still uncatalogued.<sup>24</sup>

NYPL continued to reluctantly administrate this branch however the growing requests to expand the Municipal

Library's area of service prompted the Chief of Circulation, John Mackenzie Cory, to request a study of the library's service to government agencies headed by Rutherford D. Rogers.<sup>25</sup> This report, *The New York Public Library and Service to Municipal Agencies*, was presented to the library in 1963. In it, Rogers recommends NYPL distance itself from the departmental libraries: "the City would benefit from NYPL direction of all agency library service, but the adverse public relations that would result from trying to rationalize the present hodge-podge of libraries makes NYPL assumption of this responsibility inadvisable."<sup>26</sup>

Still, Rogers does not ever suggest the Municipal Library be transferred to the City government itself. On the contrary, in its executive summary the report recommends that the library remain a branch of NYPL.<sup>27</sup>

The problem posed by these branch libraries raises a larger question about the administration of municipal documents in New York City: who should be responsible for supporting the library to expand its services in response to the changing needs of city agencies? Roger's recommendation that NYPL distance itself from these branch libraries offered an ineffective answer to this question. It did not address that the information needs of city agencies were no longer being met by the library nor request for serious consideration about the structure of library service to city officials. This hands-off approach to departmental collections encouraged the management of municipal documents in New York City to become more disparate than it previously had been.

## The Municipal Archives and Records Center

NYPL's disinclination to oversee the Municipal Archives, a division of the Municipal Library, was also major impetus for the Rogers' study.<sup>28</sup> The archives were first discussed in 1938 when Mayor LaGuardia established a Mayor's Municipal Archive Committee to develop a plan to store and preserve city records.<sup>29</sup> The Committee submitted a proposal to open Municipal Archives, however, economic shortage created by WWII prevented them from acting on their plans and the committee was dissolved.<sup>30</sup> In its absence, the volume of city records grew to alarming rates. Mayor O'Dwyer reinstated the Archives Committee and in 1950, the Municipal Archives Division opened under the temporary supervision of the Municipal Library.<sup>31</sup> The new division hardly had a chance to establish its work because it was tasked to work on a collaborative study between New York City and the National Records Management Council.<sup>32</sup> Newly hired staff surveyed the record management procedures of five Municipal Departments.<sup>33</sup> The project prompted the city to open a third records agency: the

Municipal Records Center. In 1952, the Municipal Archives and the Records Center were joined and renamed the Municipal Archives and Records Center (MAARC).<sup>34</sup> The establishment of a third agency to handle New York City municipal documents further decentralized and complicated the overall management of records in New York City.

In 1963, "The Roger's Report" found the archive in disrepair due to neglect from both NYPL and the city: "The lack of effective organization, cataloguing, and physical maintenance . . . probably reflect the lack of support from the City more than a lack of recognition of what needs to be done."<sup>35</sup> City support for MAARC became increasingly inconsistent; laws regarding administration of records were ambiguous and granted power to many agencies. Rogers cites the low salaries of archivists and the lack of training or "neglect" of staff as an illustration of "evident frictions between the Municipal Archives and Records Center and its supervising agency The New York Public Libraries."<sup>36</sup> To address this, Rogers recommends the City take full responsibility for MAARC:

There is such widespread and deep feelings that the records center operation is an incongruity within NYPL that Dr. Bahmer and I join in urging that the Library disassociate itself from the Municipal Archives and Records Center. . . . Unless the City were willing to change its attitude toward the financial support of the archival operation, the Library would be assuming a heavy burden if the archives were properly run.<sup>37</sup>

Rogers advises MAARC be treated as "a City housekeeping function without a logical library association" housed under the City Administrator or the Board of Estimate.<sup>38</sup> In conversations about MAARC during this time, one senses the struggle of identifying who should be responsible for city documents. The transfer of MAARC to city government proved to be a temporary and ineffective solution to this problem and laid the groundwork for City government to readopt the Municipal Library as well.

## The Municipal Reference and Research Center is Born

In 1969, the Municipal Reference Library was transferred out of NYPL. The transfer occurred in 1968 as part of Mayor Lindsay's reorganization of city government. In his campaign for mayor, John Lindsay promised to cut \$300–400 million in city budget by consolidating city agencies. Lindsay's reorganization plan condensed more than fifty agencies into ten "super agencies:" Financial Management, Health Services,

Housing and Development, Human Resources, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Transportation, Economic Development, Environmental Protection, Corrections and General Services, which would become MSA.<sup>39</sup>

The Municipal Library's inclusion in this restructuring occurred because of its ties to the archive.<sup>40</sup> By placing the MRL with MARC in the MSA, city officials aimed to address the disorganized manner in which records were dispersed throughout branches.<sup>41</sup> It was hoped this change would establish coordination and "rigid retention schedules" for city records. On May 15, 1969, Mayor Lindsay signed Local Law 69 transferring the Municipal Library and its employees from the care of NYPL into the newly formed MSA. The library's director, Eugene J. Bockman, announced this change: "As of June 30, 1969, the Municipal Reference Library, a branch of the New York Public Library, goes out of existence and on July 1, 1969, the Municipal Reference and Research Center (MRRC), of the Municipal Service Administration, the City of New York, is born."<sup>42</sup>

In 1969–77, the library remained in the MSA where it suffered due to budget cuts, neglect, and administration by city officials who had little to no experience managing libraries.<sup>43</sup> In 1977, the city transferred the Municipal Library and MAARC to their current home within the newly founded Department of Records and Information Services (DORIS). The transfer of the Municipal Reference Library out of NYPL had devastating effects on the library's services. In no way did it address the disorganized manner in which records were dispersed throughout branches or establish "rigid retention schedules and enforcing recognition of these schedules."<sup>44</sup> On the contrary, lack of support from both the city and NYPL hindered the library's success preventing it from keeping consistent policies, hours, and services. This has resulted in decades of incomplete projects and temporary initiatives.

## Conclusion

Inadequate funds and understaffing at the Municipal Library in part answers Juan Gonzalez's question: "how does somebody lose and then suddenly find 500 boxes?" The transfer of the library played a significant role in creating these conditions because of the ways it altered the library's administrative structure. In 1969, the Municipal Library became entirely tied to the demands of city administrations that did not see it as a valuable resource. When it lost the support of NYPL, the library's fate was to be determined by the attitudes and beliefs of individual mayors. This has resulted in decades of incomplete projects and temporary initiatives. For example, under Mayor Bloomberg, the library lost an entire room which was repurposed as a visitors

center: here agencies within DORIS featured archival exhibits and hosted dinners.<sup>46</sup> Under Mayor De Blasio, attention is paid to the libraries requests for technology but the Visitor Center is empty.<sup>47</sup> These changes in administration illustrate how pervasive the effects of this transfer have been in all aspects of the libraries work.

