Disharmony in the Clubhouse: Exclusion, Identity, and the Making of McKim, Mead & White’s Harmonie Club of New York City

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In 1906, the governors of New York’s Harmonie Club made a rare public announcement. The club was moving uptown, from its old site on West 42nd Street to new, purpose-built premises on East 60th designed by McKim, Mead & White (Figure 1). Architectural Record critic Herbert Croly drew attention to the firm’s preeminence in this class of building, describing the Harmonie’s new home as “a worthy successor” to its “long line” of gentlemen’s clubhouses. His major criticism was that the building lacked the distinctiveness of many of McKim, Mead & White’s previous designs, a failing that he blamed on the club, not the architects, because it lacked “any distinguishing characteristics” that “would naturally suggest some individual and interesting building.”3 Hardly glowing, Croly’s review was nonetheless a public relations coup for the Harmonie, which had, in fact, many “distinguishing characteristics” but wanted nothing less than to see them advertised in “some individual and interesting building.” What the club wanted was what Croly described, a good but unremarkable McKim, Mead & White-designed clubhouse.

What Croly neglected to say was that the Harmonie Club members were of German Jewish descent and that the organization had recently transformed itself from a family club into one of New York’s few Jewish gentlemen’s clubs. The new building was the capstone of a long and fractious process of reinvention. Until the early 1890s, the organization’s official name had been the Gesellschaft Harmonie (Harmonie Society), and, while membership was always restricted to men, it had been a place where members could go to dine with their wives and children, see plays, hear lectures, read, debate, and much else. At a time when the ideology of separate spheres for men and women held sway in the United States and American Jews faced new and virulent forms of anti-Semitism—chastised for being cultish and for violating gender conventions—a Jewish family club was an unusual and eye-catching institution. The members of the Harmonie

Figure 1 McKim, Mead & White, Harmonie Club, East 60th Street, New York, 1905–7 (Wurts Bros. / Museum of the City of New York, X2010.7.1.108).
Club were anxious to see that earlier version of their association tucked away behind their new McKim, Mead & White façade.

This article reconstructs the club’s journey from West 42nd to East 60th Street, from family club to gentlemen’s club. It offers the first sustained case study of one of McKim, Mead & White’s New York clubhouses, a large but neglected body of work that offers fresh insights into Gilded Age American society. The story of why and how this exclusively Jewish club came to commission a prominent architectural firm associated with powerful Protestant interests helps illuminate one of the most confounding characteristics of the American upper class as it emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century: its Jewish–Protestant divide. This article challenges recent accounts by historians such as Sven Beckert that downplay the division and that depict the American upper class as an almost inevitable development of financial capitalism, relatively free of intraclass conflict. While all these studies stress the importance of elite institutions, including gentlemen’s clubs, for upper-class formation, none take the kind of ground-level approach used below based on careful study of an individual institution’s records over several decades of planning and re-planning its building. What emerges as a result is a much clearer picture of how ideas about Jewish inferiority and male superiority were integral to the development of a national elite. No less remarkable was how the Harmonie Club’s elite Jewish families harnessed architecture to mediate these developments, which were otherwise still too new and too fraught for them to approach directly. The article begins by exploring the Harmonie’s foundation and first clubhouse, before moving to consider the prehistory and design of the McKim, Mead & White clubhouse itself. Reconstructing that story provides an unusually intimate portrait of an instance in the not-too-distant past when the categories of race, gender, and class intersected to shape American society.

The Founding and Early History of the Harmonie Club

The Harmonie Club was established by the first Reform synagogue in New York, Temple Emanu-El, as a social center for its congregation. Most if not all of the founding members were born in Germany and immigrated to the United States in the 1830s and 1840s to escape religious persecution and economic hardship. While the community prospered in antebellum New York, religious practice nonetheless set its members apart from other New Yorkers, Protestant as well as Jewish. Most Jews in mid-nineteenth-century New York lived more traditionally than did members of the Congregation Emanu-El, who sought to bring their religious practice into harmony with their new American surroundings, even if this sometimes meant altering or dispensing with Jewish law. The congregation’s liberal views on the social mixing of men and women laid the groundwork for the establishment of the Harmonie Club in 1852.

Although the Harmonie Club was always patriarchal, with decision making restricted to its male members, club life was initially centered on the family. This kind of sociability had precedents in German associationalism, but it also reflected the evolving nature of the community’s faith. In the mid-1850s, Temple Emanu-El became the first synagogue in New York—and only the second in the nation—to end the practice of separate seating for men and women. In the 1860s, the congregation entered a period of “complete change” as a younger generation took the reins and swept away many older forms of Jewish practice. Significantly, these years saw the synagogue and club move into their first purpose-built buildings on West 43rd and West 42nd Streets, both designed by the German-born Jewish architect Henry Fernbach and completed within a year of each other in 1868 and 1867, respectively (Figures 2 and 3). For all the connections that linked these two institutions, their new homes could have scarcely looked more different. The clubhouse, at 45 West 42nd Street, between 5th and 6th Avenues overlooking Bryant Park, was Second Empire baroque in style; the synagogue, a block away at the corner of
West 43rd and 5th Avenue, was Moorish, a mode then commonly used in the design of Central European synagogues.14 This meant that, from the street at least, the Harmonie club-house had much in common with the quarters of the city’s oldest and most prestigious gentlemen’s club, the Union Club. Like that club’s 1855 building (the first and then still only purpose-built gentlemen’s clubhouse in the city), at the corner of 21st Street and 5th Avenue, the Harmonie club-house was three stories on a rusticated base with pedimented windows and prominent quoining (Figure 4).15

Inside, however, the Harmonie Club was distinct.16 Contemporary descriptions of the interiors—no floor plans for the original building survive—reveal that the Harmonie club-house on West 42nd Street contained a concert hall and ball-room for mixed entertainments for men and women and a suite for the latter, including women’s parlors, cloakrooms, and dressing rooms, all located on the piano nobile.17 By contrast, the Union Club had neither concert hall nor ballroom; its principal story contained rooms for dining, cards, and billiards.18 Although the Harmonie also had spaces for these functions, they occupied less prestigious floors. Evidently, the West 42nd Street Harmonie clubhouse was intended to be the home of a family club, not a gentlemen’s club.

Thanks to a good collection of club ephemera, it is possible to paint a fairly detailed picture of life inside the West 42nd Street clubhouse. This collection, which originated with the opening of the new clubhouse, suggests the members’ keenness to develop a sense of identity in their new home. In the first scrapbook, following several pages of invoices documenting the building’s opening banquet, are invitations, menus, and programs for a range of entertainments. In the ballroom, “the dances, large and small, were the social events of the season,” and the masquerade ball was “the great event of each year.”19 In the concert hall, lectures were given, as well as theatrical and musical performances, including amateur plays and operettas performed by members and their families. “The operettas, the special feature of the seasons . . . were sumptuous in their costuming and perfect, regardless of expense, in their other appointments, while the young ladies of the club shone as principals in the chorus, according to their attainments.”20 More regular were the children’s evenings, attended by entire families, with special entertainments and separate dinners for parents and children. Finally, it was in the clubhouse that members’ daughters would make their social debuts when they came of age. “This appearance . . . marked the turning point in their lives,” recalled one member in his account of how the clubhouse had once served as “the social center for its members.”21

Having arisen from the liberal Jewish practices of Temple Emanu-El, the Harmonie Club flourished alongside its mother institution. Indeed, the club’s first decade on West 42nd Street was one of optimism and growth. Here women and family occupied a central position in the everyday life of

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**Figure 3** Henry Fernbach, Temple Emanu-El, corner of West 43rd Street and 5th Avenue, New York, completed 1868 (Irving Underhill / Museum of the City of New York, X2010.28.705).

