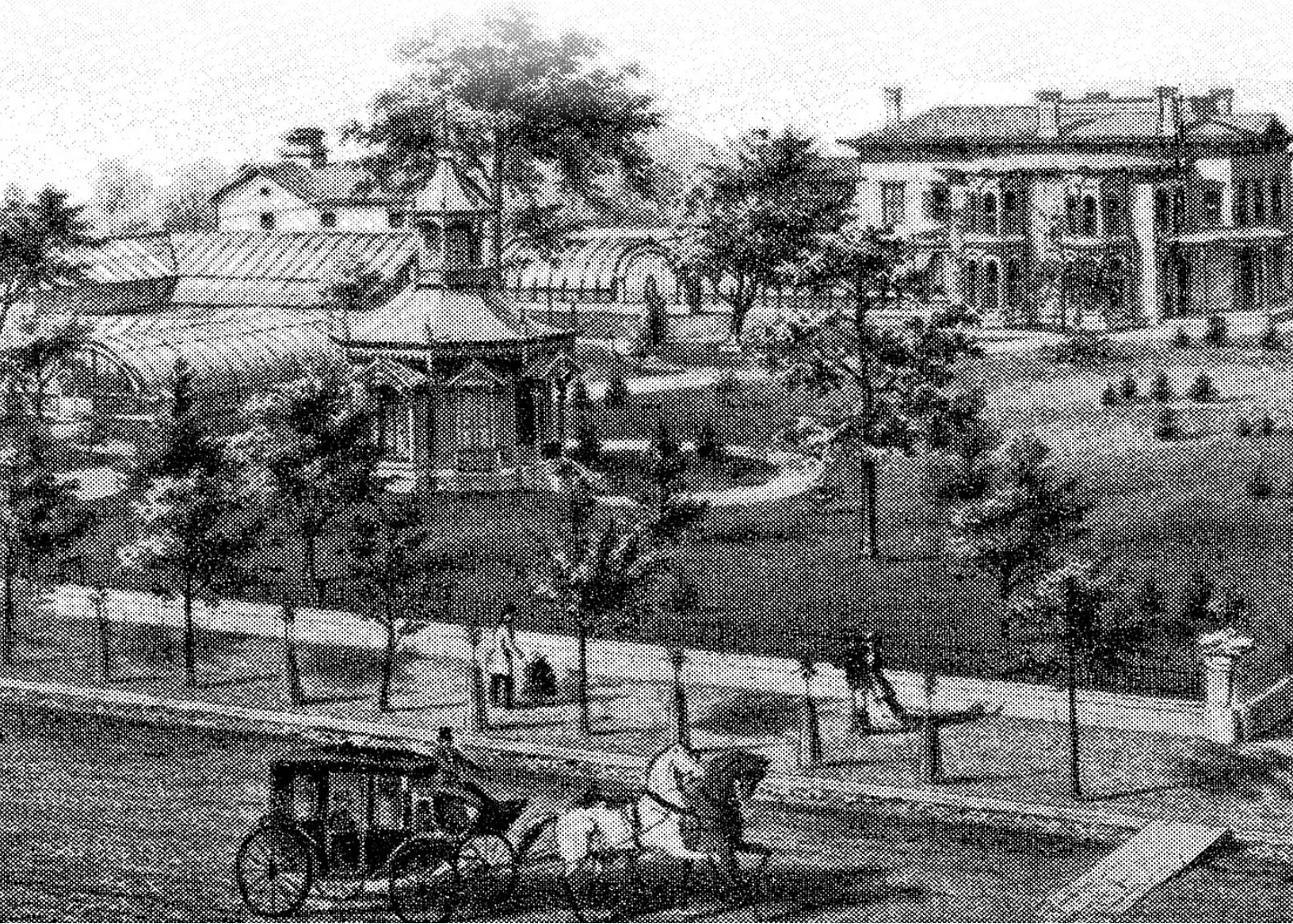




WISCONSIN CLUB



**HISTORY OF THE
MITCHELL MANSION &
THE WISCONSIN CLUB**

Welcome to the Wisconsin Club!

While the Wisconsin Club (formerly the Deutscher Club) has been in existence since 1891, the mansion where the Club resides got its start in 1848, and has long been considered an architectural treasure. Both the mansion and the Club have a rich heritage and have been an important part of Milwaukee's history.

The Wisconsin Club owes much of its success to its leadership and member involvement. We would like to acknowledge our past presidents and their dedication to making the Wisconsin Club one of the most successful clubs in the nation!



