

## CHRISTMAS ON THE ISLAND 1862

*The community tried to celebrate a somewhat normal Christmas but they still remembered their absent sons. A. S. Kelley noted that on Christmas it “rained all day and foggy at that. All hands at Island House to Christmas dinner. A good deal of raffling going on during the day at Store.”*

*The Island House by now had undergone several improvements. This year the flat roof on the hotel addition, seen here, was changed to a gable roof with gable ends on the south and north, at an expense of \$811.03. This changed the look of the Island House Hotel significantly.*

The Island House was the scene of the annual Kelley family Christmas dinner.



*Even the Lodge had a Christmas meeting. “Lodge rooms of the IOofIL [the Independent Order of Island Loafers] – Christmas Day – The regular Christmas meeting of this lodge took place as usual in the Lodge rooms...Minutes of previous evening discussed and approved. It being a rather unpromising day, the Lodge did not proceed to business at the usual hour. The members soon commenced pouring in however, notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, having for their motto*

the well known lines, ‘Business before pleasure,’ always. The devotion of its members to this favorite maxim is truly commendable as anyone will acknowledge who is acquainted with them.

Christmas is a day when it is always understood that goods are to be sold by the most worthy G. M. at cost and profit as it takes a prophet to tell the cost when he attends to buy. A half doz. members may attempt to buy the same article which results in someone getting it for a nominal sum...While the other five give the same amount merely to see the fun. Of course no one else expected to get the coveted article. Every member that participates in the enjoyment always comes out in the end with four times the worth of his money and yet no one ever heard the most worthy Grand Master complain that he was not perfectly satisfied with the results.

This is an instance where actual facts put theory utterly at the defiance. Some were so tied down by theory they could not be prevailed upon to participate. On the contrary, no amount of evidence would ever convince them that theory should always give way to actual facts. Theory will do very well sometimes but when you attempt to overthrow well known facts, then you only show inexcusable ignorance and that is never allowed in members of the IOofIL.

To illustrate; knives were sold so that the worthy master realized say 11/ but cost the purchaser only 2/. Buckskin mitts worth say 12/ sold at the same low figure. Other articles sold the same. Now these facts being established beyond question, is not it strange that folks will hesitate so long without investing? Members will be held to a strict account hereafter if they persist in placing their own futile arguments for amount to all established facts as this is a progressive generation. While some were thus eagerly speculating, others were discussing the merits and demerits of this and that general.

Of the present war policy, the proclamation, its natural effects, &c, &c, these were discussed in good humor as every member feels in duty bound to help carry out the original design of the society, viz. mutual improvement.

It is gratifying to know that the IOofIL, unlike most societies, is increasing in interest and number of its members. The Literary Society appears to have trouble in getting its members to participate in debate. This is strange, as the fault (if it is a fault) in the IOofIL is everyone is a committee of the whole on questions and to argue the same. It may be that the corporation tobacco increases a feeling of sociability not to be obtained in any other way. The Lodge broke up at an early hour owing to the inclemency of the weather and steady habits of its members.”

“The mail this week brings some good news, some bad, and much camp news. Gen. Burnside has been badly whipped at Fredericksburg and Gen. Foster seems to have given the Rebels a thrashing at Kingston, North Carolina. Two M. C. from Louisiana have arrived at N. Y.

which will bring that State back into the Union provided they are allowed to take them. The country about Nashville is bristling with bayonets and something in that direction may be looked for soon.

News from the Island boys gives a very good account of themselves. They are eager for pushing on against the enemy. Those in hospital are getting better. An acknowledgement from the Sanitary Comm. of Cincinnati of receipts from the Sol. Aid Society of a draft for \$30, which was promptly paid. Also of receipt of a box of articles for the 101<sup>st</sup> Reg't which they say shall be forwarded as soon as possible. But it is quite difficult to reach the army. We send an agent with our goods in order to insure their safety as far as possible. Articles of old clothing, bandages, rags &c are very acceptable.

One year ago we were Senior Ed. of the paper and instead of being one year older, seem to have got a turn back, for now we are Junior Ed. One year ago we were invited to Christmas dinner by mine host of the Island House and this year as we sat at the same table helping dissect the corpses of defunct turkeys, chickens &c and seeing the happy faces of so many of our friends, we could hardly realize a year had past. There were some absent at the table this year that were there, and some others had taken their places. But right before us of old sat the fat man [A. S. Kelley], our Junior Ed of last year. He seem'd as intent as of old, in filling up his open countenance with all sorts of good things, poking fun at us by every few minutes showing his plate and asking if we saw an item for the paper on it."

From the book: Kelleys island 1862-1865, the Civil War, the Island soldiers, & and *Island Queen*.