**Figure 4** Thomas Thomas, Union Club, corner of 21st Street and 5th Avenue, New York, completed 1855 (William J. Roege / New-York Historical Society, PR181_b-09_9247-01).
the organization, which made the Harmonie distinct from the gentlemen’s club tradition then beginning to take hold in New York City’s elite society. Distinct though it was, the club in these early years provided a place of relative security and stability for the German Jewish community.

The Rise of Patrician Anti-Semitism and the Harmonie Club Response

The moment when the Harmonie Club ceased being unself-conscious about its family entertainments is easy to spot in its scrapbooks. Slipped into the front of the second scrapbook, the volume covering the 1880s, is a copy of the 1882 yearbook of the Saint Nicholas Club of New York (Figure 5). The Saint Nicholas, as its yearbook tells us, was founded by a small group of men in 1875 “to collect and preserve information respecting the early history and settlement of the City and State of New York, and to promote social intercourse among its members.” In other words, it was a gentlemen’s club, loosely organized around members’ shared interest in local history. It had a clubhouse (likely a converted brownstone dwelling) in the fashionable neighborhood north of Madison Square, with a membership that was white, wealthy, and Protestant. Harmonie members probably intended to use the Saint Nicholas yearbook—a standard gentlemen’s club publication, containing copies of the society’s constitution, bylaws, and house rules—as a model for transforming their own organization into a comparable sort of gentlemen’s club.

The impetus for this transformation came from the rise of patrician anti-Semitism. For much of the nineteenth century, German Jewish elites in New York had enjoyed relatively good social relations with their Protestant counterparts. However, such interactions had largely disappeared by the end of the century as the city’s elites began to consolidate into a cohesive upper class and looked for ways to distinguish themselves as such. Their dissociation from Jews, supported by exclusive institutions such as gentlemen’s clubs, became one of the most important forms of self-identification. The position of German Jews, who by virtue of their wealth had until that time been accorded elite status by Gentiles, was now under threat.

This situation developed relatively rapidly. There were occasional reports of Jews being refused service at high-end restaurants and hotels in the late 1860s and 1870s, but over the next couple of decades such incidents grew more systematic. The most publicized of these cases was the blackballing of Theodore Seligman from the Union League Club of New York in 1893. Seligman, son of Jesse Seligman, head of J. & W. Seligman & Company (the most prestigious Jewish banking house in the United States), was a member of the Harmonie Club and Temple Emanu-El. Theodore’s rejection from the Union League came as a surprise to him and his family. His father had been a member there for twenty-five years and served as one of its vice presidents for fourteen years. Theodore’s sponsors were socially impeccable Protestants: he was nominated by LeGrand Camon, one of the Union League’s founders, and his nomination was seconded by General Horace Porter. A younger cohort, however, opposed Theodore’s election. “The objection is purely racial,” the membership committee informed Jesse Seligman, “not a personal matter in any way, either as to father or son.” Jesse immediately resigned his membership in protest.

But the Union League Club incident was about gender as well as race. It revealed the extent to which the American upper class now cultivated an Anglo-Saxon racial identity along with a particularly aggressive masculine image. This fits...
into a broader pattern of patrician anti-Semitism from this era that painted Jewish men as overcivilized, woman-like, and weak.29 The Union League Club’s rejection of Theodore Seligman was, therefore, both a statement about his race and a rejection of his masculinity.

These postures can be traced to the new Jewish visibility that followed the influx of Russian Jewish immigrants into New York starting in the early 1880s. Over the course of that decade and the next, the number of Jewish New Yorkers more than tripled, from 80,000 to nearly 300,000.30 Most settled on the Lower East Side, a small area of less than half a square mile, between the Bowery and the East River. Thus a large, densely populated Jewish neighborhood was established in a remarkably short period of time. Because most of its residents came from isolated shtetls or urban ghettos in Russia with little exposure to Western gender conventions, they lived and worked in ways that often shocked contemporary observers, who subsequently made little or no distinction between Russian Jews and German Jews who had immigrated at an earlier time and under different circumstances.

In response to this situation the Harmonie Club began to change. Originally about assimilating into liberal Judaism, which was itself about integrating into white society, it now turned toward assimilating into ruling-class society.31 In 1882—the same year the Saint Nicholas Club published the yearbook mentioned above—Harmonie Club members sought, unsuccessfully, to ease restrictions on the use of English in the club (German was its official language). The 1882–83 season also saw the entertainments committee put on the club’s first all-male events, a series of “Stag Parties,” which thereafter became regular entertainments.32 In 1889 reformers succeeded in convincing club leaders to permit the use of English in Harmonie debates (this was their third attempt to integrate the English language into club activities).33 The club finally switched to English as its official language in 1893, with German then permitted for a time in debates before being abolished altogether. In 1892 “the work of investigating candidates and . . . unpleasantness of balloting upon them” was moved to a specialized admissions committee, standard practice for other exclusive gentlemen’s clubs in the city.34 In 1894 the organization changed its name, from Gesellschaft Harmonie to Harmonie Club.

How did the club’s reformers frame these and other changes? They argued that families were using the club less, and that becoming a gentlemen’s club was a straightforward matter of adaptation and survival for the organization. There was a limited amount of truth to this. Post–Civil War prosperity did mean that many Jewish families now occupied larger houses than they had a few decades earlier, mansions in some cases, capable of hosting the types of large-scale events that had once only been possible in the clubhouse. At the same time, individual families were now able to shoulder the costs of such events, whereas before the club had been a useful vehicle for pooling families’ resources. Not all families grew rich to the same extent, however, and this also had an effect on how the clubhouse was used, fragmenting the community into “social circles” that were “more narrow and restricted” than before.35 “Young ladies, who in former years would never have considered the question of remaining away from a club entertainment for the purpose of attending some small private sociable, now generally give the preference to smaller gatherings and will come to the Harmonie only if nothing else is offered for that particular evening.”36

Wealth alone, however, cannot account for the Harmonie Club’s reforms. The obsessiveness with which club reformers went about eliminating women from their presence and reinventing the organization as a gentlemen’s club indicates that something else was afoot. Upper-class anti-Semitism and the threat that it posed to the Harmonie members’ social and economic positions were the culprits. Reforms were aimed at differentiating club members from the “promiscuous” ways of recent immigrant groups and at conforming to Yankee gender conventions of separate spheres for men and women.37 When the popular 1893 King’s Handbook of New York City reported that the Harmonie Club’s main features were its “homelike . . . jealous regard for privacy” and “the characteristic that the members attend it with their wives,” reform-minded members must have winced.38 Women had to go.