Juan Gonzalez's alarm at the state of the city's records is apt and raises critical questions for information professionals working with municipal documents: how do we take the long-term mission and vision of information professionals committed to increasing the availability and use of government documents and make it work with the mission and information goals of city agencies? Because the relationship between the Municipal Library and the city government seems to be fragile at best, it deserves our attention, study, and use. The Municipal Library's current state begs questions about the value and function of local government documents on a whole: whose lives are impacted when these kinds of records are less accessible? Why are they important? This history demands conversation about our responsibility for this kind of library: if the Municipal Library is not NYPL's responsibility nor the city government's responsibility then who is left?

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## Notes

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16. Barry W. Seaver, “Rebecca Rankin’s Campaign for a Municipal Archives in New York, 1920–1952,” *Libraries & the Cultural Record* 45, no. 3 (January 1, 2010): 263–96.
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24. *Ibid.*, 1–6.
25. Barry Seaver, “A Legacy of Reform: The Municipal Reference Library of the City of New York, 1913–1969,” *Bibliion: The Bulletin of the NYPL* 1 (1992): 142–55, 152.
26. Rogers, *New York Public Library and Service to Municipal Agencies*, 68.
27. *Ibid.*, 6–7.
28. Seaver, “A Legacy of Reform,” 152.
29. Kenneth Cobb, *History—Background of Municipal Archives and Municipal Reference Library*, Municipal Reference Library Vertical File, New York City Municipal Library, City of New York.
30. *Ibid.*, 10.
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32. City of New York, Bureau of the Budget, *The Records Management Program of the City of New York*, 1953.
33. For more information about the early relationship between these two agencies see Jason Horn, “Municipal Archives and Records Center of the City of New York,” *American Archivist* 16, no. 4 (1953): 311–20.
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41. Other accounts of this transfer illustrate different opinions. Jean Godfrey, Chief of the Branch Libraries, expressed apprehension about this transfer as well as apprehension on the part of Bockman's staff. In a letter written on February 14th 1968, Jean Godfrey notes "while Mr. Bockman quite frankly states the personal advantages to him that the transfer holds and while he feels that the rest of MU's staff would benefit accordingly [staff members are] not at all happy about the prospect of such a transfer." Godfrey to Edward Geier Freehager, February 14, 1968, Box 1, Transfer to NYC, Municipal Reference Library Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
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45. A press release from the MSA in 1975 describes how eight of the fifteen employees at the library had been fired and it only had the funds and capacity to be open two days a week. As mentioned above, DORIS' 2009 *Annual Report* discusses staff cuts that reduced the library's staff by 50 percent. Municipal Service Administration, *City's Reference Library to Close Three Days a Week*, June 16, 1975, Municipal Reference Library Vertical File, New York City Municipal Library, City of New York.
46. Christine Bruzzese, interview by Mia Bruner, New York Municipal Library, October 2016.
47. *Ibid.*

# Understanding Controversy

## Government Information on Dietary Sustainability

Sarah Klimek

**W**hen the Advisory Report for the 2015 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* was released in February 2015, news outlets and other media platforms quickly zeroed in on some of the report's most controversial guidelines. Roughly one week after the report was released, National Public Radio released a news story titled "Will the Dietary Guidelines Consider the Planet? The Fight is On," discussing the heated controversy that was already brewing over a particular recommendation that addressed the topic of environmental sustainability.<sup>1</sup> This recommendation essentially warned that current dietary patterns in the United States have created serious environmental problems that threaten long-term food security, and therefore the guidelines should not only recommend dietary changes that support human nutrition, but that also support the consumption of more environmentally sustainable foods.<sup>2</sup> As illustrated in the report's media coverage, this recommendation produced a storm of controversy, particularly on whether issues of environmental sustainability were appropriate inclusions in a report that focused on human health and nutrition. When the final version of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* eventually appeared in December 2015, the sustainability guideline was noticeably absent from the recommendations.

