



The Tuesday Club medal (copy of original), depicting two clasped hands (in ruffle-sleeved shirts) within a heart, inscribed "The Tuesday Club in Annapolis Maryland May 14, 1746." Latin motto: "Concordia Res Parvae Crescunt" ("In Harmony Small Things Grow").

The Tuesday Club of Annapolis, Maryland

1745-1756

The History of the Ancient and Venerable Tuesday Club, by founder Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 1745-1756, excerpts

As urban gentile society became a fixture of eighteenth-century British America, gentlemen's social clubs were formed throughout the colonies, the first most likely being Franklin's Junto, formed in Philadelphia in 1727. Formed as groups of ten to forty men, the clubs organized regular gatherings for discussion, camaraderie, drinking, and "networking," each developing its unique rules, activities, and traditions. The Tuesday Club of Annapolis, Maryland, was formed by a leading physician of the town, Dr. Alexander Hamilton (not the later Founding Father). For eleven years the club met every other Tuesday evening, usually at Hamilton's home; they engaged in one-upmanship banter, witty song, competitive riddling, and anniversary processions through the town. Hamilton's 900-page "history" of the club is a tour de force of satiric wit, comic digressions, and proud prosaic excess (amidst accounts of the club's meetings). "Although Hamilton would have been the last to admit it," writes editor Robert Micklus, *The History of the Tuesday Club* is a comic novel.¹

By *Clubs* I mean those societies which generally meet of an evening, either at some tavern or private house, to converse, or look at one another, smoke a pipe, drink a toast, be politic or dull, lively or frolicsome, to philosophize or trifle, argue or debate, talk over Religion, News, Scandal or bawdy, or spend the time in any other Sort of Clubical amusement. Out of this definition I expressly exclude all your card matches and meetings, those properly belonging to the celebrated modern assemblies called Routs and Drums, which are many degrees Inferior to Clubs, as being less ancient. . . .

The Clubs that prevailed at this time [1716] in Annapolis were all boozing or toaping Clubs. There were wine Clubs, punch Clubs, Rumbo Clubs (for Grog was not yet invented), Flup [beer] Clubs . . . the main Intent and purpose of the meeting of these Clubs was to drink and be merry, and among them all it was hail fellow, well met, there being little or no distinction [among members] . . .

[The first Sederunt (meeting) of the Tuesday Club]

These Gentlemen then, meeting upon Tuesday the 14th day of May, in the Year 1745 . . . formed and erected themselves into a club which they called by the name of the *Tuesday Club*. They met first at the Lodging of Doctor Loquacious Scribble,² who first exercised the office of Steward and Chairman to the Club, and the Candles being lit, the punch made, and the pipes fairly set a going, after two or three rounds of the punch bowl, they applied themselves to make and pass some wholesome Laws for the good government and regulation of the Society. . . .

National Humanities Center, 2009: nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds. Dr. Alexander Hamilton, *The History of the Ancient and Honorable Tuesday Club*, ed. Robert Micklus (University of North Carolina Press, published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, 1990), Vol. 1: 33, 81, 127; Vol. II, 97, 103-106, 177-179, 193, 197, 210. Permission pending. Some spelling and punctuation modernized by NHC for clarity. Photograph of the Tuesday Club medal reproduced by permission of the Maryland Historical Society. Complete image credits at nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/becomingamer/imagecredits.htm.

¹ Micklus, ed., *Tuesday Club*, xxvii.

² Hamilton assigned comic nicknames to all club members, including himself (Loquacious Scribble). [See Micklus, Vol. I, lxxv-lxxvii.]

Law I. That the meeting of the Club be weekly, at the members' houses, by turns, thro' out the year, upon Tuesday evening.

Law II. The Steward for the time being shall provide a gammon of bacon or any other one dish of dressed vittles and no more.

Law III. No Liquor shall be made, prepared or produced after eleven o'clock at night, and every Member shall be at liberty to retire at pleasure.

Law IV. No members shall be admitted without the concurring consent of the whole Club, and after such admission, the member shall serve as Steward next meeting.

Having passed these laws with great wisdom and Sagacity, they betook themselves again to their punch and pipes, and then, the Gammon, according to Rule, appeared on a Side-board with some plates in a heap, and knives and forks, there not being so much as the formality of a Cloth laid, and every member at pleasure arose from his Seat and helped himself, without taking up time in Saying of Grace, setting Chairs, passing compliments, about taking place at table, or troubling themselves about shifting of dishes, handing of plates, Spoons, cruets mustard pots &c [etc.], and Servants running over one another, which not only wastes much time, but creates more noise than is needful.



Happy, O happy had it been for this ancient and honorable Club, had they always kept to this golden mean of frugality and temperance, but the mode soon changed and Luxury crept in by degrees, as we shall find in the Sequel.