It is worth noting that the reformers never threatened to go themselves. That is, they never appear to have considered it an option to leave and start a new club of their own, even as they encountered stiff opposition from conservatives, and even though the German Jewish community was now large enough to support a second social club. Certainly, plenty of other New York clubs had begun as breakaway organizations. Indeed, the Union Club had earned the nickname the “mother of clubs” because so many others in the city could trace themselves back to one of its internal conflicts, the Union League Club among them. Another Union Club breakaway, more relevant to the Harmonie Club’s story, was the Metropolitan Club. Financier J. P. Morgan founded the Metropolitan in 1891 after the Union blackballed a slew of railroad men he had put up for membership; the men were rejected on account of their being “parvenus.” These dismissals were publicized, like the Seligman affair at the Union League, and it was after hearing about one of these, the rejection of the self-made railroad president John King (who was said to have offensive table manners), that Morgan, “in a fit of pique,” instructed Stanford White to “build a club fit for gentlemen. Damn the expense!”39 That clubhouse, on the corner of 5th Avenue and East 60th Street, stood directly
across from the site of the future Harmonie clubhouse by McKim, Mead & White (Figure 6).

Opening a new club was certainly an option for Harmonie Club members. Member families such as the Seligmans, Schiffs, and Lehmans occupied the same world of high finance as J. P. Morgan and would have been able to muster the necessary funds had they wanted to go that route. But what the reformers wanted was to transform their parents’ and grandparents’ family club into an all-male society, because such a development would eliminate an embarrassing feature of their community’s public sociability—the female element—while simultaneously calling attention to the fact that, as represented by the Harmonie’s age, their community preexisted the downtown Russian Jewish one by at least a half century.40 Perhaps that is why Harmonie members were drawn to the example of the Saint Nicholas Club—one of a handful of gentlemen’s clubs in New York at that time that combined homosociality with historical, genealogical, and nativist interests.41

**The First Attempt to Rebuild the Harmonie Club**

It did not take the Harmonie Club’s reformers long to realize that they would need to relocate the club if they were ever going to fully reinvent their institution. By 1893, a “younger . . . energetic” member initiated the first recorded attempt to build a new clubhouse. He raised an impressive $130,000 in member subscriptions—about one-third of what a new building would have cost—before his campaign stalled, probably because of the devastating financial crisis that same year.42

Fortunately for the reformers, conservative members themselves soon broached the subject of a new building. The club owned its building, but not the land on which it stood, and the ground lease was set to expire early in the next century. Although the Harmonie had the option of renewing, the expected hike in rent would make renewal difficult to justify.43 The Midtown neighborhood had by this time evolved into the city’s premier shopping district, and the club’s site had considerably appreciated in value. One club estimate put the renegotiated annual rent at $21,000, a threefold increase over the then-current rate.44 The question of relocation weighed on all members.

Jacob W. Mack, a German-born garment manufacturer and merchant, a conservative member of the Harmonie Club, and the club president from 1895, next raised the issue.45 At a special general meeting in March 1896, Mack put the idea of a new clubhouse to a vote, but not before clarifying his own views on the matter. On the one hand, he acknowledged reformers’ resolve that the Harmonie should move in the direction of a “Gentlemen’s Club”; on the other, he was adamant that moving too far in that direction—dropping rather than downplaying family and mixed entertainments for men and women—would mean “becoming in the course of time . . . little more than a card or gambling club.” Such change, he protested,

would certainly make the Harmonie turn its back upon all its traditions, usages and customs, and make it, not a “Gentlemen’s Club,” but simply a “Men’s Club” between which two there is a
vast distinction. If you should at any time decide upon such a change, you may retain the name and title of the Club, but you will have retained the shadow only and lost the substance. When this club becomes a “Men’s Club,” you will in my humble opinion lose the respect of the world, which is bad enough; but you will also lose your self-respect, which is infinitely worse.46

In Mack’s mind, relinquishing the Harmonie’s old social element would be tantamount to closing the club.

Still, he was willing to make concessions. He proposed a new building that would carefully sequester entertainments for women and children, a building located on a corner site, which would have the “distinct and supreme advantage” of permitting “two separate and independent entrances, one of which might be used for entertainments only, while the other would be the regular main front of the club.” The former would lead “to the banquet hall, reception rooms, dressing rooms, etc.” and the latter “to the regular reading room, card rooms, billiard room etc.” This arrangement would benefit “regular habitués” who, at the clubhouse on West 42nd Street, complained of being shut out on entertainment nights.47 Mack also endorsed incorporating ten to fifteen bachelors’ apartments into the club’s precincts. “Apart from this mere rental [income], the occupants of these quarters, or at least the greater majority of them, would undoubtedly become themselves ‘fixtures’ of the clubhouse and regular daily guests at its table.”48 In effect, then, Mack envisioned two discrete but attached clubhouses: a gentlemen’s club and a family club.

When his proposal was put to a vote at the same 1896 meeting, it passed by an overwhelming majority. But when Mack returned a year later with a more detailed plan for remodel, including a list of potential building sites (selected for their proximity to members’ residences rather than to Temple Emanu-El or to the city’s club district), members balked and support disappeared.49 Mack’s failure to hit the club’s $400,000 fund-raising mark through member subscriptions (he raised only three-quarters of that) forced a second vote on the proposal, and the plan was killed. In seeking to address the needs of everyone, conservatives and reformers alike, Mack ended up satisfying no one.50

Just over a month later, however, Mack was back, pushing a new scheme, this time to remodel the West 42nd Street clubhouse. At a special club meeting in June 1897, he presented drawings from at least two different architects (all anonymous; none of the drawings survive). Mack, whose garment business likely extended into menswear, attempted to coax the club into action by comparing the clubhouse to a gentleman’s old suit of clothes:

When a man outgrows his clothes, or when, after a use of many seasons, they become shabby and worn so that he is well nigh ashamed of showing himself in public, in addition to his feeling of personal discomfort and inconvenience, his thoughts turn in the direction of purchasing new garments. Into the choice of these there enter many elements: that of taste, of fashion, and particularly the question whether his purse is able to afford what his wish would dictate. . . . When all these things fail, when he can neither find what he wants, nor purchase for cash or credit, his next thoughts are turned to the possibility of patching, mending and cleaning his old suit, that it may do him for a while, until an improvement in his circumstances, or absolute necessity, compels him to new clothes.51

The club members eventually approved Mack’s plan to remodel, which suggests that the building had indeed grown uncomfortable and inconvenient. Issues of maintenance, safety, and outdated amenities could be addressed, members agreed, without revisiting those questions of taste and fashion that had beset Mack’s earlier plan for a new building. It was in the interest of everyone that the club, as Mack frankly stated, “show at least some sign of life.”52 Thus began the process of “patching, mending and cleaning” the Harmonie’s old suit.