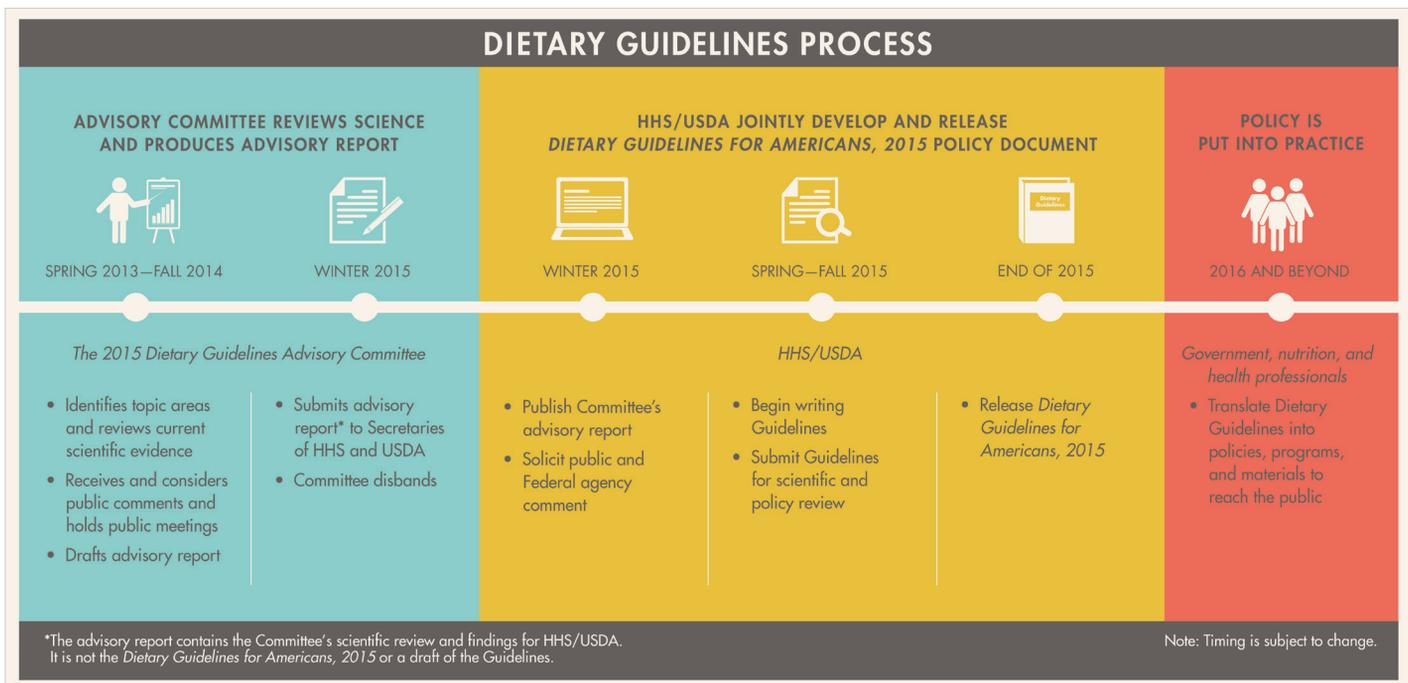
### Summary

While news outlets provided fairly extensive coverage of the arguments held both for and against the inclusion of a sustainability recommendation, they provided fairly little background into the actual issue introduced by the Advisory Report: how dietary choices, from the population level down to the individual level, impact not only human health but also the health of the environment. Yet it appears that the federal government, which is typically a valuable source for information on current social, political, and economic issues, has done little to publish and disseminate resources that explain this issue to the general public. While government agency websites and other resources

provide access to information on tangential issues related to agricultural and environmental sustainability, few resources geared specifically toward educating the public on the connection between diet and sustainability exist. Given the important role that government resources can play in educating the public on current issues, this absence of government information has notable limitations on the public's ability to learn about how this issue might affect their lives and the creation of government policy. Fortunately, the growing level of attention that this topic has received, as illustrated both in the advisory report itself and the growth of international resources addressing this topic, provides an exciting opportunity for the creation of new government educational resources. By publishing more information specifically for the general public on the connection between dietary choices and environmental sustainability, the US government would more effectively uphold its role in supporting the public's ability to stay informed of current government issues.

### Background to Government Involvement in Sustainability

Concerns surrounding environmental sustainability have influenced government policy since the conservation movements of the early twentieth century, but the issue was not firmly embedded into federal policy until the creation of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.<sup>3</sup> This act laid out the fundamental goals for a national sustainability policy that would "create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony" and established required sustainability regulations for federal agencies.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, in recognizing "the critical importance of restoring and maintaining environmental quality to the overall welfare and development of man," NEPA set out to address environmental problems created by activities like industrialization and resource exploitation, to mitigate their impact on the quality of the



An overview of the 2015 Dietary Guidelines creation process. Source: Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, and US Department of Agriculture, "From Advisory Report to Policy Document: Creating the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015," accessed May 1, 2016, <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/At-a-Glance-Advisory-Report-to-Policy-Document.pdf>.

natural environment and the overall health of the human population.<sup>5</sup> In July of that same year, President Nixon delivered the Reorganization Plan No. 3, which authorized the creation of an Environmental Protection Agency that would consolidate efforts by different agencies to address sustainability issues into a single agency.<sup>6</sup> Since then the federal government, with the EPA at the forefront, has worked to address pressing environmental issues such as pollution, resource conservation, pesticide use, and energy efficiency, turning environmental sustainability into an issue of critical national importance.<sup>7</sup>

As environmental sustainability has developed into a central policy issue, agencies like the EPA have published extensive resources to educate the public on the various issues and subsets of sustainability. Today, many of those resources are available online through the EPA's website, where the agency provides an incredible range of information and resources to help members of the public learn about sustainability in general, specific environmental issues like pesticide use or water pollution, and how these issues can affect their personal lives. Given the impact that environmental issues have on individuals and the development of government policies, as evidenced most recently through problems like the Flint water crisis, educational resources that introduce and explain such issues are invaluable.

## Dietary Sustainability and the 2015 Scientific Advisory Report

Within the realm of environmental sustainability, the issue of dietary sustainability has emerged as another critically important component of the broader sustainability challenge. The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) recently defined sustainable diets as "diets with low environmental impacts which contribute to food and nutrition security and to healthy life for present and future generations."<sup>8</sup> Such diets aim to support human health in ways that are also environmentally responsible, such as through a greater reliance on eating local food and reducing consumption of foods that require significant amounts of energy to be produced and transported.<sup>9</sup> Recent scientific studies have measured the effects of food choices, such as consuming high amounts of meat versus consuming mostly plant-based foods, through indicators like gas emissions and land usage, while others have examined the impacts of environmental degradation, which can result in the loss of food biodiversity and the availability of valuable nutrients, on human health and nutrition.<sup>10</sup> As with the issue of sustainability in general, the specific problem of dietary sustainability focuses on the intersection between environmental health and human health, with dietary patterns as the key link.

The issue of dietary sustainability came to the forefront of federal policy discussions with the release of the Scientific Advisory Report in February 2015. This report, developed by

a committee of renowned nutrition and health experts, offered a set of nutrition standards, based on reviews of the most recent scientific literature, that the committee recommended for inclusion in the final guidelines publication. Within the report's chapter on "Food Sustainability and Safety," the committee argued that, although environmental issues had never before been addressed within the guidelines, the strong connections between food consumption and environmental health, and particularly the impact of those connections on long-term food security, warranted the inclusion of a sustainability recommendation.<sup>11</sup> To encourage a transition toward "less resource-intensive diets," the committee recommended that Americans move toward dietary patterns that favor consumption of vegetables, fruits, legumes, and whole grains while decreasing consumption of some animal-based foods.<sup>12</sup> These transitions, the committee claimed, would not only address current health epidemics like obesity and diabetes, but would also support environmental health and ensure that healthy, nutritious food would be available for current and future generations.<sup>13</sup>

When the Advisory Report was initially released, reactions to this particular recommendation were passionate and immediate. The US Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and Health and Human Services (HHS) received around 19,000 comments on this recommendation alone, and while a significant majority of those comments were positive, many others expressed fierce opposition to this recommendation.<sup>14</sup> The USDA and HHS received floods of comments against the recommendation from the general public and from members of Congress, in which they frequently argued that environmental issues were outside the scope of the Dietary Guidelines.<sup>15</sup> In fact, this recommendation proved so controversial that a provision in the 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act prevented the Secretary of HHS from continuing with the guidelines unless they focused solely on diet and nutrition.<sup>16</sup> Eventually, on October sixth, Secretaries Visack and Burwell announced via the USDA blog that, although they felt the issue of environmental sustainability to be an important topic, they determined "because this is a matter of scope, we do not believe that the 2015 DGAs are the appropriate vehicle for this important policy conversation about sustainability."<sup>17</sup> While the Advisory Report's sustainability recommendation may not have made it to the final guidelines, it certainly raised awareness of the topic of dietary sustainability and launched the issue into the national spotlight.

