

MATTACHINE: A SERIALIZED STORY IN GAY HISTORY
EPISODE 5: "DIVERSIFIED INDIVIDUALISTS"



A podcast dedicated to exploring the overlooked, forgotten,
or often-untold stories in gay history.

Written & produced by Devlyn Camp
Editorial advising by Paul Di Ciccio

Dedicated to Albert Williams

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The original Mattachine Society jester logo is courtesy of ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

Who is Jeff Winters? **The Director of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover**, is trying to answer that question. Jeff Winters, the byline on the featured story in ONE Magazine. It's not a name the Bureau has on file. But this person claims to have been entrapped by the police for being a homosexual, then wrote about it in a magazine recently launched for homosexuals, then that magazine was distributed to them in meetings run by homosexuals, by an organization called Mattachine. The FBI discovers employees of ONE Magazine Don Slater and Tony Reyes. They have previous arrests on lewd-vagrancy charges, like many homosexuals. Don was even forced to register as a sex offender. But the FBI still cannot find this writer, Jeff Winters. Perhaps he, **Dale Jennings**, will get away with writing it. He's successfully co-founded the Mattachine, and maybe now, with the power of the press and a pseudonym, he can spread word of our movement to the country.

Welcome to *Mattachine*.

It's August 1952. A moral panic is spreading throughout the country. Hundreds of so-called sex deviates are dismissed from work in the federal government as the FBI continues to systematically collect information on homosexuals. The general public, fearful of communist infiltration through the homosexual community, supports military discharges, bar raids, sexual psychopath laws, and purges in government jobs. As we explored last week, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover's discovery of *communists* leading a new organization of *homosexuals* happens to be the perfect overlap in a Venn diagram to prove the danger of homosexuals to the public. Upon a report from an informant, Hoover sends two agents to question two possibly homosexual former communists. The agents arrive on Mattachine co-founders Chuck Rowland and Bob Hull's doorstep in Norwalk, California on **August 20, 1952**.

Chuck and Bob were expelled from the Communist Party, likely for being gay, though the records are unclear. Hoover has these expulsions on record, so he sends the agents to Chuck and Bob to find out if they are, in fact, homosexual communists, but with the pretext that the FBI is simply seeking information on the Communist Party.

They knock on the door, and Chuck answers.

The agents ask if they may speak with him.

Chuck: "I'm too busy to talk with the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Agent: "It won't take long."

Chuck: "I have to mow my lawn. I have nothing to say to the FBI."

And then, to really sell it, Chuck goes to his garage and pulls out his lawnmower, and starts mowing his lawn.

The agents leave.

They return eight days later to speak with Bob.

Bob: "It is not required for me to talk to the FBI, is it?"

They say no.

Bob: "Well, let's leave it at that, then. I don't care to talk with you."

The FBI hits a dead end here. But Chuck and Bob will remain on the FBI's Security Index. This visit is the FBI firing a warning shot. Chuck and Bob know that. Before the bureau can connect them to the Mattachine, something in their secret organization will have to change – for their own protection.

President Eisenhower takes office in 1953, and within weeks, he signs **Executive Order 10450**, making homosexuality enough grounds for immediate dismissal from federal employment. It is exactly what Harry Hay feared: Corporations under a government contract vet their employees to be sure they aren't gay. It's what Harry predicted, it's why Harry created the Mattachine.

Keep in mind, it's not homosexuality that puts a target on these federal employees. "Homosexual" isn't a widely-used word yet. These employees are targeted for sexual deviance. These people with no word for what they are, except "deviant," begin to push their own term: "homophile." To show society that they are people like anyone else, they're not just sex acts, criminal acts. So we have "homophile" or "sex deviant." And of course the term that villainizes a group of people and is pushed by the government is the term that gets the most attention. And history repeats itself again.

In the mid-50s, over 12.6 million workers deal with loyalty-security investigations. Under Eisenhower's Executive Order, 3000 people per year are dismissed from the military up to, and throughout, the '60s. Back at the FBI, agents are collecting and sending information on sexual deviants to military branches, especially if members of the military have been seen at a Mattachine meeting. This is the FBI Sex Deviates Program, and though it wasn't originally designed this way, it has become a tool to weed homophiles out.