Yet when the remodeled clubhouse opened a year later in 1898, the old suit looked new again (Figure 7).53 Jewish architect Henry Beaumont Herts and his partner, Hugh Tallant, who supervised the $85,000 project, had effectively gutted the Harmonie’s old building.54 On a vacant lot to the east of the clubhouse, where the club had formerly kept a garden, Herts & Tallant erected a new wing with a separate entrance, known as the ladies’ annexe. There was some precedent for this among New York’s clubhouses, notably the ladies’ annexe in McKim, Mead & White’s 1894 Metropolitan Club on East 60th Street (opposite the future Harmonie Club site). However, the Metropolitan’s annexe was little more than a restaurant, while the one attached to the Harmonie Club on West 42nd Street contained multiple functions across three stories.55 On the first floor of the Harmonie annexe were reception, coat, and reading rooms, and on the second floor, a high-ceilinged dining room with a music gallery. Herts & Tallant crowned the new wing with a third-floor conservatory, a French-inspired miniature Grand Palais, reached via a staircase from the dining room below.56

The club drafted new house rules suggesting that the annexe functioned as a sort of club within a club:

4. Ladies, of the family of a member of the Club, whether or not attended by such member, may use the annexe including the ladies’ restaurant, and may be accompanied by other ladies.
5. A lady making use of the ladies’ restaurant may incur charges for meals served, when duly authorized by a member. Such authority must be entered by the member in a book kept for that purpose.57
These were extraordinary privileges for women in the world of New York social clubs, all the more unusual since they bore little relation to how women had previously used the Harmonie clubhouse, which had been predicated on their roles within members’ families. In the annexe, members’ wives and daughters could visit the club independently of their male relations, host female friends (who need not be related to members themselves), and, if authorized, charge meals to an account. The annexe provided the Harmonie women with a purpose-built space outside the home and an alternative to socializing through charitable work or the highly formal practice of making house calls.

The unique organizational and architectural character of the ladies’ annexe suggests that it was created by Harmonie women themselves through their private lobbying of male relations. After all, the neighborhood around West 42nd Street had now emerged as a premier shopping and entertainment district, as the Ladies’ Mile migrated north of Madison Square, making it one of the few places in the city where they could walk alone, without male chaperones. The appeal of the annexe, then, might be compared to that of a women’s shopping club, somewhere to stop and rest when out on 5th Avenue. But it was also more than that—there was something radical about the annexe. Whereas shopping clubs functioned primarily as hotels for out-of-town female visitors, the Harmonie annexe served a small, local community, providing these women with a space outside the home, outside direct male control, where they might meet and socialize on their own terms. This must have infuriated and embarrassed the club’s reformers and helps explain their subsequent doubling of effort to exclude women from the future McKim, Mead & White–designed clubhouse.

The main club building on West 42nd Street, as redesigned by Herts & Tallant, was virtually as new as the ladies’ annexe. It now looked and functioned much like other New York gentlemen’s clubs. On the exterior, the architects removed the stoop and converted the old second-floor entrance into a loggia, a signature feature of New York’s clubhouse architecture ever since McKim, Mead & White’s trendsetting building for the Century Association on West 43rd Street, completed in 1893 (Figure 8). Now, instead of entering on the second floor via the stoop, Harmonie members entered on the first floor, like Centurions (i.e., members of the Century Club). Other changes evocative of the Century and other clubhouses lay inside. Just beyond the entrance, Herts & Tallant replaced the dark mahogany staircase, designed by Henry Fernbach, with “a simple and classical” one “built through a stone colonnade” that formed “a double loggia on the floor above.”

More significant was the elimination of the concert hall and women’s rooms in the remodeled clubhouse. Replacing them along the front of the building on the second floor were now the club’s main dining and lounging rooms and, along the rear, a new billiard room (Figure 9). The primary entertainment spaces were now a ballroom and a music room, both on the fourth floor, where the principal supper room had once been. Another notable addition was the first-floor grillroom, which had “the appearance of a palatial Kneipe”—a German-style pub—with “heavy wood-top tables and antique chairs” and “a row of beer mugs on the shelf which surround the room” (Figure 10). Grillrooms, which offered informal dining, had become ubiquitous in New York’s clubs, but the decoration of the Harmonie’s was unique. In a sense members were emphasizing their national heritage over their religious heritage, thereby participating in a broader immigrant culture of German national pride.

Settling back into the clubhouse was difficult for just about everyone. Mr. Siebrecht, the club’s head servant, resigned after butting heads with the new, or newly empowered, house committee and its “modern ideas” for running the place; he
had been employed by the club for more than thirty years.66 If the house committee was on the rise, the entertainment committee was in decline. It became less active after the club reopened, organizing just six events in the first season, half of which appear to have been open to women.67 Most telling was the committee’s decision to cancel the reopening celebrations because of a lack of RSVPs.68 The club members were clearly disgruntled. Some even accused Mack of having undertaken the remodeling surreptitiously.69 Tensions were such that the president complained of feeling unwelcome at the clubhouse, ignored at club meetings, and “assailed with . . . language of assorted quality.” The building “has been the cause of more heart-burnings, crimination and incriminations, dissatisfaction and bad language, than any other which has ever engaged our attention.”70 The clubhouse had, as Mack himself must have on some level realized, become about more than just the building; it was about the community and its identity.

McKim, Mead & White’s Harmonie Club

The 1902 annual meeting of the Harmonie Club should have been a celebratory one, for it marked the organization’s fiftieth anniversary. But at that meeting the club’s new president, Henry L. Calman, said almost nothing about the milestone. Instead, he began by announcing that more than two dozen members had resigned over the previous year, “a record number,” he warned, “evidencing the fact that something is wrong, for which a proper remedy should be sought.”71 The remedy as he saw it was to build a gentlemen’s clubhouse and to complete the organization’s metamorphosis once and for all.

At thirty-nine years old, Calman was young for the club’s presidency.72 No less remarkable was that he had been born in New York, not Germany. His German-born father, Emil, had immigrated to the United States, opened a varnish manufactory (which Henry inherited in the same year of his election), and joined the Harmonie in the 1860s. Unremarkably for a U.S.-born son of foreign parents (who tended to marry later in life or never at all), Henry Calman was still a bachelor.
when elected president. This was also true of his four brothers, who were Harmonie Club members as well. Calman likely owed his presidency to men like them: unmarried, first-generation American members with little or no memory of what the Harmonie had been before its reforms. This younger generation could be counted on to support change, especially if that change added to the club’s—and their own—prestige.

The pursuit of prestige appears to have preoccupied most young and wealthy German Jewish men in New York during these years. There were more of them than there had been in their parents’ generation, and their wealth was greater, but there were still only a handful of clubs that would admit them, hence the Harmonie’s ease in recruiting new members after the exodus that Calman reported in his inaugural address. Even the addition of fifty new membership slots, which the Harmonie had created to offset the costs of the West 42nd Street remodeling, did little to dent the club’s waiting list. By 1899 the list ran to almost two hundred names.