WISCONSIN CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS PRESIDENTS

George Koeppen 1891-1895
F.C. Winkler 1895-1896
George Koeppen 1896-1897
F.C. Winkler 1897-1898
John E. Hansen 1898-1899
Charles L. Kiewert 1899-1900
Louis F. Schecker 1900-1901
Henry Baetz 1901-1902
G.A. Keitzsch 1902-1903
Charles J. Kasten 1903-1904
Adolph Finkler 1904-1905
Herman A. Wagner 1905-1906
Adolph Finkler 1906-1907
William Von Baumbach 1907-1909
Edward A. Uhrig 1909-1911
Adolph Schmitz 1911-1913
A. Lindemann 1913-1914
Paul J. Stern 1914-1915
Walter Kasten 1915-1917
Charles H. John 1917-1919
Charles Paeschke, Jr. 1919-1921
S.J. Casper, Sr. 1921-1923
John Wollaeger 1923-1925
George Uihlein 1925-1926
A.L. Lindemann 1926-1928
Frank Frey, Jr. 1928-1930
Frank J. Edwards 1930-1932
William G. Koch 1932-1934
William J. Kieckhefer 1934-1936

G.G. Blatz 1936-1938
Fred Oeflein 1938-1940
Phil Orth 1940-1941
Fred Kasten 1941-1943
E.A. Lindemann 1943-1944
Armin F. Jaeger 1944-1945
Jean LaBoule 1946-1947
C.A. Gutenkunst, Jr. 1947-1948
R.C. Zimmerman 1948-1950
George Tiernan 1950-1951
E. Brumder 1951-1953
A. Pflugradt 1953-1955
K. Wollaeger, Jr. 1955-1957
Paul E. Riebs 1957-1957
T.A. Rogers 1957-1959
Jack Haessler 1959-1961
S.J. Casper, Jr. 1961-1963
T.H. Bentley, Jr. 1963-1964
H.C. Woehr 1964-1965
C. Ray Cook 1965-1966
R.W. Maercklein 1966-1968
R.H. Weaver 1968-1970
R.C. Pittelkow 1970-1972
Dr. Daniel Gehl 1972-1974
Curt E. Hoerig 1974-1976
Robert F. Schomann 1976-1978
Willard J. Reik 1978-1980
B. Carl Froemming 1980-1982
George H. Baumann 1982-1984

Richard E. Bayerlein 1984-1986
Charles R. Pittelkow 1986-1988
Lee A. Delaney 1988-1990
Irv Hansen 1990-1992
G.A.D. Schuett 1992-1994
John A. Fiorenza 1994-1996
Glenn E. Langer 1996-1998
Thomas H. Bentley, III 1998-2000
John G. Persa 2000-2002
Michael M. Berzowski 2002-2004
S. R. (Sandy) Cicero 2004-2006
Donald L. Schroeder 2006-2008
Roger C. Sherman 2008-2010
Gerald E. Zitzer 2010-2012
Thomas G. Wieland 2012-2014
Mike Jones 2014-2016
John G. Persa 2016-2018
David Christianson 2018-2020
Jeffrey Sherman 2020-2021
Fred Joachim 2021-2023
Steve Kohlmann 2023-Present

Our Rich History

In 1891, three Milwaukee businessmen - General E.C. Winkler, George Koeppen and Henry Gugler - held several meetings with sixty other men in the old Plankington House Hotel to organize the founding of a new social club. The purpose of the club was to promote and provide a venue for German-American understanding and fellowship, a reflection of the large German immigration to Milwaukee at the end of the nineteenth century.

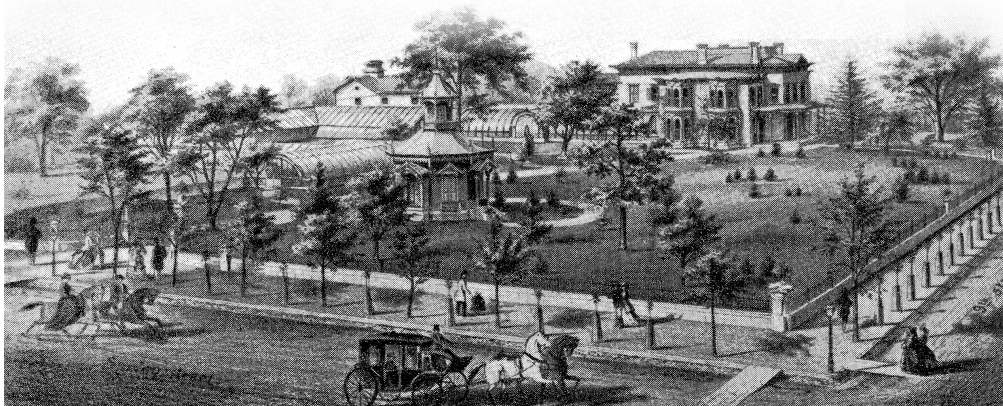
The first home of the new club, called the "Deutscher" or "German" Club, was in the Stadt Theater, the site of the present Pabst Theatre. In early 1895, a fire broke out and severely damaged the clubrooms and a new home had to be found. Several alternatives were considered, including disbanding the club which was in a poor financial state. When the vacant Mitchell Mansion on Grand Avenue (now Wisconsin Avenue) was brought to the attention of the club members shortly after the death of Alexander Mitchell, all thoughts of dissolution vanished.



