

The Deviant's Trove

Charles Francis, Mattachine President

“History is written by the winners”, said Attorney General William Barr, “so it largely depends upon who is writing the history.” What better inspiration for our work than Barr’s dangerous cynicism! The “Deviant’s Trove” is Mattachine’s answer to anyone who would re-write or erase LGBTQ history. Working with McDermott Will & Emery, our pro bono legal counsel for the past nine years, we have collected thousands of pages of original documents that provide the evidentiary history of brutal government animus toward LGBT Americans. These documents cannot be erased or “written by the winners”. They could only have been destroyed, but it is too late for that.

Spurred on by the new history “The Deviant’s War” by Eric Cervini (Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2020) we have assembled this trove, a sampling of our “greatest hits” collected by Freedom of Information Act requests, many hours in the National Archives, the Library of Congress, Presidential Libraries, even in peoples’ attics. These selected documents provide crucial context for the story of the original Mattachine Society of Washington, D.C. and the decades-long fight for LGBT equality in the face of stunning government animus. Our Trove is organized by chapter headings in Eric Cervini’s “Deviant’s War”. We post this collection so that a new generation of LGBTQ Americans, historians, researchers and educators may benefit from primary source materials--- safe from the clutches of any so-called “winners” who would rewrite our hard-won history.