## Availability of Government Information on Dietary Sustainability

Despite the significant attention that this recommendation received in both the government and the media, the federal

government currently offers a surprisingly limited amount of information for the general public on the actual topic of food sustainability itself. There are, of course, several resources that get close to the central issue of dietary sustainability, including resources from the USDA on the development of more sustainable agricultural practices and resources from the EPA on reducing food waste.<sup>18</sup> However, the USDA resources focus on agricultural production, not dietary patterns, while the EPA's resources fail to discuss issues surrounding food sustainability at all, other than in the context of food waste. Though undoubtedly useful in their own right, all of these resources fail to explain or even address the connection between dietary choices, human health, and environmental health, which is ultimately at the heart of dietary sustainability. Without addressing that key issue, the information available on the topic of dietary sustainability is inevitably and woefully incomplete.

Currently, only a very limited number of government resources discuss the role that dietary patterns play in shaping both human and environmental health, and how certain consumption choices can positively or negatively impact both. One of the only exceptions uncovered throughout this research was a webpage created by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), yet this resource has several issues that significantly limit its educational value.<sup>19</sup> Not only is the webpage inaccessible via the topic overviews provided on the CDC website or through links provided in the site index, but several of the links provided at the bottom of this page, which are intended to direct users to more resources, are also broken. Nearly all of those that do work simply redirect to a short seven-year-old podcast with author Michael Pollan.<sup>20</sup> While this CDC page and the related podcast certainly provide some measure of information, they are hardly adequate for anyone hoping to educate themselves on this issue. Unfortunately, this poorly maintained website is potentially the most that the federal government has provided so far in terms of educational resources.

This overall lack of public-friendly government information undoubtedly impacts the extent to which members of the general public can learn more about this issue. Although this topic has been brought up within the broader context of national policy and could potentially influence its creation in the future, members of the public have no government resources to which they can turn to educate themselves. This absence of resources reflects a missed opportunity on behalf of the government to help the general public engage with and contribute to national dialogues on this topic. While support of specific dietary recommendations is undoubtedly influenced by a variety of additional political and economic factors, it is arguably much more difficult to even have a real discussion on the merits of

### Organic products from far-off lands?

Organic products from abroad are often cast in an unfavourable light. The reason for this is that transporting them uses up a great deal of energy.

#### RULE OF THUMB

Products from overseas produced in the most sustainable way possible may have an acceptable energy balance if there was no costly storage and the goods were transported by ship. As it is hard to find out how the goods were transported, it is best to choose foods that have three specific characteristics: organic, regional, and seasonal. Sometimes, it is not easy to find such products. Make sure then that at least one of the three aspects is covered.

Tips and strategies for sustainable food shopping. Source: German Council for Sustainable Development, "The Sustainable Shopping Basket: A Guide to Better Shopping," November 2013, [www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/uploads/media/Brochure\\_Sustainable\\_Shopping\\_Basket\\_01.pdf](http://www.nachhaltigkeitsrat.de/uploads/media/Brochure_Sustainable_Shopping_Basket_01.pdf).

addressing sustainability in the guidelines, let alone effectively argue for its inclusion, if congressional members and members of the public are largely unaware of the issue in the first place. For any meaningful dialogue to take place, those involved must first be aware of the issue and have access to resources that can provide further information.

### An International Perspective

While the US federal government provides a very limited amount of information to help educate the general public on dietary sustainability, the types of resources that other countries and international organizations have developed serve as a valuable model for the resources that US agencies could soon develop. As members of the Advisory Committee noted in their report, the notion of addressing environmental concerns within nutrition guidelines has been widely accepted elsewhere: in countries such as Germany, Brazil, Australia, and several Nordic countries.<sup>21</sup> The 2013 *Australian Dietary Guidelines* include an appendix on "Food, nutrition, and environmental sustainability" in which the authors assert, much like the members of the US Advisory Committee, that "health should be considered in sustainable food systems, where the nutritional requirements of the population can be met without placing pressure on natural resources."<sup>22</sup> Similarly, the most recent version of Finland's

nutrition recommendations includes a discussion on ways to make food choices that are environmentally sustainable.<sup>23</sup> Yet in addition, these countries also provide easily accessible educational resources specifically designed to help members of the general public learn about the overall issue of dietary sustainability, as well as the ways in which the issue relates to their personal lives and daily actions. In the recent Nordic Nutrition Recommendations, which included an entire chapter devoted to dietary sustainability, the authors not only succinctly summarized the issue, but also created a series of streamlined tables that clearly list the health and environmental effects of food choices, as a way of informing consumers of the impacts that their food choices have on their physical health and the health of the environment.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, in addition to addressing environmental sustainability in their dietary guidelines, the German Council for Sustainable Development published a sustainable food shopping guide to help consumers better understand the environmental impact that various foods have, and how they can alter their food choices and shopping habits in a way that is more environmentally sustainable.<sup>25</sup> This resource includes charts that display the growing seasons for fruits and vegetables, to help consumers purchase foods that can be produced locally and in season, as well as informational guides on what sustainable consumption means, why it is important, and

how consumers can modify their own food shopping habits to support environmental sustainability.

Even international organizations like the FAO and the United Nations provide a wealth of educational resources on this topic, including guides, educational videos, and much more. For example, the FAO's homepage on "Sustainable Development Goals" provides topical overviews and summaries of different food sustainability issues, links to webpages that discuss individual sustainability goals developed by the UN, and photo galleries that discuss and illustrate various issues and topics related to food sustainability.<sup>26</sup> In addition, UN sources on sustainability goals and brochures such as "The Lazy Person's Guide to Saving the World" provide basic facts, figure tables on the environmental impacts of various food choices, recent related news stories, and tips and strategies to help general consumers make more sustainable purchases.<sup>27</sup>

The types of easily accessible informational resources that other countries and international organizations have created for the general public serve as valuable models for the resources that US government agencies could also publish. As the Advisory Committee noted several times within its report, "consumer-friendly information that facilitates understanding the environmental impact of different foods" should be widely communicated to the public.<sup>28</sup> In stark contrast to the limited and poorly maintained resources provided by the US government, the guides, lists, and webpages that other governments and organizations have created present the complex issue of dietary sustainability in an accessible and understandable format. Moreover, these resources not only explain this issue and its importance, but also illustrate how individuals can take action to address it. Ultimately, these resources denote a conscious effort to inform members of the public about an issue that has already shaped, or has the clear potential to shape, government policies that affect the everyday lives of citizens.

