

SCHARDT'S ISLAND HOUSE HOTEL & PARTY ROOMS

George Schardt bought the Island House lot in 1892 and the island population turned its eyes to the progress of construction. The lot had been vacant since 1877 when the 102 room Island House Hotel caught fire and burned to the ground. For several years islanders lamented the sad condition of the lot and hoped that development would occur.

While he claimed he had no plans for the site when he purchased it, George began construction late in 1892. In January of the next year, He found some silvery metal while digging at the old Island House foundation. He melted it up and the prevailing opinion was that it was genuine silver. Very likely a part of the silver service that was lost in the original fire.

He removed the old cellar walls of the Island House and by March, Schardt had a large force of masons at work laying the cellar and foundation walls of his new building. The carpenters followed a week later constructing a building 50x100 feet and two stories high, much smaller than its namesake. Those who had seen the plans said it would be a very neat looking structure.

In April, the building was assuming proportions; the frame was up and the roof expected in another week. Islanders noted that "this will improve the appearance of the 'corner,' the old cellar and rubbish being an eye sore for many years." By May, Schardt's party room was nearing completion. "The plasterers will begin putting on the finishing coat tomorrow. The building is on the Cedar Point pavilion order and will present a fine appearance. Only one thing looks bad, and that is the small sized, cheap looking glass in the front windows. The building would have looked a thousand dollars better with a plate glass front." No pictures of this building survive. We can see its general layout from the Sanborn Maps. It included a dining room on the first floor and a dancing hall on the 2nd floor.

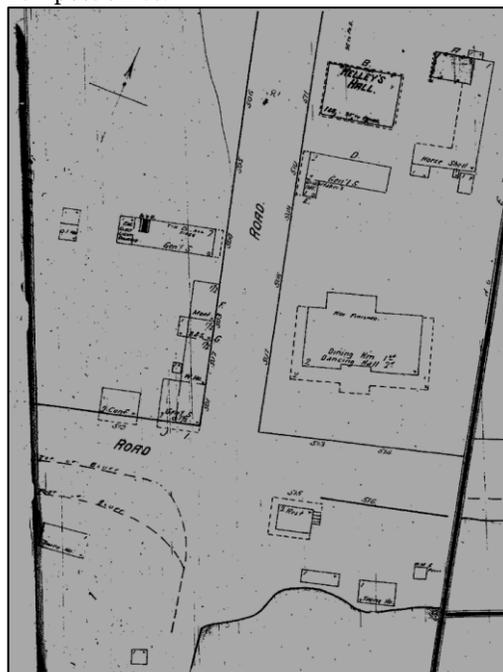
"The steamer *City of Sandusky* was chartered by the People's orchestra for an excursion trip to Kelley's Island on the evening of July 1st when Schardt's new party rooms will be opened."

At various times the new building was referred to as a saloon, Schardt's pavilion, or Schardt's party rooms. One report even described it as a 'handsome resort hotel known as the Island House.' Not to be confused with Schardt's Hotel located just to the east next to Himmelein's Hotel.

July 1893 - "The steamer *Erie* took a party of wheelmen to Kelley's Island yesterday, July 3. Schardt's new party rooms at Kelley's Island were opened on Saturday evening. An excursion was given from this city on the steamer *City of Sandusky* by the People's Orchestra. The steamer *Erie* took the Leiderkranz Singing Society to Kelley's Island yesterday where a concert was given in Schardt's new party rooms."

Schardt's Hall was officially open for business. This description appeared a few months after Schardt opened his hall. "Geo. P. Schardt, owner and proprietor. After landing, the first place that greets the eye is the handsome summer resort hotel known as the Island House. It is located in the center of a magnificent grove on the site of the old Island House, familiar to every

The Sanborn insurance map shows the downtown area. On the shore is Smith's fish house, above is Schardt's new party room, above that at the top is Kelley's Hall and Burger's store. To the left is Elfer's new store and below that the Store on the Corner. To the left of the store is the new post office.



Schardt's new building resembled the Grand Pavilion at Cedar Point (pictured here).



visitor to the island. It occupies a commanding position overlooking the lake, and near the water's edge. It was opened for guests July 1st of the present year, and offers every attraction that modern ingenuity has conceived.

The first floor contains the spacious auditorium or ball room, 54x66 feet, which is always at the disposal of guests or parties, and the design of its proprietor was to furnish every comfort for pleasure seekers. Adjoining this on the left is the dining room, capable of seating 40 persons, and the handsome reception room and parlors occupy the extreme eastern part of the building. In the rear is the private dining room, adjoining which is the kitchen, furnished with new and complete apparatus for catering, the best to be obtained.

The bar which occupies the extreme western wing, is stocked with all the choicest native and imported wines and liquors and is finished in handsome style of natural wood in accord with the superior finish of the entire establishment.

The guests' chambers, 17 in number, are supplied with every requisite convenience, the fittings and furnishings being of the best the market affords. A broad veranda encircles the front, eastern and western sides, commanding an excellent view of the lake, and all the fine steamers pass within hailing distance. In summer it is dotted with all manner of pleasure craft. Fishing parties are furnished with boats, bait and fishing tackle at a nominal cost. Nothing could be more delightful than a spin to this popular place on skates or ice boats, and needless to say it will be taken advantage of to the fullest extent this coming season.

Everything about the place is clean and neat, and the fact that it is entirely new from cellar to garret, makes a sojourn under its roof especially desirable. If the opening season is to be a criterion it will soon become one of the most fashionable watering places on the lake. The proprietor is courteous and obliging, and is extremely solicitous for the welfare of guests."

Unfortunately, much like the original Island House, Schardt's Hall would catch fire and burn in September 1912. A blaze broke out shortly after 2 o'clock in the rear of the large building and before the islanders in the immediate vicinity could render any assistance, the entire building was completely enveloped in flames. The fire broke forth so sudden and in such volume that it was almost impossible to make any attempt to subdue the blaze. It was valued at about \$10,000 and ended the Island House legacy.

SCHARDT HALL BURNS - September 16 1896 – Disastrous Blaze at Kelley's Island – "Shortly after 2 o'clock yesterday morning fire broke out in the rear of the large hotel and dancing pavilion known as the Schardt Hall. Before the islanders in the immediate vicinity, who were surprised by the bright illumination of the water front, could render any assistance the entire building was completely enveloped in flames. The fire broke forth so sudden and in such volume that it was almost impossible to make any attempt to subdue the blaze. The building is situated just above the steamboat landing at the Reinheimer dock. It was built only a few years ago [1893], and was valued at about \$10,000. The loss is partly covered by insurance.

Frank Stang of [Sandusky] was interested in the building, and the hotel and dance hall was conducted by Mr. Schardt, a well known resident of the island. The fire is supposed to have been caused by a defective flue in the old building which was moved back previous to the erection of the new structure, and adjoining the hall. Very little furniture of the house was saved.

By heroic efforts of a bucket brigade, Hamilton's store [The Lodge] across the street was saved, although scorched some and the glass broken on the side next to the fire.