But before the Harmonie Club could begin the project of building a gentlemen’s clubhouse, one final reform would be needed, Calman contended, one that would require an amendment to the club’s constitution. If the club’s mixed entertainments were going to disappear, then something else, some “other means of enhancing the attractiveness of the club,” would need to be found. This, Calman said, should be gambling. He argued that the rationale behind the club’s prohibition on gambling would cease to make sense once there were no longer any women on the premises to offend. Further, gambling, once “deemed dangerous,” had “been rendered safe through the greater ability of the majority to bear [financial] losses which could formerly not be met.” By contrast, Calman’s predecessor, Jacob Mack, had railed against a members’ petition to permit gambling a few years earlier. In New York State it was illegal to gamble in social establishments such as the Harmonie Club, he pointed out; worse still, the advent of gambling would be the “death-knell” of the club. “It cannot be, it must not be,” Mack rebuked the petitioners, “that an indiscriminate desire for promiscuous gambling has taken such a violent hold upon the majority of the respectable members of this club, as to cause them to fling to the winds all the traditions of its respectability and its high standing among the clubs of this city.”

Calman, for his part, was less interested in traditions and more concerned with club law than with state law. In his bid to change the club’s rules on gambling, he investigated what “other prominent clubs” were saying and doing with regard to betting games like poker. Organizations such as the Union, Manhattan, and Metropolitan Clubs had prohibitions against gambling on the books but never actually enforced them. Calman asked “that members should be allowed to have the use of private rooms, without being subject to inquiry as to the purpose for which such room shall be used. The outward appearance of the club would therefore be the same as it is at present.” In the end, a majority of members agreed and the constitution was changed to allow gambling.

Noting that he was “convinced that a majority of our members would now be favorable to a plan which would gradually eliminate entertainments to which ladies are invited,” Calman argued “that if a new building is to be constructed it should be constructed on the plan of a gentlemen’s club.” It fell to the next club president, Albert F. Hochstadter, a lawyer and trustee of Temple Emanu-El, to execute this plan. Despite the fact that two-thirds of the members were now in favor of building a gentlemen’s clubhouse, Hochstadter revised Calman’s proposal to include family functions. At its first meeting, the committee on site and building (of which Hochstadter was chairman) resolved “that the building to be erected shall contain a room suitable for a ladies’ dining room with dressing rooms and accessories; and bowling alleys, arranged for use by ladies and gentlemen.” Further accommodations followed, including a luncheon room for women and “a reception room for their convenience” on the first floor.

Hochstadter’s disregard for the club’s majority opinion suggests that he was swayed by the female lobby that earlier emerged to create the ladies’ annex on West 42nd Street. German-born and in his mid-fifties, Hochstadter was a decade and a half older than Calman and had been a Harmonie Club member long enough to be able to recall the vibrant family entertainments. Unlike Calman, he was married, with children, including two daughters, and he had sisters, as well as brothers, of his own. When Calman returned to the club presidency following Hochstadter’s unexpected death in 1903, he respected the revised program with women’s spaces, the one soon to be executed by McKim, Mead & White.

The overriding criterion for the location of the new clubhouse was that it fall within the district known as “clubland” in Midtown Manhattan—the area, as defined in a resolution adopted by members at Calman’s urging, “bounded by 40th Street on the South [and] 60th Street on the North, Madison on the East and Eighth Avenue on the West.” On announcing their acquisition of the lot at 4 East 60th Street, between 5th and Madison Avenues, the board of governors described the location to members as “the most desirable and fashionable,” while also conceding that the “delay in taking this important step” had prevented the club “from locating on Fifth Avenue itself,” the most prestigious location for a club in the city. Another disappointment was that East 60th Street represented the northernmost boundary of clubland, meaning it was removed from the shops and transportation hubs that made streets such as East 43rd and East 44th so popular with other elite organizations. By contrast, East 60th was almost entirely residential, with one notable exception. Opposite the
Harmonie’s new home was the McKim, Mead & White–designed Metropolitan Club, opened in 1894. There was something fitting about these two clubhouses being neighbors, since both were partly born of campaigns to overcome upper-class exclusion.87 Engaging the Protestant architects McKim, Mead & White to design their clubhouse appears to have been a key part of the Harmonie Club leaders’ strategy for winning the organization’s acceptability as a gentlemen’s club. Previously, the club had worked exclusively with Jewish architects; Henry Fernbach, the original architect at West 42nd Street, had even become a member.88 And there was an obvious candidate among the club’s members in 1903: Harry A. Jacobs (1872–1932), a graduate of the École des Beaux-Arts and a recipient of the Prix de Rome, was an established and distinguished architect, more than capable of designing a new home for the club.89 Yet, as a member of the subcommittee on building, he played a part in steering the commission toward McKim, Mead & White.90

Jacobs, more than most, must have appreciated the firm’s fitness for the job, its elevated place within New York’s cultural and architectural establishment, and its special position as the city’s—and America’s—most influential clubhouse designer.91 Indeed, McKim, Mead & White worked on more clubhouses than any other individual architect or firm in New York City and played a personal role in cultivating a taste for club life there. In many cases, the partners belonged to, or helped found, the same clubs they designed for, including a number of the most prestigious associations already mentioned. In addition to J. P. Morgan’s Metropolitan Club, where Charles F. McKim and Stanford White were charter members, McKim, Mead & White remodeled the dining room at the Union Club, another organization that White joined.92 The Union later invited McKim to select the architect for its second clubhouse, completed in 1903.93 Long before that, McKim and William R. Mead, prior to White’s joining their practice, participated in a closed competition for the design of the Union League Club, which, although unsuccessful, provided them with a fount of ideas for the succession of club commissions that followed in the 1880s and 1890s, during New York’s clubhouse building boom. Among them was their building for the Century Association, which became a paradigm not only of their own subsequent clubhouse oeuvre but also of American clubhouse architecture more generally (Figure 11).94 In short, McKim, Mead & White was the ideal firm to complete the Harmonie Club’s metamorphosis. Unsurprisingly, the selection received unanimous support from Jacobs’s subcommittee and sailed through the Harmonie’s appointment process.95

One of the first challenges McKim, Mead & White faced was how to make the Harmonie look like a gentlemen’s club. The relatively narrow site, 75 feet wide along East 60th Street, meant that the building would need to climb several stories if it was to accommodate the various amenities called for by the club. Anything higher than two or three stories, however, would risk making the building unrecognizable as a club. The “club style,” first developed by Charles Barry and Decimus Burton in early nineteenth-century London, was, according to Henry-Russell Hitchcock, characterized above all by its cube-like appearance.96 The new Harmonie...
building’s proportions, then, were a key consideration for McKim, Mead & White.

The architects hit on their solution early in the design process. In one initial scheme for the exterior, we already see the high-waisted design that would make its way into the completed building (Figure 12). The idea was to use two different exterior materials, with the first three floors clad in marble—evoking the standard club form—and the remaining upper floors in terracotta, allowing for a high level of detail. The major changes from this early version to the clubhouse as built involved unifying the decorative program of the upper stories, probably with the goal of reducing the building’s vertical emphasis (Figure 13). Thus, the window pediments disappeared, and the pilasters extended three stories, not two, like suspenders, compressing the space. Likewise, below at street level, the Tuscan porch was extended two stories, and the sixth floor, the uppermost visible from the street, was tucked behind the building’s frieze. Did the building register as a club? Likely yes, because of the central loggia (another feature absent from the initial scheme), which, although more sculptural than practical, had by then—thanks to McKim, Mead & White—become the virtual shop front for a club-house in cities across the United States.