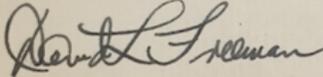
Gerry Brissette is at an orgy in Berkeley. He likes to read at orgies. We haven't met Gerry yet, but he's been nearby. He's sitting in the corner with a book, catching glances of Allen Ginsberg walking around naked with other guys...until someone passes by Gerry and slips him a letter. He immediately opens it. A group is meeting up in Los Angeles, a group he's expressed interest in. He puts down his book and goes home to write a letter to the group's leader, David Freeman. Over 10 pages, Gerry explains to David Freeman his interest in the organization, and that he's 27, a chemistry lab technician at UC-Berkeley, and a children's theater director. When the letter arrives, David Freeman AKA Chuck Rowland invites Gerry down to LA to meet the Mattachine, "the sooner the better."

Incidentally, our League
only part of their subscribers have re
ruary edition, and Ray at the Rendezvo
told me the other night that he has no
his subscriber's copy nor the 100 copi
sell across the bar. Can you do somet
problems?

I'm sorry to trouble you with these ma
we feel you people deserve nothing but
praise for your work on behalf of the
all believe in.

Very cordially yours,

THE MATTACHINE FOUNDATION, INC.



David L. Freeman
Corresponding Secretary

From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

*"I cannot live beyond my times," Gerry writes to Chuck on **March 1, 1953**, "If I live an ambiguous life, it is because millions are living it with me. If I am confused, there is consolation in that I am not alone. I dream of freedom in a land of repression, guilt, and blue-nose Puritanism, fully realizing how impossible my dreams are when so few share them with me. To try to achieve that love by retreating behind a wall of secrecy and self-protection would be death before love ever began. For I could never build the walls high enough.*

So from my failure to fulfill my dream, I gain my inspiration to change my environment. If I rebel against this ungodly pattern of "tricking" when men are not human but machines, and "camping" where life is but a joke, a game, a pit of despair, then it is my responsibility to work for the kind of world I believe in, to help create in the hearts of people like me a belief in themselves, a dignity, and a capacity for loving as free men love. Only then can I ever hope to hold in my arms the happiness I pray for now. If Mattachine means this, then I am with you all the way."

My progress since then has been a slow but a steady climb to maturity and health. A home, a mate, and a work have been my aims.

I am presently employed as a chemistry lab technician for the university here for my three squares and a roof. On weekends, I work as director for the Children's Theater of Oakland, and until recently, the director of the Wesley Players, a group of Methodist students off-campus, interested in religious drama. Since the last few months I have been writing again after a long period of literary constipation, and so with my little cottage, I can say that I have finally begun to achieve the first and third of my great goals.

I have had a long and intensive experience of traveling in the "gay" world of the Bay Area, am still a regular habitué of the bars and parties, and travel with a circle of friends who are mostly actors, writers, and artists. My intellectual interests seem to be chiefly centered at present around sex and the Christian experience and their integration. Because of this, I suppose, I have come to be known as a counselor for my friends in emotional difficulties, and in many ways, one could say we have already started a discussion club on our own.

To be honest, however, I must confess to be no model of the well-adjusted invert. Certainly, I am well beyond my flaming Bohemian period, and when the moments of despair come, they are not as black or as prolonged as before, but the irony of my present situation lies in my desire to be the most prolific of inverts while, were you to make a Kinsley report, you would find me the most temperate. I search for a mate, but find instead many fine friends and still more one-night-stands. I yearn for the chance to surrender, but encounter instead situations so confused and ambiguous that only the most delicate control can maintain my equilibrium.

But I cannot live beyond my times. If I live an ambiguous life, it is because millions are living it with me. If I am confused, there is consolation in that I am not alone, I dream of freedom in a land of repression, guilt, and blue-nosed puritanism, fully realizing how impossible my dreams are when so few share them with me. To try to achieve that love by retreating behind a wall of secrecy and self-protection would be death before love ever began. For I could never build the walls high enough.

So from my failure to fulfill my dream, I gain my inspiration to change my environment. If I rebel against this ugly pattern of "tricking" where men are not human but machines, and "camping" where life is but a joke, a game, a pit of despair, then it is my responsibility to work for the kind of world I believe in, to help create in the hearts of people like me a belief in themselves, a dignity, and a capacity for loving as free men love. Only then can I ever hope to hold in my arms the happiness I pray for now. If Mattachine means this, then I am with you all the way.