## Conclusion

The fierce controversy surrounding the sustainability recommendation of the 2015 Advisory Report revealed an overall lack of resources on dietary sustainability that the US government has produced for the general public. Yet the increased attention that the report generated on this issue has also created a perfect opportunity for government agencies to address this absence. Government informational resources provide an invaluable contribution to the general public's education on social and political issues that affect both government policy and their personal everyday lives. While the US has yet to incorporate sustainability into its Dietary Guidelines and may not do so for some time, the topic has clearly become important within the

scientific and broader international community. Now, with the Advisory Report, this issue has directly impacted policy discourse in the US government as well. Though the role of diet represents only one factor within the broader realm of environmental sustainability, it is a critical factor, and one that has directly confronted our current understanding of the connections between human and environmental health and how society can support both in tandem. Just as federal agencies like the EPA have created resources on other sustainability issues that have influenced government policy, the time has come to develop more resources that address this growing issue of dietary sustainability. The availability of informational resources would create opportunities for informed and thoughtful discussions on this issue to take place, ultimately providing the foundation upon which our society can continue to face the environmental and health challenges of the twenty-first century.

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# FOIA: Then and Now

Sami Kerzel

Enacted in 1966 and effective July 4, 1967, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) gives people, both citizens and non-citizens, the right to request access to federal executive branch agency records.<sup>1</sup> According to FOIA's website, provided by the United States Department of Justice, FOIA "is a law that gives you the right to access information from the federal government. It is often described as the law that keeps citizens in the know about their government."<sup>2</sup> However, agencies may at their own discretion provide access to records that fall under these exemptions and exclusions when allowed by law.<sup>3</sup> Due to amendments that have occurred overtime, FOIA remains relevant in today's technological world. Some information, called proactive disclosures, are made freely available online by agencies, which do not require a request, and when requests are needed they can be made electronically.<sup>4</sup> To truly understand FOIA an understanding of its general workings, amendment history and recent legislation is beneficial.

While the idea of a citizen's right to information was not new, due to the Administrative Procedure Act of 1946,<sup>5</sup> a decade of debate among a variety of interested parties produced FOIA.<sup>6</sup> Many government officials criticized FOIA; they questioned the amount of government information it would make available, and even its effectiveness.<sup>7</sup> Meanwhile, the press worried that loopholes in the statute would prevent access to information.<sup>8</sup> Although having many reservations about FOIA, Former President Johnson issued a signing statement rather than a public event. In this statement, Lyndon B. Johnson noted, "There are some who have expressed concern that the language of this bill will be construed in such a way as to impair government operation."<sup>9</sup> He continued, "I have always believed that freedom of information is so vital that only the national security, not the desire of public officials or private citizens, should determine when it must be restricted . . . I sign this measure with a deep sense of pride that the United States is an open society."<sup>10</sup> This change in mindset was fueled by a growing need for such litigation.

The only reasons for nondisclosure are outlined in the Act's nine exemptions and three exclusions.<sup>11</sup> While these have been amended since FOIA's conception, at the time they should have provided worried parties with a greater understanding and delivered some relief. Additional provisions even provide requesters the right to appeal refused fulfillments. While FOIA's early years were surrounded by conflict over information and access, the topic is still widely debated, as can be seen through the 279 pieces of legislation that have passed both chambers, 248 bills that have made it to the president, and 230 bills that have become public law related to information issues since 1973.<sup>12</sup> At the heart of keeping FOIA current and applicable are its amendments, which started with the first in 1974 and has seen a continued trend up until today.

FOIA's first amendment in 1974 narrowed exemptions relating to law enforcement and national security, and expanded provisions for requesters "relating to fees, time limits, segregability, and in camera inspection by the courts."<sup>13</sup> This first major amendment was partially a reaction Watergate, and the abuses of power that occurred. During the same year the Privacy Act of 1974 was enacted, which partially supplements FOIA by establishing guidelines when requests by an individual seeking information about themselves.<sup>14</sup> Essentially, the Privacy Act guarantees the right to see records about yourself, to amend records if they are outdated or wrong, and to use the government for any violations.<sup>15</sup> As the government compiles a wide range of information on individuals, additional controls outlining what is gathered, how it is stored, and how it is used simply provides the public with security. Smaller amendments continued throughout the 70s and early 80s. These amendments focused on limiting what could be withheld as disclosure,<sup>16</sup> technical changes relating to administrative disciplinary proceeding,<sup>17</sup> and repealing expedited court-review.<sup>18</sup>

The second major amendment to FOIA occurred when the Freedom of Information Reform Act of 1986 was enacted by Congress. After two decades of experience this reform clarified the information accessible in relation to law enforcement

and national security by expanding exemptions for law enforcement information, and law enforcement record exclusion.<sup>19</sup> Additionally, this amendment created a new fee and waiver structure to reflect different types of requesters, creating appropriate cost levels. Ten years of continued use and practice followed the 1986 amendment, a long period of relative quietness compared to the decade before when FOIA was constantly evolving.

Eventually, technical growth during the late 80s and 90s, via accessible personal computers and beginning of the internet, caught up with FOIA through the Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments (EFOIA) of 1996.<sup>20</sup> EFOIA brought FOIA into the twenty-first century by requiring the access of certain information electronically via FOIA Reading Rooms on the agency websites. Due to its online nature, EFOIA addresses “the difficult problem areas of compliance with the Act’s time limits and administrative backlogs at many federal agencies, among other procedural issues.”<sup>21</sup> This amendment increased the amount of time for initial response to twenty days from twenty days, but tightened what is considered “exceptional circumstances,” and allowed for a requester to demonstrate compelling need for materials. Also, denial notification now required denied records to be numerically specified.<sup>22</sup> This amendment was a huge change for FOIA and forced many agencies into the twenty-first century, while others were already embracing it.

After the September 11 terrorist attacks, FOIA was amended through the Intelligence Act of 2003.<sup>23</sup> This amendment limited the ability of the foreign intelligence community (i.e., foreign governments, international governmental organizations, intelligence agents, etc.) to either directly or indirectly request information via FOIA.<sup>24</sup> Prior to this amendment any one, whether they were a U.S. citizen or not, could submit a request via FOIA. Amendments such as this, while reactive, maintain the relevance and importance of FOIA in today’s government information climate.

