

**The New York Public Library
Humanities and Social Sciences Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Mattachine Society, Inc. of New York Records
1951-1976**

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November 1989**

**Revised by Stephanie Wilson
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Summary

- Main entry:** Mattachine Society of New York
- Title:** Mattachine Society, Inc. of New York Records, 1951-1976
- Size:** 10 linear feet (14 boxes)
- Source:** The records of the Mattachine, Inc. of New York form part of the collection of records of the International Gay Information Center, Inc. which were donated to the Library in April of 1988 by Mr. John Hammond of the I.G.I.C.
- Abstract:** The Mattachine Society of New York was a non-profit organization founded in New York City in 1955 for the purpose of educating the public in all aspects of homosexuality and for securing the repeal of laws discriminating against gays. The records reflect the origin and development of the homophile movement in America, especially in New York City. They document the struggle to achieve through education and other peaceful means the social integration of the homosexual, and the fight for the removal of legal sanctions in housing, employment and assembly.
- Access:** Apply in the Special Collections Office for admission to the Manuscripts and Archives Division.
- Microfilm must be used in lieu of originals.
- In order to protect the privacy of individual persons certain papers have been sealed until 2043.
- Preferred citation:** Mattachine Society, Inc. of New York Records, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.
- Special formats** Photographs
- Alternate formats:** Collection is available on microfilm. Copies are available for purchase through
- Primary Source Microfilm
Telephone: 1-800-444-0799
E-mail: sales@galegroup.com

Historical note

The Mattachine Society, Inc. of New York (MSNY) was founded in New York City in 1955 (incorporated in 1961) as a non-profit organization for educating the public in all aspects of homosexuality, for assisting the individual gay in coping with problems related to his homosexuality, for effecting changes in social attitudes towards gays and for securing the repeal of laws discriminating against gays in housing, employment and assembly. It was one of several affiliates of the Mattachine Society founded in Los Angeles in 1951. The name was derived from the Italian "mattachino" meaning a court jester who dared to tell the truth to the king. During the 1950's other Mattachine societies were established in Boston, Chicago, Denver, Philadelphia, and the District of Columbia. The parent organization subsequently shifted its headquarters to San Francisco and by 1961 had ceased existence as a national organization, its affiliates becoming fully independent.

During the 1960's its most active period, the MSNY became a leader in promoting the cause of gay rights through education and other peaceful means. It eschewed the more aggressive tactics adopted by the movement following the Stonewall Riots of 1969. The riots resulted from a police raid on a gay bar in New York City named "Stonewall Inn" from which emerged a new era of militancy.

In pursuing its goal of "serving the needs of all homosexuals" the MSNY maintained a referral and counseling service for gays. Advice was given by phone, by mail and in-person without charge and for those who needed professional assistance referrals were made to physicians, attorneys and psychotherapists who were known for their compassion for and understanding of the problems of gays. The MSNY also sponsored guest speakers and discussion groups on topics related to homosexuality, canvassed political candidates on their views on issues of concern to the gay community, and compiled a survey of employers' attitudes towards gays. It published two periodicals: the Eastern Mattachine Magazine directed towards the general public, and the New York Mattachine Newsletter intended for its membership. Gradually, through its expertise and its skillful use of the mass media the MSNY became accepted as an authoritative source of information on "the homosexual viewpoint."

The MSNY lobbied for the revision of federal, state and municipal laws discriminating against gays in housing, employment and assembly, demanded honorable discharges for homosexuals in the armed forces, the decriminalization of consensual sodomy between adults, and the suppression of police harassment and entrapment, and the enactment of a bill of gay rights. Joining with its associates in ECHO (East Coast Homophile Organizations) it organized large demonstrations for gay rights in Washington, D.C. before the White House, the Pentagon and other federal agencies. With other civic action groups including CORE, NAACP, and the New York Civil Liberties Union it agitated successfully for a civilian complaint review board in New York City to monitor allegations of police misconduct. It also participated in a legal battle to enforce First Amendment rights of gays to assemble peacefully in bars of their own choosing.