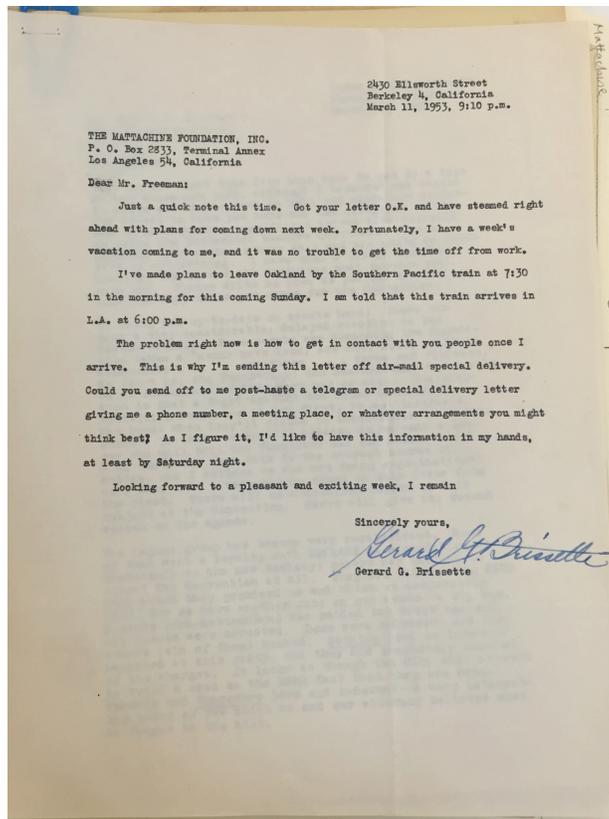
As I see it, if you want a man like me, then the next step is to see Mattachine in action. I would want to come down and visit with you folks, see the clubs in operation, and discuss with you the many problems which you must certainly be meeting. Questions like where you meet, new members, conflicts with officialdom, where you succeed, and why you fail come flooding in too fast and furiously to be contained in any letter. I am as poor as a churchmouse, but I might be able to get down for some weekend by bus or hitching, if you folks could help me avoid any hotel expenses. Write and tell me what you think. I'll eagerly await your reply.

Sincerely in fellowship,
Gerard G. Brissette
Gerard G. Brissette

Mattachine
Carte Spontane
1933

From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

The next Sunday morning, Gerry hops on a train to LA. He feels this is one of the biggest moments of his life. He's terrified. It's difficult for anyone to make contact with the Mattachine Foundation, and he sits at Union Station in Los Angeles, amazed that it happened. He's waiting for them to arrive! Suddenly the doors of the waiting area fly open and a group of men walk through. He knows they are the Mattachine. "They were men of such character, pride, dignity, and forcefulness," he'll later say. Gerry sits in on several discussion groups. They sleep two hours a day. The leaders have day jobs, then go to work for the Mattachine as soon as they're off. **Konrad Stevens**, from the Fifth Order, will later recall, "We were meeting very often. We just lived Mattachine. We didn't do anything else. We never went anywhere just for pleasure. When we went, it was organizing."



From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

On Mondays, the group is The Citizens' Committee to Outlaw Entrapment, meeting with attorneys and printing leaflets. On Tuesdays, each of the seven leaders organize their own separate discussion groups. On Wednesdays, they advise new membership guilds. Thursdays they make calls and visit people for financial support of the Foundation. On the weekends, they gather as a council to coordinate the plans of the past week, and the coming weeks, the future campaigns ahead, and literature to print and spread word of the Mattachine.

"I had quite forgotten all about Berkeley during my one week with you folks," Gerry writes, "and had lived so intensely in the present that for once in my life the past and the future meant nothing." He's sent home with a mailing list of people in the Bay Area who had expressed interest in the organization. Gerry Brisette starts three discussion groups within a week. He writes to Chuck and the Foundation that homophiles continue to "flock to us in hordes, hungry, anxious, eager to do something, say something, get started."

Meanwhile the UCLA faculty Mattachine group starts social science and literature reading programs to understand current theories on sexuality.

Gerry can't stop talking about the Mattachine. He's got every homophile he knows interested. He had just started a group in Oakland, and his next group will be on Berkeley's campus. When the time comes, he invites men into a student's room, and pulls the shades. Some of the guests stand quietly in terror. He invites them to have a seat, and they all sit down on the floor. Gerry talks about why he called all of his homophile friends together. A discussion starts, about police pressure and sexual deviance. Turns out everyone in this room is on the same page. Gerry announces the Mattachine and its purpose, telling them what the Mattachine has already done for Dale Jennings, and what Henry Gerber had already tried to do decades before in Chicago. He speaks for an hour and a half on their history, and their potential future, as the guests watch him with bewildered faces. Some of them are thrilled, others are still terrified. A young man named **Hal Call** sits astonished in that meeting. Gerry has him convinced. Hal is quick to take part, befriending other new Bay Area Mattachinos, such as **David Finn**. David is also inducted by Gerry. Hal and David begin telling every homophile they know as well: friends, hookups, men they meet in bars. They invite everyone to their upcoming meeting across the Bay in San Francisco in two weeks.