Along a similar vein as the 1996 amendment, the OPEN Government Act of 2007 addressed many procedural issues. Essentially, the OPEN Government Act focused on fixing the FOIA system by specifically targeting delay and lack of responsiveness from agencies.<sup>25</sup> Enhanced online access assisted with the receiving and responding to requests; however, technology didn’t stop growing just for FOIA. Some changes included a

definition of news media requesters; the recovery of attorney fees and litigation costs; computing and tolling (or stopping) the time limits for responding to requests; tracking requests; agency annual

reporting requirements; Attorney General and Special Counsel reporting requirements; treatment of agency records maintained by government contractors; creation of a new office in NARA; codification of the key roles played by Chief FOIA Officers and FOIA Public Liaisons; and new marking requirements for documents.<sup>26</sup>

While not all of these are directly related to technology and online advancements, one can see an increased technological aspect in many of these provisions. Continuing to adapt and push the system, rather than settling with whatever is at hand, allows FOIA to hold a greater impact and relevance in modern society.

Over FOIA’s history there have been times of reform and practice; both of which are spurred by events, technology, and often people. Both former President Clinton and President Obama are known for their push towards openness in government information. Former President Clinton called for agencies to embody the spirit and primary objective of the Act, and reminded agencies “The statute was enacted based upon the fundamental principle that an informed citizenry is essential to the democratic process and that the more the American people know about their government the better they will be governed.”<sup>27</sup> President Obama believes that FOIA should be administered believing that “In the face of doubt, openness prevails,” and “that agencies should take affirmative action to make information public . . . not wait for specific requests from the public.”<sup>28</sup> This last thought is one that embodies the ideas behind the EFOIA and OPEN Government amendments, which push for more widely accessible and available information.

Unfortunately, not every voice in the current landscape is as welcoming. In fact, FOIA amendments often are met with hostility, and an unwillingness to bend to another party’s agenda. While specific proposed amendments in recent years have been championed by bipartisan leadership, the unwillingness to work across the aisle in the larger houses has led to the failure of FOIA amendments. The Electronic Frontier Foundation notes, “It is becoming something of an annual tradition for Congress to introduce FOIA legislation with overwhelming bipartisan support,<sup>29</sup> only to be shot down by one house or the other. This is unsurprising when noting that in recent years Congress has not been good at passing bills. In fact, the 113th Congress, known as “The Fighting 113th,” was the “least productive ever.”<sup>30</sup>

During the 113th Congress the FOIA Improvement Act of 2014 and the FOIA Oversight and Implementation Act of 2014

were proposed and died. Both houses passed their representative bills,<sup>31</sup> but leaders in both house failed to put legislation to vote before adjourning for the summer. These amendments would have codified President Obama's open government directive. Both amendments received push back from the Department of Justice (DOJ) who believed the language used would allow for more frequent lawsuits on part of the requester.<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, the DOJ oversees government wide FOIA compliance, and one might imagine they would be happy about much needed reform.<sup>33</sup> Many politicians were surprised House republicans, especially House leader John Boehner, let a bill go unsigned that would have given the people greater oversight powers, especially since they have been interested in overseeing the Obama administration.<sup>34</sup> Both amendments failed due to minimal differences within their text, and specific agendas, even though more than seventy groups backed the Senate bill.

Currently, during the 114th Congress there are two bills with familiar titles: the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 and the FOIA Oversight and Implementation Act of 2016.<sup>35</sup> Both originated from the former legislation introduced during the 113th Congress. The FOIA Improvement Act was approved by was passed by the Senate on March 15, 2016, and the FOIA Oversight and Implementation Act was passed by the House on January 11, 2016. Both bills are waiting to be signed by the House and Senate, respectively. The next step is to settle differences between both bills without a conference committee, where the bill has a greater chance of dying.<sup>36</sup> July 4, 2016, marks FOIA's fiftieth anniversary, at which point FOIA advocates hope to see a final bill set forth by Congress ready for the President to sign.<sup>37</sup>

As a whole, the Senate bill reaffirms an openness in government. The bill addresses deficiencies in Federal agency FOIA request responses, since many agencies are resisting responding to requests, creating a substantial backlog and leading to expensive litigation.<sup>38</sup> Specifically, the bill addresses this issue by prohibiting withholding records unless it would harm an interest protected by FOIA exemptions or outlined in other statutes, and limiting exemption 5, which is often referred to as the "withhold it because you want to" exemption.<sup>39</sup> Internal agency deliberations would no longer be able to be withheld if they were older than twenty-five years. Unfortunately, this new provision doesn't go far enough, because it excludes a broader document base, which is often excluded by misuse of exemption 5.<sup>40</sup> Also, the bill states that fees cannot be charged if the request is not fulfilled within the twenty-day deadline, adding protection for requesters.<sup>41</sup> Finally, bringing FOIA into a more modern twenty-first century, the bill provides for a central

online FOIA request portal. Overall, unlike the House bill, the Senate's bill does not provide for greater secrecy for national security agencies, but rather promotes greater transparency across the federal government.<sup>42</sup>

The House bill is only slightly different from the Senate's bill; however, hopefully these differences won't produce another stalemate like past litigation. This bill also increases transparency and accountability in government; however, goes a step further than the Senate bill by codifying government openness.<sup>43</sup> Also, the House bill expands the provisions to exemption 5 by including all documents in the twenty-five-year sunset limitations, which like the Senate bill would hold the force of law over agencies withholding unnecessary documents.<sup>44</sup> Holding federal employees to this amendment, an additional provision states that annual performance evaluations must measure the responsibility and responsiveness to FOIA requests for each employee.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the bill would make it easier for Courts to award attorney's fees to requesters who sue based on denial of requests.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, the bill only brings some agencies into the twenty-first century by requiring all agencies to accept requests via email.<sup>47</sup> Also, there are a few provisions that allows for greater secrecy especially concerning intelligence agencies, something that has been troubling to US citizens after learning more about mass surveillance activities.<sup>48</sup> While FOIA already has an exemption which protects classified materials, this new provision would prohibit the disclosure of materials which negatively impact intelligence sources and methods, but the language is incredibly vague, which would allow agencies greater nondisclosure. Another provision exempts intelligence agencies from having to disclose documents not provided due to being prohibited by law, and would not need to inform requesters when they consult with other agencies, due to materials being generated by the other agency. Essentially, these additional provisions restrict government transparency in ways that prevent citizens from knowing more about their government.

The Senate and House bills are attempting to bring greater transparency, although they both limit transparency relating to certain materials or agencies. Currently, FOIA legislation is pushed by a broken FOIA system, which often focuses on small issues rather than larger, big picture ideas.<sup>49</sup> During 2015, 14.41 percent of request were backlogged or not responded to, 59.29 percent of requests were released in part, and 7.28 percent of requests were completely denied.<sup>50</sup> Simply looking at these statistics one can see there are issues with the system. FOIA's effectiveness has been maintained by continued amendments throughout its fifty years; unfortunately, current politicians have yet to come to an agreement on how to continue to improve FOIA and

provide for continual relevance. As many Presidents and politicians have noted, the rights FOIA provides are central to the rights of Americans and continued growth of America.