The Deutscher Club began renting its new quarters in early 1895, and on May 1st, the Club held its opening night party in the Mitchell home with over 450 attendees. In 1898, an offer to purchase the mansion for \$165,000 was made and accepted and the Deutscher Club began to settle in for a long stay.

The Mitchell Mansion

The Alexander Mitchell residence grew with the fortune of its owner. In 1848, he built a modest brick house between 9th & 10th Streets and Spring Street. He gradually bought up the remaining properties on his block and expanded the home. In 1858, it was remodeled in the fashionable **Italianate style**.



In 1872, Alexander Mitchell hired noted Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix and over the next five years, the home was transformed into the **French Second Empire mansion** it is today. Wings were added to both sides, the porch enlarged and bay windows were installed.

Many rooms were added, including third floor ballroom/art gallery, a library, and a conservatory. The conservatory featured a small stream, palm trees and many exotic plants. Artists from Europe were commissioned to adorn the interior of the home with **elaborate hand carved mahogany woodwork, stained glass, plaster and inlaid tile.**

The Grand Staircase in the East Hall of the home has 24 lions' heads carved into it which took a single craftsman **seven years** to construct.

The Oriental Room features more than **1,600 hand carved pansies** on the ceiling and the walls of the Moorish Room are covered in **embossed panels** poly-chromed in red, blue and gold arabesques.



The Belvedere was designed and built by an Italian woodcarver. It's one of **Milwaukee's most historic structures** as well as being known as the finest structure of its kind in the country.

By 1876, Alexander Mitchell controlled the **banking and insurance industry** in Milwaukee as well as owning the Milwaukee Railroad and serving as a **member of Congress**. His fortune was said to have been in excess of \$20 million at the time.

Spring Street was renamed **Grand Avenue** and Alexander Mitchell had already reoriented the front entrance of the home from the East side to the South side so that it would bear a Grand Avenue address, like other prominent Milwaukee families.



From the late 1900's until 1950, a porch and terrace on the East side of the mansion were used as an outdoor dining room. Polly Prospect of The Daily Wisconsin News wrote, "**...the East Porch at the Club is a popular spot these days, especially with women members. Enlarged by means of screens covered with stunning blue and tan striped awnings and surrounded by window boxes fitted with bright flowers, it makes an ideal place for bridge parties. Pierrot lanterns hang from the ceiling and the chairs are covered with white linen decorated with designs symbolizing the carnival spirit.**"

Over the years, many famous and noteworthy guests have been entertained in the mansion including Julia Ward Howe, Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, Prince Henry of Prussia, General Grant and Presidents Cleveland and Roosevelt.

The Alexander Mitchell Mansion was listed on the **National Register of Historic Places** on August 28, 2012.

The Belvedere

On the southeast corner of the Wisconsin Club grounds stands what is likely the most unique and historical structures in the city. Alexander Mitchell had the large, one and a half story wooden structure built for the purpose of **viewing his extensive gardens and greenhouses from a rich and idyllic setting**. The first contemporary records showing the Belvedere occur in two separate documents.



The first is a lithograph commissioned by Alexander Mitchell for publication in the 1873 proceedings of the state historical society. The other is a bird's eye view map entitled "Map of Milwaukee, 1872-1873" published by the Milwaukee Lithographic and Engraving Co. The map shows a large octagonal structure on the Mitchell grounds. It resembles more of a sketch of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre than it does the Belvedere. The Belvedere **foundation was constructed with the same stone as the foundation of the wrought iron fence built around the same time**. This fence, having a large formal gate on the Grand Avenue side bearing the initials A.M., cost \$20,000 when it was built.

The Mansion Exterior

In 2008, the Club widened the Wisconsin Avenue entrance and installed new wrought iron gates. The front entrance to the mansion was updated and a beautiful fountain and turnaround were added. The Club also added a new outdoor dining venue named the Veranda which became a popular setting throughout the year.