Brissette, April 18, 1953 -- Page 3

Finally, are we helping you at all? Please be ruthless in your demands and frank and open with us at all times. We need to know the feel, the sense, of your people, your needs and desires at every step of the way. Sound off to us, and we'll do everything possible (sometimes it won't be much, I realize) to help you.

You have done such a really magnificent job that I'm almost reluctant to offer assistance, but I'm sure you know how much we think of you and everyone there and realize the sincerity of our offers of aid. It seems to me that you are working altogether correctly, and because of this we want to help you in every way possible.

Please write me often and in detail. With my personal affection

In the Mattachine Spirit,
THE MATTACHINE FOUNDATION, INC.

Chuck

From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

People dress well for the discussions. They arrive at an apartment door and knock lightly. Someone answers with a subtle greeting, and invites the guests into the living room. Homophiles are packed inside, sitting on furniture and the floors, gathered halfway up the stairs and down the hallway. Usually, no one knows who lives there or who is in charge.

The meetings hit the usual topics, including seeking the support of medical doctors to explain their sexuality. Back in LA, Harry Hay criticizes the idea, still frustrated that everyone is caught up with the sex of it all. Harry is annoyed that so many of them want doctors to approve of the sex they desire, that they want validation that they aren't mentally ill. Harry is focused on the "emotional-cultural relationship before and after the sex expression." But even the notes from the first meeting in San Francisco recorded someone saying, "Everyone agrees meetings are wonderful places for cruising - better than bars!" That's not what Harry made this organization for. His persistence in recognizing a homosexual culture outside of just sex begins to rub up against members new and old, including Dale Jennings and Martin Block, even though the new Bay Area leader Gerry Brissette, the guy who reads books at orgies, agrees with Harry.

Through all of their fighting, while trying to understand what this newly uncovered minority stands for, the FBI launches an internal security investigation of the Mattachine. That investigation is code-named COMINFIL, and is opened in order to find the communists in the Mattachine organization. Hoover orders the West Coast field offices to investigate and report back to headquarters. Investigators find that ONE Magazine is being run by Martin Block, Tony Reyes, and Dale Jennings. But where is Jeff Winters, they still wonder. They also get a hold of ONE's articles of incorporation, signed by the Mattachine's lawyer **Fred Snider**, another clue that leads the FBI to believe the Mattachine and ONE Magazine are one and the same. The Special Agent in Charge in San Francisco focuses in on the Mattachine's leader there, likely the new guy, Gerry Brissette, but the agent's documents are heavily redacted so we can't know for sure. An informant in the Mattachine meetings reports to the FBI that nothing subversive is going on because... they're too busy discussing their problems living in society as sexual deviants.

But the discussions must be leading to some progress for them, because the First Order groups in the Bay Area are already looking into larger theater spaces to gather for parties, movies, and drag shows, which make money to support the mysterious leaders of the Mattachine Foundation. Gerry plans a little picnic in the park and hangs up posters in the bars. He optimistically expects 50 people at his picnic, but 500 show up. He runs around the park trying to get rid of everyone, worrying the park rangers will catch people in the bushes.

Meanwhile, Hal Call and David Finn – the young men from Gerry’s meeting – are taking on leadership roles in the Bay Area, under Gerry’s charge. Hal and David begin to understand that there are Mattachine leaders, above Gerry, headquartered in Los Angeles. And that’s where the money goes. Hal does some digging, trying to figure out exactly how this organization works. He and David and the rest of San Francisco are called the First Order, and those leaders in LA are considered the Fifth Order. Who’s in between? He looks into other homophile groups in LA, finding a publication called ONE Magazine is loosely connected to the Mattachine. He investigates further. In April, Hal flies down to LA and goes straight to the front desk at ONE Magazine. A man on ONE’s staff named **Dorr Legg** greets Hal. Dorr is eccentric and charming, quite smart. Dorr is fascinated by the secret group as well, and points out that to gather together and work on such specific goals means someone must be in charge behind the curtain. Word is getting around that the Fifth Order leaders are former communists. Dorr will later discover, “The original founders of the Mattachine were Marxists and they had the insane concept that they were going to marry Marxism and homosexuality.” Hal Call has heard the rumor that some of them were still communists. He continues to dig until he hears another rumor, this one that the head of the Fifth Order, the head of the entire Mattachine Foundation, is a communist named Harry Hay.