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# Military Bands and Government Documents

Daniel E. Ray

Since before the founding of the United States, musicians have been an integral part of the military. Throughout history armies have used trumpets and drums to enhance communication and assist the movement of mass forces.<sup>1</sup> Over time, the military has influenced both the makeup of musical ensembles, and styles of popular music. The modern American wind band featuring brass, woodwinds and percussion, is modeled after British military bands.<sup>2</sup> And the marches of John Phillip Sousa, who served as the director of the President's Own Marine Band for twelve years,<sup>3</sup> remain popular to this day. His "Stars and Stripes Forever" is considered our national march. Today, the US Army declares itself "the oldest and largest employer of musicians in the world."<sup>4</sup> Military musicians around the world perform in bands, choruses, orchestras and popular ensembles. Such a rich historical and cultural resource is well documented in government publications. It is possible that official information could be utilized by service members, policy makers and the general public. The scope of this paper is to discuss types of information sources, highlighting examples relating to the current state of military bands.

## Background

The tradition of bands in the United States military dates back to colonial times.<sup>5</sup> From the fife and drums of Washington's Continental Army to the regimental bands of the Civil War to the rock bands entertaining troops in Iraq, military musicians have provided music that inspires and entertains soldier and civilian alike. The official mission of US Army Bands is to "provide music throughout the spectrum of military operations, instill in our soldiers the will to fight and win, foster the support of our citizens, and promote our national interests at home and abroad."<sup>6</sup> Although each of the armed services explains it slightly differently, the ceremonial, inspirational and diplomatic roles of military musicians are demonstrated by soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and coast guardsmen serving

their country as musicians in bands throughout the United States and around the world. The role of military musicians was lauded by President Bill Clinton in a speech delivered at the White House on the two-hundredth anniversary of the founding of the President's Own Marine Corps Band.<sup>7</sup> It was even the subject of an entire issue of *Music Educators Journal*, a publication of the National Association for Music Education.<sup>8</sup> With more than six thousand musicians performing throughout the world in active duty, reserve and National Guard bands,<sup>9</sup> the US military continues to support the contribution of military musicians. There are currently more than one hundred bands in the US Army, seventeen in the Air Force, thirteen in the Navy, twelve in the Marine Corps, and one in the Coast Guard.<sup>10</sup>

## Funding Legislation

In 2012, the amount military musicians and the question of funding was the spotlight of an amendment to a defense spending bill in the US House of Representatives.<sup>11</sup> Representative Betty McCollum sponsored a measure to limit spending on military bands from \$325 million to \$200 million.<sup>12</sup> In a statement on her official website, the representative argued that the amount currently spent on military bands is neither strategically necessary nor fiscally responsible. "It is excessive and a luxury the Pentagon and taxpayers can no longer afford."<sup>13</sup> This amendment was countered by Representative John Carter, who argued in favor of the important role military bands play in military ceremonies, funerals and patriotic celebrations.<sup>14</sup> Ultimately, the measure was not included in the final bill. But the threat of spending cuts to military musical units continues. It was highlighted again by recent House legislation requesting a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the current state of military bands. The report requires GAO to "submit a report to the Senate Committee on Armed Services and the House Committee on Armed Services by February 1, 2017,

on the Department of Defense requirement for military bands.<sup>15</sup>

GAO has previously prepared reports on military bands for Congress. Its report to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations titled *Expenditures for Public Affairs Activities*, Department of Defense, dated July 1973, provided statistics on the five military bands located in the Washington, DC, area and three other bands on separate bases.<sup>16</sup> A later GAO report on military bands was conducted in 1981. According to the report, there had been steady reductions in the number of bands and personnel since 1964. Despite a decrease in funding, however, the report noted an increase in the number of performances per band.<sup>17</sup> The 2016 House report on military bands, in addition to the GAO report, requests from the Secretary of Defense a briefing on the current state of military bands and a recounting of spending reductions over the last five years. Band related items are also occasionally included in spending bills. For example, a Navy Fleet Band National Tour was listed in section 4301 of the House's military appropriations bill for fiscal year 2016.<sup>18</sup>

## Other Legislation

Although spending bills feature prominently among legislative documents relating to military bands, there have been other actions that have affected musical units of the US military. One significant change in US military band policy has been to allow bands to make and sell recordings. Previously to 1974 this was not allowed as a protection to professional civilian musicians and the initial changes were limited in scope. In 1974, House Resolution 14401 was passed, allowing military bands to make recordings in celebration of the Bicentennial celebration and Public Law No. 93-571 allowed the commercial sales of records from 1975 to 1976. Later, The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991 allowed special bands to sell recordings.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, all military bands were allowed to distribute recordings as part of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010.<sup>20</sup> The current law regarding recordings of



Figure 1. The Presidents Own Marine Corps Band performs funeral honors at Arlington National Cemetery, 2016. Source: "The President's Own," United States Marine Corps Band, [www.marineband.marines.mil/Photos.aspx?igphoto=2001546967](http://www.marineband.marines.mil/Photos.aspx?igphoto=2001546967).



Figure 2. Members 101st Airborne Division Band perform for soldiers in Afghanistan. Source: *Featured Photos*, [www.music.army.mil/images/slideshow/h\\_101ABN\\_2013\\_01.jpg](http://www.music.army.mil/images/slideshow/h_101ABN_2013_01.jpg).

military bands states that, "A military musical unit may produce recordings for distribution to the public, at a cost not to exceed expenses of production and distribution."<sup>21</sup> This change in policy is reflected by the online music source, iTunes. A search for "us military band" returns recordings by the US Army Band, the US Military Academy Band, The United States Marine band and the US Air Force Band (figure 3).