This first Sederunt was finished in a gay and Jovial manner by the Singing of several ancient Catches at which Capt: Serious Social [Robert Gordon] was a good hand and sung the following, holding up a large punch bowl, well Replenished, which I think worthy of a place in this history because it became afterwards a Constant Club Catch [song/ditty].

Club Catch sung by Capt: Serious Social

Merry meet, and merry part,
Here's to thee with all my heart.
One bowl in hand, and another in store,
Enough's enough, and we'll have one more.

Nothing more worth remarking passed at this first Sederunt.

...

[The 2^d grand anniversary procession, 15 May 1750]

Upon the 15th of May, 1750, according to the appointment of the Grand Committee, the members, regular and honorary, to the number of ten, convened at the Secretary's house at four o'clock p.m., and an hour after Invested themselves with their badge medals and proceeded to Sir John's house, who received them dress'd out in his regimentals with a bold martial air, and Introducing them into the Antichamber, Entertained them with Rich Lemonian punch and Generous wine. At 6 o'clock they dispatched a messenger to his honor, the president, to acquaint him of their coming, and in half an hour after marched out in Solemn procession, being met on the way by Capt. Dio Ramble [Dennis Dulany], an honorary

member, the order of the procession was, as follows:³

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Jonathan Grog Esqr, ⁴ M[aste]r of Ceremonies, <i>Solus</i> | [Jonas Green] |
| 2 Sir John, Knight, & Philo Dogmaticus Esqr, Canc: | [John Bullen & Alexander Malcolm] |
| 3 Slyboots Pleasant & Tunbelly Bowzer Esqrs, L:S:M: | [Walter Dulany & Richard Dorsey] |
| 4 Jealous Spyplot Jnr Esqr L:S:M: & Capt: Dio Ramble, H:M: | [William Cumming, Jr., & Dennis Dulany] |
| 5 Merry Makefun and Signr: Lardini Esqrs H:M:M: | [Robert Morris & Thomas Bacon] |
| 6 Smoothum Sly, Esqr & Dr Polyhystor H:M:M: | [John Gordon & Dr. John Hamilton] |
| 7 Solo Neverout, Pro: Mus: & Secretary Scribble L:S:M: & rearmen | [William Thornton & Dr. Alexander Hamilton] |

As the procession moved on in a Solemn and Stately manner, it was honored with a great number of Spectators of all Ranks from windows, walls, Balconies, and even the Sides of the Streets were lined with Children and other Spectators, nay, the *Patres Conscripti*, or members of the Great provincial Senate, deigned to come forth of the doors of their house and look on this gallant Show; for the Longstanding members made a most Splendid appearance with their double gilt badge medals. . . .

Anniversary Ode, for the Tuesday Club

Set to music in three parts, and to be sung, and played on several Instrume3nts, on Tuesday the 15th of May 1750. Humbly Inscribed, to the honorable Carlo Nasifer Jole Esqr, president, and the Longstanding members of the said Club by Their Humble Servant, The Poet Laureat.

Recitativo

Thrice hail Serene returning day,
Bright Day, outshining far, the rest,
In which the Tuesday Club, in may,
First rear'd her gay and Social Crest.

. . .

High in the chair with look profound
Illustrious Jole dispenses round

Awful, but Just authority,
He with a Sage Important face
Most graceful fills his lofty place,
Promoting mirth and Jollity.

. . .

Let this glad evening crown the day,
Let mirth abound
And bowls go round
To honor Jole,
Our life and Soul,
And each Sad thought be Clear'd away.

Grand Chorus

Whilst Jole shall live to fill our Chair,
We ever shall be debonair,
No turpid cares our Joy shall Rob,
Kind heaven Grant, that long he may
Remain in health to bless this day,
Love live, Long live the Tuesday Club. . . .

Thus in great pomp and magnificence was this grand anniversary Celebrated, at the house of Mr. President Jole in North East Street where, besides the Show and Splendor of the Entertainment, the Instrumental music that was exhibited on this grand occasion, there was abundance of Eloquence displayed In various Speeches made by the members, both honorary and Regular, which we have neither Space nor leisure here to record. There was also a great deal of vocal music, for, after Mr. Protomusicus had performed, most of the members sung, and the old Catch of Capt[ai]n Serious Social was sung several times over, where is the following distich.

One bowl in hand, and another in Store,
Enough's enough, and we'll have one more.

. . .

³ *Thomas Bacon*: clergyman and musician. *John Bullen*: Annapolis landowner. *William Cumming, Jr.*: planter & attorney. *Dennis Dulany*: son of a planter-attorney (not son of Walter Dulany). *Walter Dulany*: merchant, landowner, officeholder. *Richard Dorsey*: county magistrate. *John Gordon*: clergyman. *Jonas Green*: poet & public printer of Maryland. *Dr. John Hamilton*: physician. *Alexander Malcolm*: schoolmaster & music theorist. *Robert Morris*: merchant. *William Thornton*: merchant & shopowner. [Member biographies, see Micklus, Vol. I, lxxix-cv.]