The in-fighting doesn’t stop. While Hal Call returns to San Francisco with what he’s learned, Dale Jennings writes in ONE Magazine under his pen name Jeff Winters, criticizing the views of Harry Hay and his Mattachine. Dale is completely against establishing a legal minority for homosexuals. It’s cultural isolation, he believes. Segregation of gays and straights. It does not make us equals.

Harry responds to Dale’s essay, using his pseudonym Eann MacDonald: “Over an enormous period of history the Homophile was an accepted force in society as he is a rejected force today. And the Homophile’s acceptance was based solely upon the character and quality of a cultural contribution which could not be produced by any other category.”

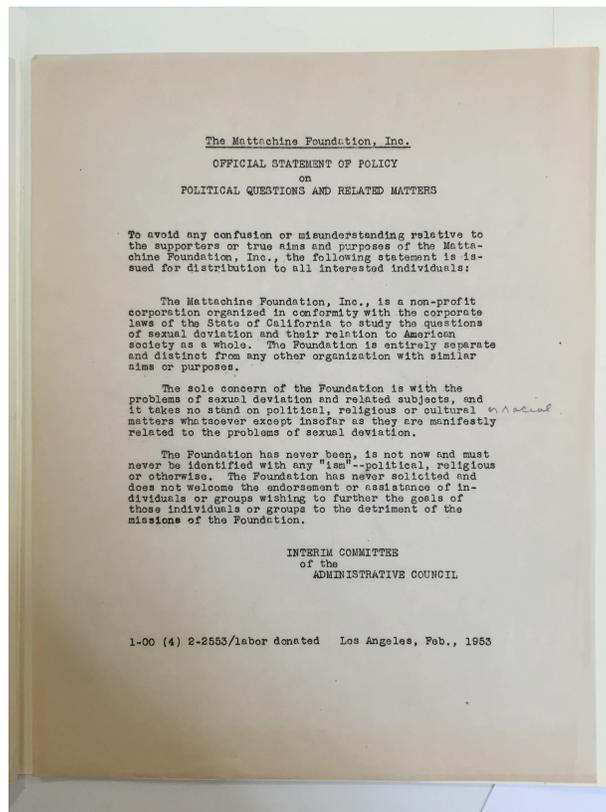
Harry means that gays used to be recognized for their ability to see both sides of gender and sexuality’s spectrums.

Jennings sarcastically replies that Hay’s “letter implies a vast background bristling with endless data. I sincerely suggest he write a study of the homosexual’s historical position in society. It would be a great relief to me to find that I am actually not an ordinary person after all.”

The next month, Chuck Rowland writes a letter to ONE under his pseudonym David L. Freeman. It’s published in ONE, despite also attacking Dale’s position against a minority culture: “What, exactly, do we mean when we talk about homosexual culture? Simply this: the manner of speaking and thinking, the beliefs, traditions and attainments of the homosexual minority. Our moral code obviously cannot be the same as the heterosexual one, since it is not based on the necessity of reproduction and the family.”

Mattachine membership is booming. The reigns are loosened on requirements to join and become members because the floodgates can't be closed. People just keep showing up. More members are asked to take on leadership roles... but they're all starting to see that they're managing an organization built on mystery and anonymous leadership and anonymous action. Members are no longer seeing secretive cell structure as a protective device, but rather as a tool used to manipulate them.

Harry Hay is named as a Marxist teacher in a newspaper. His fellow Foundation leaders become even more concerned. **Paul Coates's** *Daily Mirror* column continues circulating, that's the article that tipped off the FBI, which was published after the Dale Jennings trial. Everyone is concerned about the communism insinuation. The Foundation releases a statement to Mattachine leaders below them: "The Foundation has never been, is not now, and must never be identified with any 'ism'—political, religious, or otherwise." But the rumors won't slow down.



From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

On March 11, 1953, Chuck writes to Harry:

"I am more convinced than ever that radical approach is the only one we can make in the present situation. Whether you like it or not (whether I like it or not), the subject for today is REORGANIZATION. Now if the need were expressed solely by malcontents, I'd agree with you. But...I am seriously concerned.