In 2016, awnings were added to recreate the look of the mansion as it was in the early 1900's. In 2017, the Club renovated the North side parking lot and added new landscaping, re-positioned the small fountain and added lighting around the perimeter. In addition to these renovations, a small building designed to replicate the mansion's tower was built on the northwest corner of the property and automatic gates were installed at each of the 10th Street driveways.



Inside the Mitchell Mansion

LIBRARY (CONCIERGE DESK)

Originally the **Mitchell family dining room**, the library was part of the remodeling during 1872-1877. All of the woodwork is carved from oak. With the exception of the removal of a large arched window that once opened the south wall to the conservatory, the room has not been structurally altered. The three doors on the west wall were used for various household purposes by the Mitchell family. The leftmost door concealed a large steel cabinet in which the family secured their silver cutlery, tete-a-tete silver service and valuables.

The doors flanking the fireplace led to the kitchens and servant's quarters. When the Deutscher Club purchased the house in 1895, they utilized the expansive kitchen to service their member's dining room until other rooms could be renovated.



MOORISH OR PERSIAN ROOM/MEN'S LOUNGE (NORTH LOUNGE)

Alexander Mitchell's smoking room was known as the Persian or Moorish Room. The ceiling is uniquely decorated with plaster molds reminiscent of the near eastern style of a **Moslem Palace**. The walls are covered with large embossed panels, polychrome in red, blue, gold and burgundy arabesques, which were imported from England. The space is similar to John C. Rockefeller's smoking room. Large folding **stained glass doors open from the Moorish Room onto the North-South corridor, the East Entry Hall and Alexander Mitchell's private library study.**



ROOSEVELT ROOM (GOVERNOR'S ROOM)

This room was the private library study of Alexander Mitchell. In the mid-1870's it housed more than **2,000 volumes of books** from his personal collection. The decoration of the room survived the architect's renovations in the late 1870's.

When Alexander Mitchell died suddenly in New York City in 1887, his body was returned home to Milwaukee and he **lay in state in a red cedar casket** in his study. In early April 1903, the **Deutscher Club welcomed President Theodore Roosevelt** and served him lunch in this room.

ORIENTAL ROOM/LADIES' LOUNGE (SOUTH LOUNGE)

The entire east end of the first floor of the Mitchell home was renovated during the late 1870's in a style known as "Oriental," - an eclectic mixture of Japanese, Chinese, middle-eastern, and Persian motifs. In the Oriental Room, the predominant motif is the pansy, which was thought to be Martha Mitchell's favorite flower. **Hundreds of poly chromed, gilt edged, hand carved flowers cover the ceiling and smaller pansies on the wainscoting.** The pocket doors on the west end of the room led to the South Entrance as well as an entrance to the 500 foot long Conservatory.



THE CONSERVATORY (MITCHELL ROOM & VERANDA)

In 1895 when the Deutscher Club purchased the mansion, they removed the Conservatory and built a bowling alley for the members. In 1950, the room was remodeled to become the main first floor dining room. While it remains the **first floor dining room - The Mitchell Room** - the décor has been refreshed several times, and a three sided full bar was added.

In 2008, the Club opened the Veranda. Adjacent to the Mitchell Room, the **open gallery outdoor dining facility** offers members and their guests a unique experience.



DEUTSCHER ROOM

The Deutscher Room was the original first floor formal dining room of the Deutscher Club. At that time, it was used for both a la carte dining and private parties. The entrance from the reception space to the room features a carving bearing the name of the room. The **ornate fireplace hood displays the letters “D” and “C” for “Deutscher Club”**. Since 2005, the Deutscher Room has been reserved for private functions.



GRAND BALLROOM

The Grand Ballroom was part of the major additions the Deutscher Club made in 1899. After the Conservatory and greenhouse were dismantled, the construction began and was completed in 1900. Designed in the “**Art Nouveau**” style, the Ballroom features a wall filled with folding French doors.

Original Club members could come for an evening of private entertainment and as such, a large stage was constructed. Such notables as John Philip Sousa, numerous military orchestras, and **even Johnny Carson has graced the stage!**



The Club opened a Tea Room in the Ballroom which filled the entire hall. Daily from twelve o'clock to five, members and guests used the flower-filled room for small private parties, bridge playing or just a casual meal while being entertained by **musicians playing overhead in the minstrel's gallery.**

GOLD ROOM (MILWAUKEE ROOM)

North of the Grand Ballroom stands the Gold Room - part of the 1899 addition. It was built to provide a **formal dining room for the members and their wives** and guests since the dining areas on the first floor were then exclusively male and members only allowed.