Inside, McKim, Mead & White’s building differed in several major respects from the Harmonie’s old quarters. First, the architects abandoned the ladies’ annexe idea and reintegrated the women’s accommodations into the main clubhouse. Women still had a separate entrance, but it shared the front portico with the members’ entrance, and there was an unmistakable hierarchy between the two: members entered through the double doors at center, while the women walked through the single door to the left. Behind that door lay the largest allocation of space for women, a suite of amenities organized around a reception room that led to a lobby at the back (Figure 14). The lobby provided access to the building’s main staircase and elevators, for there were rooms for women on other floors, too: in the basement, next to the bowling alley, a women’s dressing room; and on the sixth floor, a women’s dining room, abutting the members’ main dining room. The records suggest the dining rooms were furnished alike, although only an image for the latter survives (Figure 15).

The most significant women’s space, the reception room, was clearly a downgrade from the women’s accommodations on West 42nd Street. Stanford White, who oversaw the furnishing and decoration of the clubhouse, designed the reception room as a transient space, a crossing point near the door, just comfortable enough to pause in for a moment to check or collect one’s coat (there was a separate women’s cloakroom), use the lavatory, or perhaps write a quick letter (on the room’s single desk). Although no photographs survive, invoices from the Hiss Company and Tiffany Studios, which supplied the furnishings and decorations, suggest that the room contained only a single piece of upholstered furniture, a banquette, with the remaining chairs and sofas done in cane, which offered limited support and comfort. Everything was either painted or upholstered in “French gray,” and the walls were covered in matching gray damask with gold and silver trimmings. The reception room was elegant but austere; it was neither exceptionally comfortable nor particularly inviting.

The second major change for women in the new building was the elimination of entertainment spaces. Calman had proposed the gradual elimination of mixed-sex entertainments as part of his plan for a new building. Following this, McKim, Mead & White’s design excluded all the room types that had distinguished the old clubhouse: ballroom, concert hall, and, after the remodeling, music room. The entertainment committee withered, organizing just two to three entertainments per year during the first couple of seasons, all of which were for male members only. Attendance at these events, however, was high. More than four hundred members (over half the club) attended a smoker and vaudeville performance. Consequently, the board of governors pushed for more programming, which eventually led to the reintroduction of family
Figure 13 McKim, Mead & White, Harmonie Club, East 60th Street, New York, 1907 (A Monograph of the Work of McKim, Mead & White [New York: Architectural Book Publishing Company, 1914–15]).
events in the form of “special dinners,” with musical entertainments, for members and their wives.105

Thus, women were back in the clubhouse—but only on occasion and only under carefully prescribed arrangements. When special dinners were planned, the board of governors posted notices giving warning that women would be present on such-and-such an evening.106 Outside of special dinners, the board felt compelled, following members’ complaints, to introduce restrictions on where exactly women could go inside the building. The underlying principle, the board explained, was “that the members should be considered in every instance, but that the ladies should be granted every privilege that did not conflict with this primary consideration.” As a result of “the moderate restrictions imposed,” Calman reported, “this fear has been entirely dissipated.”107 Some of the complaints were likely provoked by women’s access to the library. At the West 42nd Street clubhouse, they made regular use of the circulating collection.108 At East 60th Street, with the majority of the eighteen thousand volumes moved to the main lounging rooms, it would have been difficult (if it was not proscribed outright) for women to gain access to the books.109

In effect, a new bachelor culture replaced family on East 60th Street. On the third and fifth floors were eight bedroom-parlor suites for bachelor members, all of which were occupied within two years and thus presumably providing the clubhouse with the “fixtures” that Jacob Mack had earlier envisioned.110 On the eighth floor was a well-equipped gymnasium, where an instructor and masseur were available to members at “a charge of $15.00 for the season,” amenities that had become commonplace in gentlemen’s clubs as elite men sought to remake themselves in the image of a fit and
The main members’ areas, grander than those left behind on West 42nd Street, further conveyed this aura of aristocratic masculinity. With gambling now permitted, the clubhouse contained five card rooms of various sizes distributed across the second and third floors at the rear of the building, behind the lounging rooms and bachelors’ apartments. The space given over to billiards was no less impressive: nine tables occupied almost the entire fourth floor. Though containing slightly fewer tables than the dozen first proposed by Hochstadter—which would have made the Harmonie’s “larger than any billiard room in any other club of this city”—the room was nevertheless expansive, with dark wood wainscoting and burlap wall coverings (Figure 16). For the more opulent suite of second-floor lounging and reading rooms, White and his colleagues favored baronial themes (Figure 17). The walls were papered in figured green damask, and the window curtains, in matching green velour, were lined in sateen, with silk rope and gold galloon borders, and looped and tasseled draw cards. The furniture was predominantly mahogany and oak, covered in rich velour or heavy tapestry. At least one large sofa, upholstered in leather, was custom-designed by the architects. The cost of furnishing these rooms was high, about a third more per square foot than what was spent on the women’s reception room. But by
far the most impressive feature in this suite was the coffered ceiling, executed by Tiffany Studios. At $20,000, it was the single most expensive item in the clubhouse and the closest thing to a fiftieth birthday present the members ever gave the club.111

Conclusion

As club president Henry Calman said shortly after the East 60th Street clubhouse opened, the Harmonie’s becoming “a man’s club” did not mean, as “many supposed . . . the elimination of the ladies from our presence.” On the contrary, “ladies have benefited by the opening of our new house and . . . they have hastened to take advantage of the greater privileges which have been extended to them.” He noted in particular how “lunch and dinner parties have become the rule and not the exception,” and that the capacity of the ladies’ dining room was “now constantly taxed to its utmost or even overtaxed.”114 The popularity of this dining room only grew, with the board of governors reporting a year later that it was now “taxed beyond capacity,” necessitating “the use of the private dining rooms to accommodate the members and their families.”

On one level, McKim, Mead & White’s Harmonie Club represented a resolution between those within the club who sought to reinvent the organization as a gentlemen’s club and those who wished to retain something of the club’s older function as a social center for New York’s German Jewish elite. From a different perspective, it was the experience behind the new building that really mattered to members and their families. In the planning and building process itself, they found a platform for responding to Patrician efforts to remove them from their position in New York society at the turn of the century. That the club still occupies its East 60th Street quarters today suggests that on some level it worked. The association did not disappear or splinter into breakaway organizations. Rather, the community used the architectural project as a vehicle for grappling with anti-Semitism and negotiating its effects on their identities as men and women, Jews and elites. The club’s story is that of a single building bound up in all these different threads of American history.

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Notes

1. Much of the research for this article was undertaken as part of my DPhil at the University of Oxford supervised by William Whyte. I am indebted to William for his generous help developing the narrative and for his extraordinary insight into the social history of architecture. The DPhil was supported by a PhD Scholarship from the Society of Architectural Historians of Great Britain, and research in the United States was made possible by a Patricia and John Klingenstein Fellowship from the New-York Historical Society and travel awards from the University of Oxford’s Rothermere American Institute and St Cross College. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/Metropolitan Museum of Art provided funds for the images. I thank all these bodies for their support. In the process of researching and writing this study, I have benefited from the insights of many individuals. Jacyn Granick provided early guidance on Jewish historiography and crucial later direction on the intersection of race and gender in Jewish history. Keith N. Morgan generously read the manuscript and corrected and queried key points. Peter Budden and Augusta G. Joyce read and greatly improved the manuscript. Hope Alswang and Henry B. Joyce discussed and helped develop different aspects of the research. Samuel G. White gave insight into the design of the Harmonie Club’s East 60th Street façade, arranged a tour of the building, and assisted with the redrawing of the floor plan. In the later stages of preparing this article, I was fortunate to benefit from the wisdom of my anonymous reviewer and JSAH editor Keith Eggener. This study is considerably better for all their insights, and I thank them for their help.