"My view is just this: Three years ago when you and Bob and Dale and I began our initial discussions on the possibility of setting up Androgones Anonymous we were pioneers in a hostile society, and we had to take elaborate precautions to insure our safety and that of others we were trying to influence. Our pioneering has created a whole, new situation and it is in this new situation that we must act and act intelligently or we will lose our leadership (paltry objection!), all our aims and purposes. The truth is this: After three years...we haven't started an esoteric group; we've set a movement in motion."

11506 E. Devonrich St.
Norwalk, California
March 11, 1953

Dear Harry,

I have read your long and very interesting note with much interest, but after a lengthy interview with Gwartzney last night I am more convinced than ever that a radical approach is the only one we can make in the present situation. Whether you like it or not (whether I like it or not) the subject of discussion for today is REORGANIZATION. That this had filtered down to Gwartzney, who is not a member of the Society, is to me very significant. We have at no time on our 2nd Order level (Steve's and mine) discussed reorganization or the problems raised in L.A. It is therefore highly significant, I believe, that (according to Tommy) the Laguna group independently ~~has~~ begun discussing the need for reorganization.

Now if this "need" were expressed solely by malcontents, solely by that particular species of left deviationist who devotes himself exclusively to problems of re-organization and never to organization, I'd agree with you. But when the cry of reorganization is raised in front of Jr. Chamber of Commerce Laguna Group (the exact type of group the secrecy of the Society was designed to protect) I am seriously concerned.

My view is just this: Three years ago when you and Bob and Dale and I began our initial discussions on the possibility of setting up Androgones Anonymous, we were pioneers in a hostile society, and we had to take elaborate precautions to insure our safety and that of others we were trying to influence. Our pioneering achievements, however, have created a qualitatively new situation: While three years ago we could hardly get anyone but that blond Lesbian (whose name I've forgotten) to attend our august deliberations, today we have such diverse elements as Gwartzney, Don Frey, Tommy, the swishy Long Beach crowd and you. This represents a qualitative change. You will perhaps argue that we have insufficient experience on a national level, insufficient experience with the minority as a whole. I might agree with you--agree that we have a lot to learn--but I'd still say that our pioneering has created a whole, new situation and it is in this new situation that we must act and act intelligently or we will lose our leadership (paltry objection!), all our aims and purposes.

Harry, Page 2

The truth is this: After three years (that's our official figure; it's actually about ~~XXXXXX~~ 2-1/4) we have only about 30 members (!) and all locally. We haven't started an esoteric group; we've set a movement in motion.

I had a long talk with Mike on Monday night, and he expressed the view that we are probably close to the need for a democratic organization. Then Tuesday I spoke to Gwartzney (our AIA, NAM ad. council member) who said exactly the same thing. Let me quote him: "Frankly, I think our organization stinks." "It's too complicated." "It affords inadequate liaison." "It's cumbersome." "I think we should have an open, elected body of officials," etc., etc.

Then Gwartzney made the most brilliant suggestion of all. He said that he, as a professional and employee of the State could not possibly join a "secret" organization. He said, however, that he could and would join an organization of individuals (heterosexual as well as homosexual) concerned with the problems of sexual deviation.

This is Bob's opinion and Steve's and Martin's, and it is a view that has to be reckoned with. I resisted the idea to the end, but now I'm in accord with it. Friday I am introducing a motion that we, the 5th Order, call a Convention (see attached) and propose a Constitution (also attached, which I have written) and a set of Convention rules (I haven't prepared them yet).

I'm terribly enthusiastic about the idea, because if we are merely a body to study and discuss problems of sexual deviation and if we are open to everyone (Gwartzney's idea) there is nothing to fear, and Steve, Jim, Martin, etc. (if not you, Bob and I) could be on the letterhead. I'm sure you see the possibilities.

Please call me or something soon!

All my love,
Chuck

P.S. Constitution is deliberately very rough, but it will be clarified and worked out in detail at the Convention.

From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

Some of the Foundation members are barely on speaking terms, especially since one of them is openly criticizing another in a magazine. Chuck, Bob, Konrad, and Martin also want to end the secrecy. They thought it was useful when people were scared to join a homophile organization, but now that isn't an issue. Harry doesn't think new people are willing to fight for a movement, and that they're just selfishly joining for protection in case they're arrested like Dale was. Harry doesn't think these people care about a homosexual minority and its culture, and they just want to assimilate into "respectable" society. He writes back, "No, Chuck! This move isn't radical, it's betrayal. You can't build a democratic society on a bunch of diversified individualists going nowhere." But Chuck insists that it's time to call a convention of the Mattachine orders.

