

after similar groups in New York (Sunset Club) and Chicago (Twilight), William F. Vilas named a Madison men's society the Six O'Clock Club.<sup>41</sup> Other founding members included Amos P. Wilder, editor of the *State Journal* newspaper and father of playwright Thornton Wilder; Charles H. Brown; W. A. P. Morris; William Helm; J. B. Winslow; C. E. Buell; and other members of the academic and professional elite. Monthly dinners during the winter months featured speakers addressing topics of civic interest (e.g., the Boer War, municipal ownership of utilities, or the life insurance situation), as well as a hearty meal and the companionship of one's fellows. Starting and ending times were carefully observed, as the announcement for the first dinner on Tuesday, November 14, 1899, states: "No dress suits are tolerated—the idea being that men shall come direct from their places of business. They will be returned to the bosoms of their family certainly by ten o'clock."<sup>42</sup> Although the meal was offered mostly as a convenience for members, the *State Journal* notes, "The dinner itself was unusually good, the excellence of the initial soup and the wild duck being a subject of comment."<sup>43</sup>

Over two hundred men attended the initial Six O'Clock Club dinner, for which they paid seventy-five cents each. Neither lengthy speeches nor liquor were permitted. Instead, a later club menu offers "Meat for the Body—Songs for the Soul—Food for the Brain."<sup>44</sup> Suitable entertainment for the evenings included the Madison Maennerchor, or, occasionally, female singers, such as the Monona Ladies Quartet.<sup>45</sup> For many years, the club rotated its dinners between a hall over James Keeley's Palace of Sweets, a confectioner's shop on State Street; the Guild Hall in Grace Episcopal Church on the Capitol Square; the Woman's Building; and later, the gymnasium in Central High School, as increased attendance required a larger hall.<sup>46</sup> Although the last Six O'Clock Club menu in the library collection dates from 1913, writers used the club as an example of widespread interest in civic affairs for years afterward.<sup>47</sup> The Six O'Clock Club also made a contribution to town-gown relations, as one writer notes

The club has done a great deal to show "down-town" folks that some college profs can really drive a nail. On the other hand, some of the faculty have been made meek by noting the force and power of speakers who haven't seen a school-room since they were 13 years old, and don't know whether Charlemagne was one of Plutarch's men or an out-post of Thule.<sup>48</sup>

The Old Settlers' Club of Milwaukee was another men's social club that held annual dinners, usually on George Washington's birthday. Unlike the abstaining Six O'Clock Club diners, the Milwaukee Old Settlers' Club members often imbibed the palate-cleansing Roman punch, which contained spirits, and their evenings included many toasts. Camaraderie

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This menu accompanied a dinner given for Warren G. Harding aboard the United Fruit Company steamship, the *SS Pastores*, after his victory in the 1920 presidential election. Besides importing tropical fruit from Central America for tables in the United States, the United Fruit Company influenced the politics of the countries where it operated.

was important to these men, as the refrain to the parting song, sung to the tune of Auld Lang Syne, suggests:

Then Brothers, join our hands for aye,  
Our hearts together beat,  
May heaven spare our locks of gray  
Till here again we meet.<sup>49</sup>

Leaders in state government, academia, the clergy, and business comprised the Old Settlers' Club membership, and included the State Historical Society's own Lyman C. Draper and Reuben G. Thwaites.<sup>50</sup> Sharing well-prepared food and companionship were part of the appeal of these clubs. Dinners for both the Madison and Milwaukee men's clubs are well-documented, with promotional flyers, dinner programs and menus, and the occasional ticket. Not only did men at the top tier of society attend these dinners but some also kept the ephemera associated with them.

The Old Settlers' Club of Madison collection includes a poignant menu item: a handwritten draft of the menu for a

## A Gastronomic Forecast

*Dire was the clang of plate, of knife and fork,  
That merciless fell, like tomahawk, to work.*  
— Dr. Wolcot's *Peter Pindar*.