2. Originating in Great Britain at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the socially exclusive institutions known as “gentlemen’s clubs” grew popular among white elites in urban areas of the United States after the Civil War—and nowhere more so than in New York City, where 150 to 200 such clubs organized and acquired quarters by around 1900. At the center of club life was the clubhouse, which, almost as a rule, whether purpose-built or converted, provided members with comfortable, if not luxurious, libraries, restaurants, and facilities for games such as billiards. In its organizational and architectural dimensions, the prototype for the American club was the London club, on which a sizable body of scholarship exists, unlike for the former. On club architecture in London, see Jane Rendell, The Pursuit of Pleasure: Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London (London: Athlone, 2002); John Summerson, Architecture in Britain, 1530–1830, 9th ed. (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 474–75; Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Early Victorian Architecture in Britain (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1954), 175; Thomas A. Markus, Buildings and Power: Freedom and Control in the Origin of Modern Building Types (London: Routledge, 1993), chap. 6. On the cultural aspects of London clubs, see Amy Milne-Smith, London Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late-Victorian Britain (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Barbara Black, A Room of His Own: A Literary-Cultural Study of Victorian Clubland (Athenes: Ohio University Press, 2012); Seth Alexander Thèvoz, Club Government: How the Victorians Ruled the World from London Clubs (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017).


5. For the Jewish-Protestant divide, see E. Digby Baltzell, The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Cast in America (1964; repr., New Haven, Conn.:...


10. The Congregation Emanu-El formed other institutions in these years, including a short-lived elementary school and a successful burial society. Rabbi Leo Merzbacher served as first president of both the burial society and the Harmonie Club. Myer Stern, The Rise and Progress of Reform Judaism (New York: Myer Stern, 1895), 13–54. It remains unclear when and why the Harmonie Club and Temple Emanu-El broke away from each other. One possible scenario is that the split occurred in the 1880s as the temple’s congregation grew and the club sought to retain its exclusivity.


15. Unlike the Union Club, however, which had a flat roof in keeping with its Renaissance Revival appearance, the Harmonie Club had a major Mansard attic level. In this respect, the Harmonie shared more in common with the Century Association on 15th Street, another old and prestigious New York gentleman’s club, as it would then soon appear, after being redesigned by Gambrill & Richardson. On the Century Association’s building, see David Breiner, “(Former) Century Association Building,” New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission Report, 5 Jan. 1993; Christopher Gray, “The Century Association Clubhouse,” in Changing New York: The Architectural Scene (New York: Dover, 1992), 72.


21. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, untitled printed report, 7, vol. 13, MS 282, HCR, NYHS. This document is in the folder “Harmonie Club, vol. 13, material from inside,” which has been inserted into the volume. It appears to be the 1902 Board of Directors Report, delivered by President Henry L. Calman, and is so identified below.


23. Constitution, By-Laws, Officers and Members, title page, 6, 7.


29. My thanks to Keith N. Morgan for pointing out the peculiarity of the Harmonic Club’s ground lease. Still common today in England, ground leases were standard in New York until the mid-nineteenth century. The Harmonic’s ground lease, originally signed in the late 1860s, may have been a result of difficulties the club faced when searching for an appropriate site near Temple Emanu-El, or the club may have simply wanted to avoid the significant upfront costs of purchasing land. See Elizabeth Blackmar, Manhattan for Rent, 1750–1850 (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 251.


31. Notably, Temple Emanu-El also saw reforms in these years, including the elimination of the last of the Hebrew prayers, a move widely supported by the congregation. Grinstein, “Reforms at the Temple Emanu-El,” 166–67.


35. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1902, 7. For an overview of this new social world, see Birmingham, “Our Crowd”; see also Pak, Gentlemen Bankers, 45–79.

36. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1902, 7.

37. Hyman, Gender and Assimilation, 26–27.

38. Moses King, King’s Handbook of New York City, 2nd ed. (Boston: Moses King, 1893), 550.


40. A related institutional development was the 1892 founding of the American Jewish Historical Society. According to Leonard Dinnerstein, the members of that society “used [it] as a vehicle to prove that their ancestors had also been in the United States since its inception, had contributed to its development and its greatness, and therefore had earned Jews a place of honor and respect in society.” Dinnerstein, Antisemitism in America, 55.

41. Another prominent example was the Knickerbocker Club, founded in 1871, which then occupied a brownstone mansion at the corner of 5th Avenue and 32nd Street. As Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, these sorts of organizations served not just “to distinguish native white and Protestant Americans from the mass of new immigrants, in fact their object was to establish an exclusive upper stratum” or “a quasi-aristocratic elite.” Admission to these clubs was typically limited to men of white Anglo-Saxon Protestant lineage. Eric Hobsbawm, “Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914,” in The Invention of Tradition, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 292–93. On ancestral associations, see also Balthz, The Protestant Establishment, 114–16.

by providing mutual support, as in a fraternal organization, the Algonquin Club of Boston (1887–89), which featured a separate women’s entrance. The Algonquin was a prominent though not entirely elite club, founded by successful businessmen who did not belong to the city’s old elite, known as Boston Brahmins; the Algonquin’s founders had been excluded from the Brahmins’ Somerset Club.

I thank Henry B. Joyce for pointing out the annex’s resemblance to the Grand Palais.


58. For an excellent description of the ceremony surrounding women’s house calls in this era, see Ames, *Death in the Dining Room*, 35–43. For a broader study of elite women in New York in this era, see Maureen E. Montgomery, *Displaying Women: Spectacles of Leisure in Edith Wharton’s New York* (New York: Routledge, 1992).


60. There were already at this time women’s shopping clubs in London. The first of its kind in New York, the Woman’s Club of New York, at 9 East 46th Street, opened in 1901. Ina Brevoort Roberts, ed., *Club Women of New York 1910–1911* (New York, 1910), 124–25. For contemporary commentary on the differences between women’s shopping clubs and social clubs, see “ Colony Club Formed by Society Women a Very Exclusive Organization,” *New York Times*, 7 May 1905.


65. The *Kleine* enjoyed considerable popularity in turn-of-the-century America, especially on university and college campuses, in the basements of student centers, fraternities, and clubhouses, all relatively new building types for the period.

66. In a striking detail from the club’s records, Mr. Siebrecht was liberally remembered in the distribution of that year’s “Christmas Fund.” Secretary Minutes 1899–1901, “To the Members of the Harmonic Club,” 1900, 3–4, vol. 11, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.

67. Secretary Minutes 1897–99, President’s Address, 9 Apr. 1899, 198, vol. 10, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.