Martin Block will later look back on this, realizing, “In every gay movement there has always been a schism. What’s wrong with so many activists...they have no sense of humor and no sense of pleasure.”

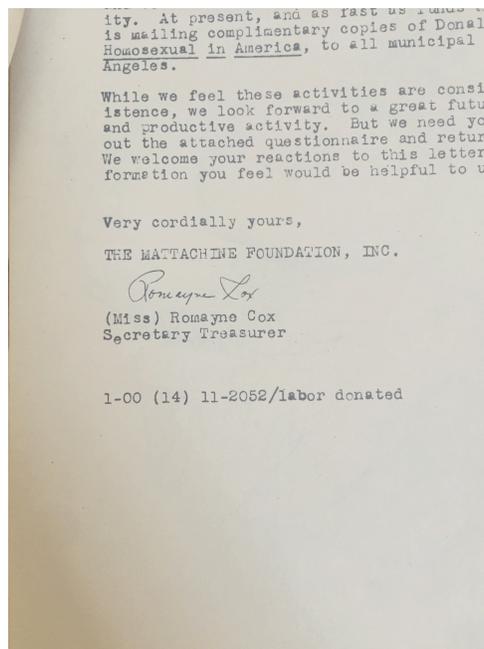
Under the pressure of the Paul Coates article, Mattachine membership is more concerned than ever. To be labeled a sexual deviate is one serious problem, but to be labeled an *organization* of sexual deviates – criminals working together – and under the control of communists, is a huge accusation that risks charges of conspiracy.

“But it’s an odd thing,” Coates’s article says, “I checked the State Division of Corporations and the County Clerk’s offices. There is no record of a Mattachine Corporation. If I belonged to that club, I’d worry.”

Rumors run rampant.

The Foundation prints a response in ONE Magazine explaining that a corporate charter was filed about eight months ago and it will take about a year to have a corporate seal.

Paul Coates looked into who ran this organization as well. Who is the Foundation?, the journalist wonders. The legal owners are listed as D.T. Campbell and Romaine Cox.



ity. At present, and as fast as funds
is mailing complimentary copies of Donald
Homosexual in America, to all municipal j
Angeles.

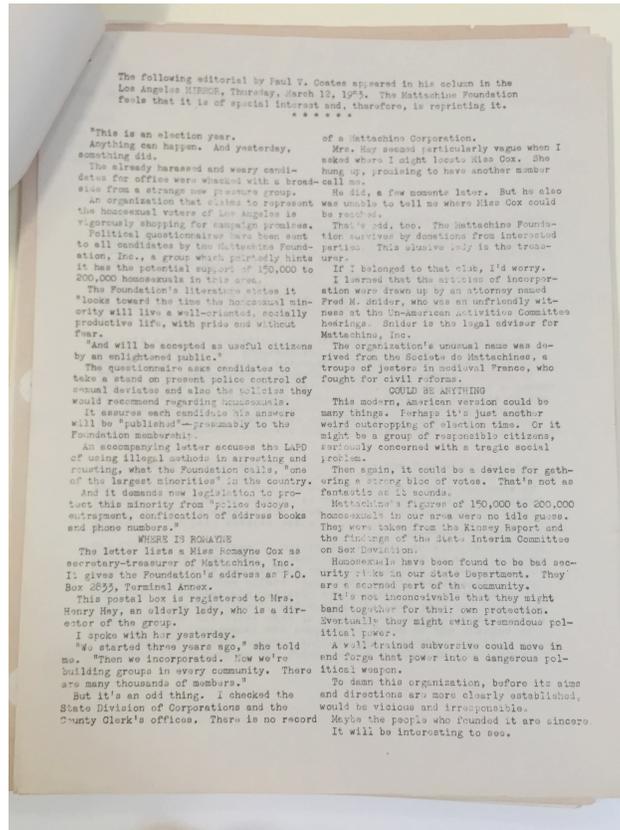
While we feel these activities are consid
istence, we look forward to a great futur
and productive activity. But we need you
out the attached questionnaire and return
We welcome your reactions to this letter
formation you feel would be helpful to us

Very cordially yours,
THE MATTACHINE FOUNDATION, INC.
Romaine Cox
(Miss) Romaine Cox
Secretary Treasurer

1-00 (14) 11-2052/labor donated

From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

“Where is Romaine?” Coates’s headline shouts.



From the ONE Archives at the USC Libraries.