Wholly dependent upon donations, membership fees and volunteer staff the MSNY was always hampered by lack of funds. During the 1970's it faced a period of increasing financial crisis caused in part by a dwindling of public support for its reformist philosophy which appeared to many to be too timid, passive and "square" after "Stonewall". Leadership in what came to be known as the "gay liberation movement" soon passed to more aggressive organizations such as the Gay Activists Alliance.

Facing bankruptcy and torn by internal feuding the MSNY was disbanded in January of 1987. Its most active officers included Robert Amsel, Robert Burdick, Madolin Cervantes, Curtis Dewees, Albert de Dion, Don Goodwin, Julian Hodges, Michael Kotis, Richard Leitsch, and Arthur Maule.

Scope and content note

The records (1951-1976) reflect the origin and development of the homophile movement in America, particularly in New York, and of the struggle to achieve through education and other peaceful means the social integration of the homosexual and the removal of legal sanctions discriminating against gays in housing, employment and assembly. The records also document the efforts made to come to the aid of the individual gay who sought information, guidance and advice on matters pertaining to his homosexuality.

Arrangement note

The Mattachine Society, Inc. of New York Records are organized in the following series:

- Series I. Correspondence
- Series II. Topical Files
- Series III. Gay Organizations
- Series IV. Financial Records
- Series V. Photographs
- Series VI. Printed Ephemera
- Series VII. Restricted Records

Series descriptions and container list

Series I. Correspondence

This series consists of a name file (subseries "A") of correspondence of principal officers of MSNY arranged by name of the officer, followed by a chronological file (subseries "B") of correspondence of various officers. Included is in-coming and outgoing correspondence of Dick Leitsch as president and executive director, of Elver Barker, Robert Burdick, Curtis Dewees, Julian Hodges, and Michael Kotis, and other officers. The correspondence which is complemented by the Topical File (Series 2) is with friends and colleagues in the gay rights movement and with persons seeking information about the work of the society and of the social and legal status of gays.

A. Name File

<u>Box</u>	<u>Fol</u>	
1	1	Barker, Elver, 1958-68
	2-5	Burdick, Robert, et al., 1973-1975
	6-7	Burdick, Robert, et al., 1973-1975
	8	Dewees, Curtis, 1957-1959
	9	Hodges, Julian, 1964-1965
	10	Kotis, Michael, 1969-1971
	11-12	Leitsch, Dick, 1964-1968
	12-15	Leitsch, Dick, 1964-1968
	16-17	Leitsch, Dick, 1964-1968
2	1-3	Leitsch, Dick, 1969-1973

B. Chronological File

2	4	1953; 1957-1960
	5	1961-1965
	6	1966-1973; n.d.

Box

Fol

Series II. Topical Files

This series contains correspondence and collateral papers (memoranda, reports, minutes, ephemera and other papers) arranged alphabetically by topic. Included are records of various committees of MSNY including Communications/Media, Community Affairs, Fund-raising, Library, Membership, Political Affairs, Program, Publications, and Religious Matters. Other files relating to internal organizational matters include board of advisors/directors; constitution and by-laws; daily staff reports (1965) and phone logs (1975) which tabulate telephone and in-person queries by type of query; election of officers (including campaign statements of candidates for the presidency of MSNY); publicity and advertising; and extensive correspondence and scripts of articles relative to the publication of the New York Mattachine Newsletter. Included also are papers relating to conferences of gay organizations, including the Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations, the National American Homophile Conference, the National Planning Conference of Homophile Organizations, and the North American Homophile Conference. Other topical files relating to specific issues or events affecting the gay community include Civilian Complaint Review Board (of N.Y.C.), demonstrations, (military) draft, entrapment, New York City civil rights bill, and selective service.