⁴ Esqr.: Esquire, gentleman.

[Sederunt 139, 18 September 1750]

... The Conundrums⁵ being called for after Supper, Jonathan Grog Esqr. produced his. . . .

Conundrum 2^d

Why is matrimony like Polyphemus's eye?

ans: Because it is a great *tye* } decl[ared]: victor . . .
eye }

Conundrum 4th

Why is a Sevil orange like a pox curing quack?

The Club gave it up, after some time spent in profound Cogitation, and the Secretary gave his answer.

ans: Because we have a *peel* } from it. . . .
pill }

It was then moved by Jealous Spyplot Sen[io]r Esqr and seconded by the worshipful Sir John, that the Conundrums should be totally abolished and expelled, as a Species of low wit altogether unworthy of the dignity of the Club, and, upon the vote's passing round, they were unanimously abolished, and banished the Club forever, to the no small Satisfaction of the Master of Ceremonies and the Secretary, whose Invention was already worn thread bare in this (as it was esteemed) low and vulgar exercise.



Thus Ended the Club Conundrums, which had Continued now for 16 Sederunts, the first that were proposed in Club, being at Sederunt 123, and the last at this present Sederunt, which is Sederunt 139, so that the Club conundrums amounted in all to 64. These pieces of Ingenuity were never an equal acuteness of genius in exercises of wit, those who are more dull and slow of apprehension Generally have a Jealousy of, or rather pique, at such as set up for being wits. Therefore many of the Longstanding members were uneasy at the master of ceremonies and the Secretary's outshining them in this very particular, hence, they not only conceived an aversion to the conundrums, but the framers of them, and these latter gentlemen, perceiving that those trials of Skill procured them the ill will of their fellow members, were very glad to get rid of them, the discord they had occasioned in Club too.⁶

[Sederunt 205, 26 June 1753]

On Sederunt 205, June 26th, 1753, Solo Neverout, Esqr, the attorney general being H:S, The Celebrated Signior Lardini paid a visit to the Club and brought along with him some new musical Compositions Composed in a delicate taste, which were an overture and a Gavotta Burlesque for the Entertainment of his honor, and a

⁵ Creating punned riddles (conundrums) became a favorite competitive event of the club.

⁶ Keep in mind Hamilton's tongue-in-cheek rendering of the club's events throughout the *History*.

minuet for the attorney General, which latter he did not bring with him, but Composed on the Spot. These pieces were performed in the Club with applause — Sigr: Lardini, viol: primo; Signr Dogmatico, Viol: Secondo; and Signr Scribellio, Violoncello; after which the Grand and little Choruses of the year 1751 were play'd, to which the longstanding members sung . . .

. . .

[Sederunt 205, 8 August 1753]

Abundance of Learned discourse passed in Club this night, relating to the prodigies of nature, in which were gravely told Stories of Great Irish Bulls with two heads; monsters as yet unheard of; of monkeys that could discourse Intelligibly; Salamanders that could drink punch and Rum; Camelions that lived at Court upon mere air and often Changed their Color, wearing an artificial Skin; Cockatrices that kill'd with a look; Unicorns; and even of Squirrels that navigated Arms of the Sea with nothing for a Barge, but a fragment of a board, and no other Sail, but a bushy tail spread out to the wind. These Stories were promoted by two Irish Gentlemen Invited to the Club at this Sederunt, vizt [namely]: the Reverend Mr. Rodomantus, and the Jocose Captain Furbisher, the first beginning this Conversation & the Latter, Imitating him, so the Club broke up, each member going home full of wonder.

. . .

[Sederunt 212, 6 November 1753]

Jonathan Grog, Esqr, Poet Laureate, towards the Close of Supper, entered the Club Room and Informed his honor and the Club that he had been Invoking the muses, and pulling out of his pocket his performance, read it with a good grace as follows.

Eulogium, on his honor's Entertainment

We've eat and we've drank,
And who should we thank
Next after the bounty divine,
Who but noble Jole,
Who Cheers every Soul
With good eating, with punch & with wine.
His Plentiful Board
Presents us a hoard,
Of dainties so rare and so nice,
That search the Globe Round
There cannot be found
Such an Elegant Luscious device.
'Mongst the boiled and the roast,
Where to choose we are lost,
Every dish is so nicely prepar'd.

When my belly is full,
My muse is too dull,
To describe how each member has far'd.
In punch, Rumbo and Grog
Each may swim like a frog,
And wine each may Liberally swill,
Till the good liquor Gains
The ascent to our brains,
And smoothly makes wit flow at will.
Then hail noble Jole,
In a full flowing bowl,
Thy health we will roll it around,
While we drink we will sing,
Thou art great as a king,
Thy equal is not to be found.