Coates doesn't discover that Campbell and Cox are Fifth Order member Konrad Stevens's mother and sister... though they're merely figureheads. Everyone's eager to find out who is running this thing. On the charter the Foundation filed to become a corporation, the FBI finds the Mattachine headquarters listed under the address of Mrs. Henry Hay – Harry's mother. But again, just a figurehead who attended Foundation meetings. And somehow, perhaps because of the name discrepancy – Harry and Henry – the FBI doesn't put together that Mrs. Henry Hay is the mother of a known communist they have on file, Harry Hay. But anyway, with the risk of legal problems, arrest, blackmail, and family turmoil, and the gamble of communist charges on top of all that is too much for members to stand for. Hal Call doesn't want to be taken down as a subversive sympathizer. He joined this organization to liberate his fellow homophiles, not communists, and he will not let go of this exhilarating experience of finding people like him. But the headlines are drawing the attention of the House Un-American Activities Committee. Because sexual deviants and communists have become tied together, the homophile movement will have to stamp out the communist influence among them in order to survive.

Chuck Rowland calls for a discussion group specifically on the Paul Coates article. A member named Marilyn Rieger, who goes by the nickname Boopsie, writes to the Foundation:

“I feel that in order to continue working for a cause, I must have complete faith in the people behind the scenes, the people who set policies, principles, aims, and purposes: Who are the people who make policy for the Mattachine Foundation, Inc.? Who is the Board of Directors? Who are Mrs. Henry Hay, Mrs. D. T. Campbell, and Romaine Cox? Why is there no record of a Mattachine Foundation, Inc. with the Division of Corporations or the County Clerk’s office? What are Fred Snider’s political affiliations? What are the political affiliations of the Board of Directors? And finally, are the aims and purposes of the Foundation which I have read and which I believe in the true aims and purposes?”

If no one responds, she warns them she intends to write to the state bar association to pursue the revelations made by Paul Coates.

Three weeks later, Boopsie Rieger opens her mailbox to find a letter from Mrs. Henry Hay. She explains her relationship to Harry Hay and the other women, but claims not to know anything about Fred Snider’s political affiliations, the Mattachine lawyer Coates called out in the newspaper. This generic response, probably written by Harry, answers almost none of Rieger’s questions, and she won’t forget this when she rises to some power.

But Harry finally accepts that the anonymity and the future of the Mattachine will need to be openly discussed.

March 29, 1953. A new letter is sent out from the Foundation to all members, titled “A Call to All Members of the Mattachine Society:” and in capital letters, “CONFIDENTIAL.”

“During the past three years the Mattachine Society has existed as a secret organization. Its structure was deliberately complicated and only partially democratic to insure secrecy. It is our belief that this structure, with all of its weaknesses, served a tremendous historical and social purpose in the interest of the sexually deviant minority: it brought a nucleus of that minority a consciousness of its existence and a conviction that great things could be accomplished toward social equality, the elimination of unjust legislation and the necessity for concerted action to achieve its goals.... While the Society has existed only in Southern California and these developments have occurred primarily here, we have today a sufficient indication of the direction in which our minority must move. In the light of this new situation, we believe that the presently constituted Society has served its functions well but must now make the internal changes and preparations necessary for a forward movement into areas of greater activity and influence. Opinion is divided within the Fifth Order as to the exact steps that should be taken toward reorganization of the present Society. While one group argues for a completely

A NOTE TO TEACHERS:

I talk during this series about how schools don't teach us gay history. If you learned anything about gay history in your school, you're one of the lucky few. This is changing because of programs like HISTORY UNERASED. Check out www.unerased.org. Not only is bullying still an issue, but nearly half of homeless youth are queer. 1 in 5 queer kids of color attempt suicide. Young queer kids are even more likely to drop out of school. This is why I'm talking about HISTORY UNERASED, not because this is a paid ad - it's not. This program is doing important work, and they're bringing educators in K-12 classrooms proper training and resources to include LGBTQ history and queer inquiry in Social Science classes, Fine Arts, and Health courses, among others. And language is always expanding for the queer community with new terms and complexities that educators want to understand and apply in their classrooms. For instance, how do I use the word "trans" properly? What does "nonbinary" mean? Teachers want to help students feel safe and understood by using the proper terminology, so the people at History Unerased are helping with that, too. If all kids in school learn about our history, then we can get rid of misperceptions about queer people and fix the real problems those misperceptions create: queer kids quitting school because they don't feel safe, homelessness, suicide. If you're an educator that wants to help your classroom be a safer space for your LGBTQ students, check out www.unerased.org for more information. You could save your student's life. You could improve the safety of your community. And you could teach your kids some fascinating history.