### CREAM OF TOMATO

CELERY OLIVES

### ROAST TURKEY

CRANBERRY JELLY

MASHED POTATOES SWEET CORN

SHRIMP SALAD

LEMON ICE

NEAPOLITAN ICE CREAM ASSORTED CAKE

BENT'S CRACKERS CHEESE

COFFEE

## From the Maennerchor

### First Tenor

CHAS. HOEBEL  
FRANK C. BLIED  
WM. JOACHIM

### First Bass

JACOB ESSER  
HERMAN GAERTNER

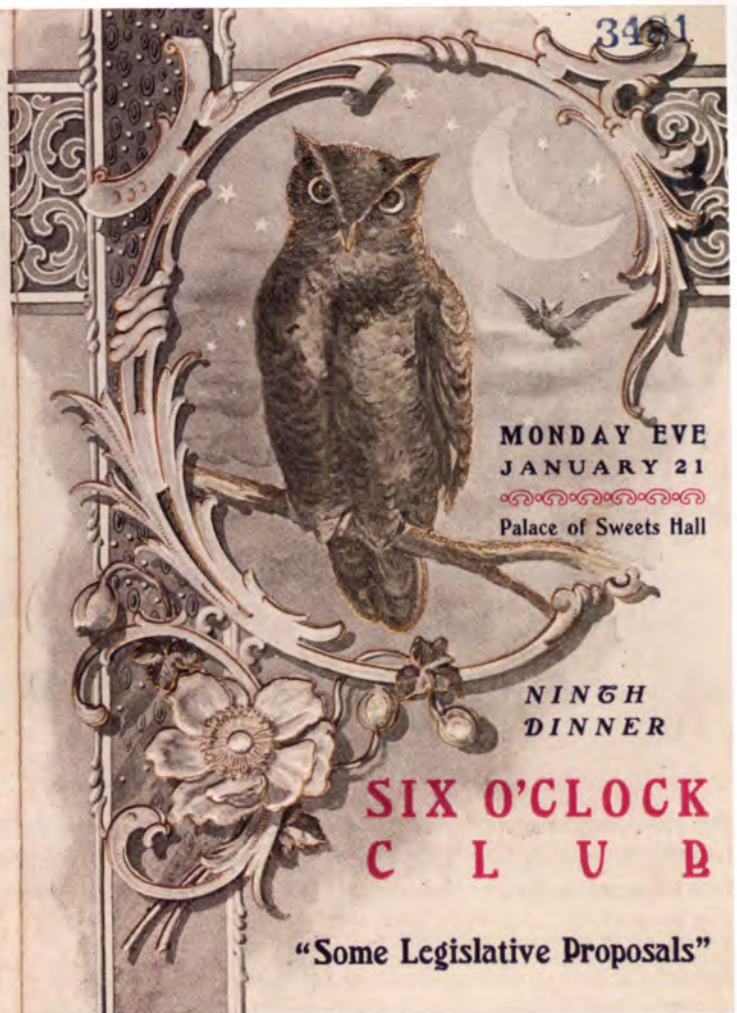
### Second Tenor

A. H. KAYSER  
E. O. KNEY

### Second Bass

CHAS. WEHRMAN  
CHAS. ELVER

L. W. JOACHIM, *Director*. 39 Active Members.



3481

MONDAY EVE  
JANUARY 21  
Palace of Sweets Hall

NINTH  
DINNER

SIX O'CLOCK  
C L U B

"Some Legislative Proposals"

This 1901 menu is for the ninth dinner of the Six O'Clock Club, a men's social club that met several times a year for dinner, musical entertainment, and short presentations by invited speakers on various civic issues. As another Six O'Clock Club menu promised, "Meat for the Body—Songs for the Soul—Food for the Brain."

Journalist and Gridiron Club member Ray Henle and his wife Marion also frequently entertained at their Washington, DC home, at black tie dinners with eight to twelve invited guests, who might be cabinet members, ambassadors, members of Congress, high-ranking military officials, or visiting royalty. One common menu for these dinners, used at least twelve times in 1955, featured Lobster Newburg (also spelled Lobster Newburgh and Lobster à la Newburg) as the fish course and Filet of Beef as the main course. Occasionally the same menu was served on consecutive nights to a different roster of guests, presumably to maximize the efficiency of shopping and prep work.<sup>57</sup> The Henles served Lobster Newburg less frequently in following years (seven times in 1958 and only four times in 1959). In 1960, the default fish course seemed to shift to Lobster Mousse Chantilly. Lobster Newburg, pieces of lobster in a creamy sauce flavored with sherry or cognac, was reputedly created in the 1880s at the famed New York restaurant Delmonico's, and appears periodically on other menus in the collection.<sup>58</sup>

### The New Woman

A menu from University of Wisconsin sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross's papers reflects the changing roles of women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: Ross is pictured smoking a pipe while sitting in an armchair. On the back, a child wearing a bib and sitting in a high chair plays with a jack-in-the-box, accompanied by the rhyme, "Mother Goose became quite new, And joined a Woman's Club, She left poor Father Goose at home To care for little Bub."<sup>59</sup> Professional women's associations also formed and occasionally held dinners, such as a Council of Administrative Women in Education event in Milwaukee, at which the guest of honor was Lizzie Black Kander, Settlement House founder and author of *The Settlement Cook Book*.<sup>60</sup>

Activities outside of the home also included meals at restaurants such as cafés, lunchrooms, and tearooms, which catered to the growing workforce of female office workers, as well as middle- and upper-class women. Women dining on their own without male companions, however, still faced