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| 3 | 1 | Action Corps 1970 |
| | 2 | Armed Forces Day protest 1966 |
| | 3 | Board of advisors/directors 1960-1973 |
| | 4 | Campaign statements (for presidency of MSNY) |
| | 5 | Cervantes, Madolin 1971 |
| | 6 | City Commission on Human Rights 1966 |
| | 7-10 | Civilian Complaint Review Board |
| | 11 | Coalition of Homophile Organizations |
| | 12 | Committee on religious matters |
| | 13 | Committees 1963-1969 |
| | 14 | Communications/media 1958-1965 |
| | 15 | Community affairs committee 1966 |
| | 16 | Constitution and by-laws |
| | 17 | Constitutions of other organizations |
| | 18 | Conventon, annual, of MSNY 1961 |
| | 19 | Court cases 1966-1968 |
| | 20 | Daily staff reports 1965 |
| | 21 | Demonstratons 1965-1966 |
| | 22 | Drama group 1965 |
| | 23- | East Coast Homophile Organizations (ECHO) 1965 |
| | 25 | |
| | 26 | Eastern Regional Conference of Homophile Organizations (ERCHO) 1968-1970 |
| | 27 | Elections of officers 1963-1964 |
| | 28 | Employment service 1964 |
| | 29 | Employment survey 1965 |
| | 30 | Entrapment 1965 |
| | 31 | Friday dances 1969 |
| | 32 | Fund-raising commettee 1966-1967 |
| | 33 | Homosexuality and the church |
| | 34 | Institute for the Study of Human Resources 1965-1973 |
| 4 | 1 | Legal matters 1962-1973 |
| | 2 | Lesbian questionnaire 1966 |
| | 3 | Library committee 1961-1965 |
| | 4 | Magazine/newspaper articles - reviews and responses 1956-1964 |
| | 5 | Mardi Gras Day 1969 |

- 6 Mattachine book service 1967-1969
- 7-10 Mattachine Newsletter 1959-1975
- 11-15 Mattachine Newsletter 1959-1975
- 16-17 Mattachine Times
- 18 Membership committee
- 19 Minutes 1960-1972
- 20 Miscellany

- 5
 - 1 National American Homophile Conference 1967-1968
 - 2 National Planning conference of Homophile Organizations 1966-1967
 - 3 New York City civil rights bill 1971-1972
 - 4 North American Homophile Conference 1967-1968
 - 5 Office
 - 6 Petition for repeal of consensual sodomy law
 - 7-8 Phone logs 1975
 - 9 Political affairs committee
 - 10 Political campaigns 1969-1970
 - 11 Postmaster general (Der Kreis case) 1964-1965
 - 12 Presbyterian Church
 - 13 Prison case 1969
 - 14 Program committee 1964-1965
 - 15 Proxies 1959-1960, 1965
 - 16 Publications committee
 - 17 Publicity and advertising 1965-1966
 - 18 Quotes
 - 19 Reader survey
 - 20-21 Requests for information 1956-1969
 - 22 Requests for information by Mattachine 1964-1965
 - 23-24 Research projects, 1951-68
 - 25 Selective service 1960-1970
 - 26 Speakers 1958-1968

- 6
 - 1 Stationery
 - 2 Subscriptions/donations 1958-1965
 - 3-6 Subscriptions/membership 1958-1965
 - 7 Suffolk County police
 - 8 Supreme Court case 73-161
 - 9 Venereal disease 1961-1965

Box

Fol

Series III. Gay Organizations

This series contains extensive correspondence of officers of MSNY with officers of sister organizations throughout the United States reflecting in-depth the development of the homophile movement and its struggle for gay rights. Included is correspondence with the Boston, Chicago, and Denver Area Councils of Mattachine, Midwest Mattachine, the Mattachine Society of Philadelphia, the Mattachine Society, Inc. (San Francisco), the Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C., the Atheneum Society of America (Miami), and the Janus Society (Philadelphia). There are also extensive collateral papers including newsletters and near-printed ephemera including ephemera of the Boston Demophile Association, Dignity, the Homophile Action League, Homophile Union of Boston, and the Le-Hi-Ho Newsletter. Principal correspondents for MSNY include Albert J. de Dion, Curtis Dewees, Julian Hodges, Dick Leitsch, and Arthur W. Maule. Other correspondents include Warren D. Atkins [pseudonym of Jack Nichols] (Wash., D.C.), Harold L. Call (San Francisco), Ralph Gilles (Boston), Ossian Warren Goodwin (Boston), Carl B. Harding (Denver), Roy F. Hooper (San Francisco), Barbara Horowitz (Janus Society), Franklin E. Kameny (Wash., D.C.), Donald Stewart Lucas (San Francisco), and Clark P. Polak (Janus Society).

