

WHAT HAPPENED

The Regular Democratic Organization was founded in 1874.

The Regular Democratic Organization, or the “Old Regulars,” is the oldest continuing civic and political organization in the country.

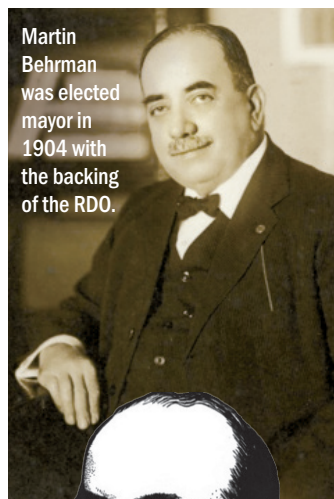
During the first half of the 20th Century the group ruled New Orleans through patronage and political favors. The RDO was created in 1874, the same year the Battle of Liberty Place occurred in protest of the election of Republican Gov. William Kellogg. Under the organization, the group had 17 leaders, one for each city ward. The group, also known as “The Ring” decided who would run for office, and then handed out jobs and political favors to those who supported the group’s candidates. It created thousands of jobs within city government. The RDO worked with major corporations, including Standard Oil and sugar growers and refiners, to expand its reach. The RDO held city hall from 1904 when Martin Behrman was elected, through 1946 when Chep Morrison was elected mayor under a promise to remove RDO influence from city hall. The RDO’s home was a social club called the Choctaw Club. It was located for 40 years at 518 St. Charles Ave., within the same block as Gallier Hall, the site of city hall until 1958. When the club was chartered in 1897, members included 39 men who had held office. Members included Sens. S.D. McEnery and Murphy J. Foster, Govs. Francis T. Nicholls and W.W. Heard. The RDO is still active and endorses members of both parties, saying that RDO also stands for Republicans, Democrats and Others. It endorsed Republican Bill Cassidy for U.S. Senator over incumbent Democrat Mary Landrieu in 2014.



The Choctaw Club, at 518 St. Charles Ave., was the home to the RDO. It was located on Carondelet Street and then Canal Street before moving to this building, which has been since torn down for a hotel.

CHARLES L. FRANK STUDIO COLLECTION AT THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION

Martin Behrman was elected mayor in 1904 with the backing of the RDO.



GIFT OF MRS. JEANNE RABIG / THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION



A caricature drawing of Mayor Chep Morrison taking down the Choctaw Club, which was the home of the RDO.

GIFT OF WALTER MARS, NELSON / THE HISTORIC NEW ORLEANS COLLECTION



1920 re-election signs were erected for Martin Behrman, who was defeated by reform candidate Andrew McShane. Behrman retook the mayor’s office in 1925.



THE NEW ORLEANS ADVOCATE

The RDO, which the group says now can stand for Republicans, Democrats and Others, endorsed Republican Bill Cassidy for U.S. Senator in 2014.