WICKER ROOM/RED ROOM (WISCONSIN ROOM)

In the Mitchell mansion, this room was known as the Marie Antoinette Room and appears to have served as a **music room or a tea room**. While the room was part of the Mitchell mansion, it was extensively remodeled after the Deutscher Club added the Gold Room. The space became known as the Wicker Room and was used as a **bar for those dining in the Gold Room**.

When the dining room relocated to the first floor in 1959, the space was redecorated and named the Green Room. Then in 1972, the room was redecorated again and while the **club considered naming it the “Badger Room,”** they ultimately landed on “Red Room.”

ALEXANDER MITCHELL’S BEDROOM (DIRECTOR’S ROOM)

The Director’s Room was Alexander Mitchell's bedroom. Three large windows, now altered, once **overlooked the eastern grounds of the home and the view would have given Alexander Mitchell an opportunity to survey the city and the lake** from atop the Spring Street bluff.

The floor-to-ceiling fireplace is impressive with its gold veined Siena marble face and beautifully tiled fireskirt.

SILVER ROOM (PRESIDENT’S ROOM)

The Silver Room was likely a **guest room** during the time that the Mitchell family lived in the home. From 1940-1960 the space was referred to as the Silver Room, coinciding with the silver wallpaper adorning the room’s walls. The room retains only **two features from the Mitchell era: the white marble fireplace and the three windows facing the east**.



MARTHA MITCHELL'S BEDROOM (GARDENVIEW ROOM)

The two rooms on the second floor which are presently occupied as the Gardenview Room and the Ladies' Restroom were originally a single chamber. These rooms were the location of the bedroom of Mrs. Alexander Mitchell. The false wall dividing the room was erected during the 1970's to create the Gardenview Room.

Mrs. Mitchell was a great lover of flowers and plants and so when the architect redesigned the Mitchell home in the 1870's he added a **balcony overlooking the inside of the Conservatory**.



When the Deutscher Club acquired the house, Mrs. Mitchell's bedroom was transformed into a lounge for the wives of the members. In 1978 the needs of increased dining warranted the division of the room into its present smaller proportions.

WALNUT ROOM (MACARTHUR ROOM)

A third floor was added to the Mitchell House in 1876 was lit from above by a skylight. It was filled with **American and foreign paintings** as Alexander Mitchell was a great collector of art and statuary. In the two niches were placed **various displays of armor and on an immense table in the center of the room lay innumerable engraving and sketches**. Cabinets on the east wall were filled with smaller intricate pieces of art gathered by Mitchell from across the world.

The room has been utilized by the Club over the years as a concert hall, a movie theatre, and for parties and dances. It was called the Walnut Room sometime during the 1930's but was **renamed in honor of Milwaukee native General Douglas MacArthur**, the first person to be granted an honorary membership at the Wisconsin Club.

COLONIAL ROOM (CATERING OFFICE)

The Colonial Room is a part of the 1876 addition. Very little is known about this room but it may be surmised that it was part of the art gallery and ballroom chambers. The high ceilings and extensive wall space makes this a plausible suggestion. In late Victorian homes, paintings were not hung as they are in galleries today, instead they filled the walls from top to bottom.

HUNT ROOM (FINANCE OFFICE)

South of the MacArthur Room is the chamber known today as the Hunt Room, This room originally had a high coffered ceiling like those in the other rooms on this floor, but it was lowered in 1978 for heating purposes. In the Mitchell home, this chamber was entered from the north-south hall by a door at the south end of the hall. The wonderful view of the south grounds makes this probably a small gallery and parlor adjunct to the larger central room. It may have also served as a gentlemen's smoking room during receptions in the Mitchell house. Until 1978 this room was used by the Club members as a card room until the location moved to the first floor.

THE BOWLING ALLEY (ALEXANDER'S)

The Club's bowling alley featured eight automatic Brunswick lanes. In its time, the Bowling Alley was a hub of activity to member leagues with team names such as the Lucky Strikes (men's team) and the Penny-Antes (ladies team).

In 1994, Alexander's opened as the Club's casual sports bar. Renovations occurred in 2007 with new lighting, stained glass and flat screen TVs. In 2017, the Club installed a 120" video wall and made other improvements.



Thank You For Your Interest!

At the Wisconsin Club, we strive to provide our members and their guests the absolute BEST private club experience possible. It's an experience highlighted by personalized service, consistency, and attention to detail. As a member, you'll receive an exceptional private club experience at a great value. All members have access to our dining spaces, unique and exciting member events, private event spaces, valet parking, shuttle service, access to tickets, and premium event experiences.

Click below, or email our Membership Sales Manager Shayne Donohue at sdonohue@wisconsinclub.com to learn more!