68. Scrapbook 1890–99, member announcement, 8 Oct. 1898, vol. 40, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.

69. Mack revealed this information in his 1898 annual address to the club. Secretary Minutes 1897–99, President’s Address, 10 Apr. 1898, vol. 10, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.

70. Secretary Minutes 1897–99, President’s Address, 10 Apr. 1898, 72.

71. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1902, 1.

72. My biographical sketch of Henry Calman draws from his entry in the *Paint, Oil and Chemical Review*, 28 Dec. 1901, 7. Calman and his brothers were listed in the U.S. Census 1900 as single and residing with their sister and parents at the family’s house at 7 West 75th Street (New York, New York, Borough of Manhattan, District No. 467, Sheet No. 19). Calman was later married, at age fifty, to Edith, as noted in the U.S. Census 1910 (New York, New York, Manhattan, District No. 31–574, Sheet No. 12 [illegible] A). The Harmonic Club’s membership dates for Calman (who joined in 1885), his father, Emil (1865), and his brothers Albert (1885), Charles (1890), David (1881), and Gustave B. (1883) can be found under “Calman” in Membership Logs through 1924, vol. 57, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.

73. As Howard P. Chudacoff points out, foreign-born men such as Calman’s father had some of the highest marriage rates in the United States, whereas first-generation American men such as Henry Calman had the lowest marriage rates. In New York in 1890, for example, 44.9 percent of all males aged fifteen and over were unmarried, while 68.6 percent of native-born men of foreign parents were single. Howard P. Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 53–54.

74. On the membership increase, see Secretary Minutes 1897–99, President’s Address, 10 Apr. 1898, 1–2; on the waiting list, see Secretary Minutes 1897–99, President’s Address, 9 Aug. 1899, 2, vol. 10, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
75. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1902, 8–9.
76. Mack also pointed out that such a proposition, if passed, would require the creation of private rooms, which the club did not then have. Secretary Minutes 1896–97, President’s Address, 11 Apr. 1897, 8, 9, vol. 9, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
77. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1902, 5.
78. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1902, 11.
80. At a special meeting of the club in 1903, Hochstader put Calman’s proposal for a new clubhouse to a clamp-by-clamp vote. The clause specifying “that the building be constructed on the lines of a modern club house for men, and shall not be constructed with a view of providing a ball room” passed with 144 in favor and 71 against. When this clause was excluded in the final vote, the resolution to build passed, 300 to 7. Secretary Minutes 1901–3, Special Adjourned Meeting and Special Meeting, 2 Nov. 1902, 145, 147, vol. 12, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
81. Minutes of the Committee on Site and Building 1902–5, 28 Nov. 1902, vol. 26, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
82. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1902, 6.
83. It would strengthen the argument that Hochstader was influenced by private female lobbying if his female relations could be tied to Jewish women’s organizations such as the Independent Order of True Sisters, mentioned above.
84. U.S. Census 1870 (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 37th District, 13th Ward, p. 86); U.S. Census 1900 (New York, New York, District No. 786, Sheet No. 13).
85. Secretary Minutes 1901–3, Special Adjourned Meeting and Special Meeting, 2 Nov. 1902, 144–46.
86. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, Board of Directors Report, 1903, 4–5, vol. 13, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
87. Porzelt, Metropolitan Club, 9.
88. Fernsch joined in April 1866, just in time for the building’s opening. Membership Logs through 1924.
90. The other members of the subcommittee on building were Albert F. Hochstader (chairman), Sylvan Bier (secretary), Max E. Bernheimer, Henry L. Calman, Ephraim A. Jacob, and Emanuel S. Ullman. Minutes of the Committee on Site and Building 1902–5, 10 Feb. 1903, vol. 26, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
91. Herbert Croly, overlooking the importance of their gilded network, attributed their popularity as club architects to “their ability to give atmosphere, character and warmth to the big, impersonal lounging and dining-rooms of a club house.” Croly, “The Harmonic Club House,” 237.
93. Simmons, Union Club of New York, 26.
94. Stern et al., New York 1900, 231.
95. The subcommittee on building voted to recommend McKim, Mead & White to the committee on site and building on 5 February 1903. That recommendation was accepted on 20 February 1903. Minutes of the Committee on Site and Building 1902–5, 10 Feb. 1903.
97. I am grateful to Samuel G. White for sharing his observations about the clubhouse exterior, some of which I use here. In addition to the drawing illustrated in this article (in the collection of the Museum of the City of New York), a related drawing survives in the McKim, Mead & White records at the New-York Historical Society. However, the porch in the NYHS drawing extends to two stories. At some point, someone penciled “incorrect” across the bottom of the NYHS version.
98. The architects’ most remarkable (and convincing) effort along these lines was their design for the University Club, which disguised nine stories as three. Broderick, “McKim’s New York Clubhouses,” 404; Richard Guy Wilson, McKim, Mead and White: Architects (New York: Rizzoli, 1983), 186–88.
99. The architects and their contractors referred to this room, which occupied the northeast corner of the clubhouse, as the “ladies’ rooms.” But the floor plan and contractors’ correspondence suggest that it functioned much like a reception room.
100. His Company estimate for furniture, 17 July 1905, box 218, PR 042, MM&W Collections, NYHS; His Company estimate for textiles, 25 Sept. 1905, box 218, PR 042, MM&W Collections, NYHS. Tiffany Studios may have executed alternative detailing in the ladies’ dining room, but it is unclear from the bills if that was the case. Tiffany Studios bill of sale, 24 Jan. 1906, box 218, PR 042, MM&W Collections, NYHS.
103. His Company estimate for furniture, 17 July 1905; His Company estimate for textiles, 25 Sept. 1905. These estimates appear to have been accepted and the goods ordered by McKim, Mead & White on 9 August and 4 October 1905, respectively.
104. Secretary Minutes 1906–9, “Fellow Members,” 8 Apr. 1907, 6, vol. 14, MS 282, HCR, NYHS; Secretary Minutes 1906–9, “Fellow Members,” 12 Apr. 1908, 5, vol. 14, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
105. Notably, the club did not bill these “special dinners” as “entertainments” as they likely would have in the old clubhouse. Secretary Minutes 1906–9, “Fellow Members,” 12 Apr. 1908, 5–6.
107. Secretary Minutes 1906–9, “Fellow Members,” 8 Apr. 1907, 2.
108. Jacob Mack reported in 1898 that several thousand books had been borrowed during the previous year by members “whose wives and daughters are now wiser by the contents of . . . [those] volumes.” Secretary Minutes 1897–99, President’s Address, 10 Apr. 1898, 4. See also “It Needs a Bigger Home, That Is Why the Harmonic Club Is Going to Move,” New-York Daily Tribune, 4 May 1896.
109. McKim, Mead & White’s floor plans indicate that book stacks were placed in the basement.
110. Scrapbook 1890–99, President’s Address, 1 Mar. 1896, 8–9.
112. Secretary Minutes 1903–6, President’s Address, 1903, 6, vol. 13, MS 282, HCR, NYHS.
114. Secretary Minutes 1906–9, “Fellow Members,” 8 Apr. 1907, 2.
115. Secretary Minutes 1906–9, “Fellow Members,” 12 Apr. 1908, 1.