Homosexuals in the Federal Government and Personnel Security

In response to growing concern over the loyalty and security of the Federal workforce, on April 27, 1953, President Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10450 - Security requirements for Government Employment. Sec. 8 (a)(1)(iii) of this order authorized investigations to "develop information as to whether the employment or retention in employment in the Federal service of the person being investigated is clearly consistent with the interests of the national security." Among the list of suspect behaviors considered criminal, immoral or unethical was “sexual perversion.”

Researchers interested in the history of Federal employment policy toward gay and lesbian workers need to bear in mind several key factors. Public discourse on sexual identity was extremely limited in the 1950s. Not only was sexual preference not viewed in terms of civil liberties or civil rights, it was almost never openly discussed. In the holdings at the Eisenhower Presidential Library there are very few documents explicitly mentioning homosexuality. The first part of this subject guide lists those few sources that readily identify this topic.

Two famous treason and defection cases also involved the topic of homosexuality. National Security Agency (NSA) cryptologists, William Hamilton Martin and Bernon F. Mitchell, defected to the Soviet Union in September 1960. This was publicized at the time and there is some material in our holdings on this case. There is also a small number of documents regarding the espionage case of Harold Adrian Russell "Kim" Philby, a British intelligence agent who defected to the Soviet Union in 1963. Also, the close association of Joseph McCarthy investigators Roy Cohn and G. David Schine came under scrutiny.

Collections containing documents relating to personnel security, while not specifically mentioning sexual preference, may also be relevant to research on this topic and are listed in somewhat less detail in the second portion of the subject guide. Researchers may also want to consult the subject guides on Internal Security and McCarthyism. In addition, some individuals dismissed from government service for homosexuality tried to appeal their dismissal. There may be individual case files for some of these individuals in the collections listed in the second portion of the guide.

Please note that access to some documents may be restricted due to donor restrictions and personal privacy concerns. In addition, some documents relating to national security may still be classified.
Dulles, Eleanor Lansing: Papers
Box 69  Conference with Hanes and O'Connor, Notes, March 20, 1963 [among other topics a brief mention of homosexuals in the State Department]

Eisenhower, Dwight D.: Papers as President (Ann Whitman File)
NSC Series
Box 13  463rd Meeting of the NSC, October 13, 1960 [Martin and Mitchell case; how to handle homosexuals in government if the Supreme Court upholds their continued employment. Includes DDE comments.]

DDE Appointment Book Series
Box 2  Calls and Appointments 1964 (7) [record of phone conversations re: Walter Jenkins, a Lyndon Johnson aide arrested in YMCA men’s bathroom in 1964]

Eisenhower, Dwight D.: Records as President, White House Central Files
Official File
Box 308  OF 99-E Appearances of Cabinet Offers and Heads of Agencies before Congressional Committees [J. Vincent Burke of the Defense Dept. on the Martin and Mitchell case]

Ginzberg, Eli: Papers
Box 2  Snyder, Howard M. (10) [12/21/51 letter supporting homosexuals in military]

Henry, Laurin L.: Papers re Presidential Transitions
Box 7  Executive Departments and Agencies—State (2) [6/29/53 editorial]
Box 9  Loyalty, Security, Suitability-General (1)-(13) [Civil Service Commission reports on employees dismissed, includes sexual perversion as a category]
Box 10  Loyalty, Security, Suitability—Statistics on Dismissals

Hobby, Oveta Culp: Papers
Box 17  Security [contains outline of the procedure for hearing sex deviation cases]

Lee, Robert E.: Papers
Box 8  Miscellaneous Speech Materials, 1950-1983 (3) [1950 Senate subcommittee publication, “Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Pervers in Government”]
Masterson, Charles F.: Records
Box 9 Federal Employee Security Program [Civil Service Commission reports on employees dismissed, includes sexual perversion as a category]

Republican National Committee: News Clippings and Publications
Box 241 Federal Payroll: Dismissals - Perverts - March 1950 - May 1952
Federal Payroll: Dismissals - Perverts - June 1952 – 1953
Box 325 Cohn, Roy M.: (Chief Counsel to Senate Invest. Sub-committee) - January 1953 [clippings in folder date from 1952-1964]

Seaton, Fred A.: Papers
FAS Eyes Only Series
[primarily relating to Roy Cohn and G. David Schine]
Box 4 McCarthy (1)-(9)
Concurrent Memoranda Included in 2 February Chronology by Mr. Adams Furnished to Lt. Col. Jean L. Wood
Chronology of Efforts by McCarthy Subcommittee to Secure Special Treatment for G. David Schine [by John G. Adams]
Transcripts of Robert Stevens’ Telephone Conversations re McCarthy Transcripts --Jack Lucas (1)(2)
Telephone Transcripts--4 September 1953-15 March 1954 [duplicates]
Box 5 Transcripts--Ted Rhode [Stevens’ telephone conversations]
Contacts in Person or by Phone with Mr. Roy Cohn [1/6/53 to 2/18/54]
Chron Copies of Memos sent to Secretary of the Army’s Office Justice Department--Documentation not considered pertinent by Sec. Seaton
Congressional Correspondence re G. David Schine Case Rebuttal to McCarthy Memos
G. David Schine Case (1)-(3) [certified copies of memos]
Adams Chronology (1)(2) [several copies]
Box 6 Adams Chronology (3)-(6) [several copies]
Work Notes and Memos re Contacts with McCarthy Committee (1)-(2)

White House Office, National Security Staff: Papers
Disaster Series
Box 43 Security (7) [evaluation of suspect behaviors, including homosexuality]

White House Office, Office of the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: Records
FBI Series
Box 10 Summary Brief - Donald Duart Maclean, Guy Francis De Moncy Burgess, Harold Adrian Russell Philby (Nov 1955)
The collections below mention E.O. 10450, employee security, industrial security and/or personnel security. They may also contain files relevant to the dismissal of homosexual employees within the government. Please consult the finding aids for the collections cited below.

Areeda, Phillip E.: Papers
Dulles, John Foster: Papers
    JFD Chronological Series
    Personnel Series
    Special Assistants’ Chronological Series
Eisenhower, Dwight D.: Papers as President (Ann Whitman File)
    Administration Series
    Cabinet Series
    DDE Diary Series
    Legislative Meetings Series
    NSC Series
Eisenhower, Dwight D.: Records as President, White House Central Files
    Alphabetical File (for locating documents relating to specific individuals
    Confidential Files
    Official Files
Flemming, Arthur S.: Papers
Henry, Laurin L.: Papers re Presidential Transitions
Hobby, Oveta Culp: Papers
The following book provides an overview of the employment of gays and lesbians in the Federal government.


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