

HAPPY NEW YEAR – 1867 by Leslie Korenko

“Our special reporters say of the Dance and Festival which came off in this Hall on Monday evening [New Year’s Eve] that it stands as yet, the grandest affair of the Season and fully equal to any former entertainment of the kind that we have ever had the pleasure of attending. It would not seem necessary for us to give a minute description of the Dance, Supper &c., as we thought most everyone on the Island was there and could judge for themselves. In point of numbers, we think that it was the largest party that ever assembled in this Hall on a similar occasion. The entertainment was gotten up by our Citizens of the Catholic Church and designed as a benefit to the church.

Invitations were extended to all classes and the extreme politeness and attention shown to persons outside of their denomination is deserving of special praise and cannot be too highly appreciated. Their programme of arrangements seemed to be perfect as everything went on like clock work, fully convincing us that the committee in charge understood their business. We not only enjoyed ourselves participating in the dancing but were remarkably well pleased in seeing some of the others dance.

Among the different kinds of dancing that was indulged in, the ‘French Four’ and... ‘The Break Down’ were particularly amusing. Some of our elder friends, whom we heretofore supposed to have passed their dancing days, here showed themselves to be fully versed in the various steps and changes pertaining to their favorite dances and many well-advanced in years appeared on this occasion entirely devoid of the infirmities that frequently accompany old age. And the extraordinary and difficult ‘Double Shuffles’ and ‘Triple Clogs’ were performed with the gracefulness of a French dancing master and executed with the perfection of a ‘Dick Sliter.’ [*Dick Sliter was a self-proclaimed champion dancer who in December 1850 challenged any dancer to a match dance. He was awarded a belt by the citizens of Cincinnati with the word ‘Champion’ engraved in silver letters.*]

Besides the magnificent and bountiful supper prepared about Midnight, an elegant breakfast was served up between 3 and 4 in the morning, consisting of all the delicacies of the season. The dancing was discontinued about 5 o’clock, everybody appearing to be satisfied that the advent of the New Year had been duly celebrated and each one had performed their part faithfully on this occasion.

The last days of the old year were calm and beautiful as the close of a peaceful life, and its death so serene and quiet that like the going out of the life of an innocent child, you could scarcely tell when it ceased to live. A welcome to the New Year mingles with our fond farewell to the old.”

From the book Kelleys Island – 1866-1871, The Lodge, Suffrage & Baseball



The dance was held in Kelley’s Hall. This photo shows
(L) The Lodge
(middle) Kelley’s Hall
(R) the Kelley family home.



The event was organized for the benefit of the Catholic church.