Showing results for "us military band"

Albums

NAME	ARTIST	ALBUM	TIME	POPULARITY	PRICE
1 My Country 'Tis of Thee	Us Military Band	Marching Bands & 4th of July Songs	1:13		\$0.99
2 National Anthem	US Army Band	A Patriotic Salute to the Military Family	1:16		\$0.99
3 My Country 'Tis of Thee	US Military Band	4th of July Classic Celebration	1:13		\$0.99
4 The Army Goes Rolling Along (The U.S. Army Song)	US Army Band	50 American Patriotic Military Songs	1:06		\$0.99
5 My Country 'Tis of Thee	Us Military Band	Memorial Day Country Salute	1:13		\$0.99
6 This Is My Country	US Air Force Band, Singing Sergeants & US Air Force Band an...	50 American Patriotic Military Songs	3:30		\$0.99
7 The Thunderer	US Army Band	50 American Patriotic Military Songs	2:47		\$0.99
8 America the Beautiful	US Air Force Band and Singing Sergeants, US Air Force Band &...	50 American Patriotic Military Songs	2:21		\$0.99
9 The Marines' Hymn	US Marine Band	A Patriotic Salute to the Military Family	0:56		\$0.99
10 National Emblem March	US Army Band	50 American Patriotic Military Songs	3:03		\$0.99

Figure 3. Search results for "us military band" in iTunes. Source: Image capture of iTunes taken by author.

### Executive Policy

Department of Defense (DoD) policies also influence military bands. In 2005, the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission made significant changes to military bases, prompting many units to deactivate or relocate. Although the initial report did not mention Army Bands, The Army overview for fiscal year 2008/2009 listed changes to specific facilities affecting the bands at Fort Carson and Fort Eustis, as well as the Army Material Command Band and 151 Army Band.<sup>22</sup> For some bands it meant being located to a new or renovated facility. In the case of the 70th Army Band, the closure of Fort Lawton actually resulted in deactivation of the band.

### Official Publications

Government published documents related to military bands take a variety of forms, from official regulations and training manuals to legislative reports and public laws. An information need for military musicians is locating current versions of official publications. Each branch of the armed services manages its own publications. Regulations, Technical Manuals, Field Manuals and other official publications for the US Army are managed by the Army Publishing Directorate (APD) (armypubs.army.mil), which is currently undergoing a migration to a new website (www.apd.army.mil). Searching the open web for a document often results in an obsolete version from an unofficial source. Finding current documents often requires a knowledge of the document name, and specific agency producing it.

Many military bands also have their own websites, providing information regarding performances, educational

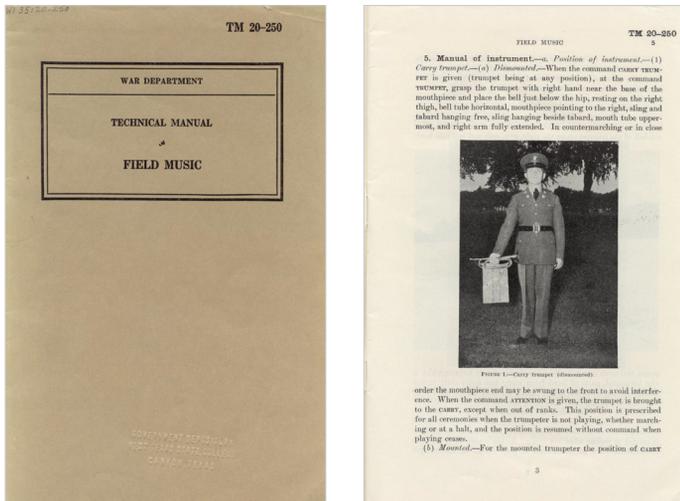
resources, career opportunities and links to social media. In addition to printed and electronic visual media, military bands have released a variety of audio and video recordings available through their unit websites, YouTube channels and online music distributors such as iTunes. For members of military musical units, information and news about military bands is often found on social media, and through media outlets such as the *Washington Post* and *Army Times*.<sup>23</sup> Archival documents are also available, including obsolete forms (figure 4) and historic photographs (figure 5).

### Dissemination of Information/ Access Issues

Finding information about military bands has some built in obstacles. The first of which is the fact that many documents are produced and managed by each individual branch of service. As a result, searching for "military bands" may not include resources prepared by or for the individual services. A Google search for "us military band" returned more than 6 million results. The first page of results included six links for Army Band websites, a Marine Corps Band, a YouTube video featuring military musicians in concert, a tourist guide to Washington, DC and a Wikipedia entry for "United States military bands." The previously mentioned National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1991,<sup>24</sup> for example, affects all military bands, but is applied to each branch in Title 10 US Code in separate chapters for Army, Navy and Marine Corps and Air Force, with the exception of the Coast Guard, which is listed in its own Title of US Code.<sup>25</sup> Recent legislation has further complicated search efforts by replacing the term "military band" with the term "military musical unit" in the US Code.<sup>26</sup> Awareness of the switch in terminology is helpful in framing queries.

### Conclusion

Performing musical units have been firmly established as an important part of the US military, and government published documents provide a rich resource for information about them. In addition to legislation and federal policy, the bands of each service create promotional materials, educational resources and recordings in a variety of media. As the GAO prepares its report on the current state of military musical units, it will be important for service members, policy makers and the general public to acquire current and historic information. There are voices on



**Figure 4. Technical Manual TM 20-250: Field Music, 1940. Source: Field Music [electronic resource]: technical manual. Online collection of Historic Government Publications at Central University Libraries, Southern Methodist University, <http://digitalcollections.smu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/hgp/id/665>.**



**Figure 5. President Truman inspecting troops at Guantanamo Bay, 1948. Source: Photo from Harry Truman Library located by search on National Archives website, [www.trumanlibrary.org/photographs/printRecord.php?id=39268](http://www.trumanlibrary.org/photographs/printRecord.php?id=39268).**

both sides of the funding issue, with some declaring military bands an institutional necessity, and others criticizing them as a frivolous and unnecessary expense. Access to government published information will be important for both parties, as will news regarding future reports and policies.

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# Review

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*Locating U.S. Government Information Handbook*, 3rd ed. E. Herman and T. Belniak. Buffalo, NY: William S. Hein, 2015.

Web guides of all kinds suffer from a brief shelf life, owing to rapid changes and redesigns in the online environment. It is almost a pity that the authors of this work devised such excellent chapters on FDSys and Census, as the former will be superseded by govinfo.gov, while American Factfinder has its successor in Alpha testing. Happily, this third-edition work has a sufficient strength of organization, comprehensive resources,

and easy-to-follow guides and background information that it can stay useful for several years at least.

Far more than a website cookbook, it offers concise chapters on the intricacies of data, the mysteries of geography and GIS, and the culture and missions of diverse federal agencies. Government information is bewildering in its complexity, as it can be found by subject layers, agencies, purpose or function such as statistics, technical reports, maps, GIS data, or by format such as print, electronic or multimedia.

Under the appendix, “Browsing by Popular Topics,” the authors have their own A-Z subject guide to online resources. This makes it of particular use to new government information librarians. Despite some The authors make it possible to make sense of all this material, in a way that maintains its strength as a ready-reference source for librarians to keep by their elbows.

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