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| 7 | 1 | Atheneum Society of America, Inc. 1964-1965 |
| | 2-4 | Boston Area Council Mattachine Society 1957-1969 |
| | 5 | Boston Demophile Association 1964-1965 |
| | 6 | Chicago Area Council Mattachine Society 1957-1961 |
| | 7 | Christopher Street Liberation Day Committee 1974 |
| | 8 | Daughters of Bilitis 1958-1964 |
| | 9-10 | Denver Area Council Mattachine Society 1957-1961 |
| | 11 | Denver Area Council Mattachine Society 1957-1961 |
| | 12 | Dignity |
| | 13 | Hartford, Conn. 1958-1959 |
| | 14 | Homophile Action League (Phila.) 1969-1970 |
| | 15 | Homophile Union of Boston 1970 |
| | 16 | Homosexuals Intransigent 1961-1971 |
| | 17 | International Committee for Sexual Equality 1959-1960 |
| | 18 | Janus Society 1964-1965 |
| | 19 | Le-Hi-Ho Newsletter 1969-1971 |
| | 20 | Los Angeles Area Council Mattachine Society 1959-1963 |
| | 21 | Midwest Mattachine 1965-1972 |
| | 22 | New York State Coalition of Gay Organizations 1975 |
| | 23 | One, Inc. 1956-1967 |
| | 24 | Philadelphia, Mattachine Society of 1965 |
| | 25 | Pittsburgh (Gay Alternatives) 1974 |
| | 26 | |
| 8 | 1 | |
| | 2 | Sexual Freedom League of San Francisco 1966 |
| | 3 | Student Homophile League (Columbia University) 1968-1969 |
| | 4 | Syracuse 1968 |
| | 5-6 | Washington, D.C., Mattachine Society of 1957-1968 |

Box Fol

Series IV. Financial Records

The financial records (1958-74) include bank and financial statements, records of receipts and disbursements, daily receipts, bills paid, tax returns, check stubs and other miscellany.

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| 9 | 1 | Bank statements 1961-1974 |
| | 2 | Bills paid 1966-1969 |
| | 3 | Daily receipts 1958-1974 |
| | 4 | Financial statements 1958-1972; receipts/disbursements 1971-1973 |
| | 5 | Miscellany |
| | 6 | Tax returns 1963-1968 |
| | --- | Receipts/disbursements 1959-1973 (6 vols.) |
| | --- | Receipt books |
| | --- | Check stubs 1962-1972 |

Box Fol

Series V. Photographs

The photographs consist of 8x10 glossy prints of groups of persons attending the East Coast Homophile Organizations convention (1965) including Dick Leitsch and Franklin Kameny; and photographs of a Gay Pride march in New York City in the early 1970's.

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| 10 | | Photographs |
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Box Fol

Series VI. Printed Ephemera

The ephemera consists of a small file sorted by subject and a larger mass of unsorted ephemera relating to the homophile movement.

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| 11 | 1-2 | MSNY |
| | 3 | Transvestites |
| | 4 | Venereal disease |
| 12 | 1-5 | Unsorted ephemera |
| | 6-11 | Unsorted ephemera |

Box
13-14 Fol

Series VII. Restricted Records

The restricted records consist of correspondence and other papers which have been removed from the files and sealed until the year 2043 in order to protect the privacy of persons involved.

Closed. Not microfilmed.