

Bethinking of Old Orleans

By C. W. Lattin, Orleans County Historian

Kendall Lodge No. 538 I.O.G.T.

Today's photo, taken in 1896, shows members of Good Templars Lodge posed in front of their hall on Main Street in Kendall.

On Feb. 12, 1868, in the Methodist Church of Kendall, a branch of the I.O.G.T. was organized. They prospered and soon rented the Masonic Hall, meeting there until April 1878. At that time, they took possession of the former Presbyterian Church, built in 1844, and fixed it up, making it suitable for their meetings. It was painted inside and out, papered, carpeted, inside blinds hung and a steel ceiling installed.

The International Order of Good Templars was the first order of its kind to admit women on equal terms with men. Hence we see both men and women in the photo.

Their ritual in the 1890s was printed in 13 languages.

The highest membership recorded at Kendall was 109 in 1885.

The purpose of this organization was in uplifting all humanity under a motto of "Faith, Hope and Charity." Their hall served as a headquarters for temperance.

Kendall Lodge No. 538 literature indicates: "We aim to save the young, pure and virtuous from falling into the snares of the tempter as well as helping those who have sunk low in the scale of human degradation to rise again. It has been remarked how few Kendall boys grew up drunkards; and what volumes that speaks for the Good Templars who for so many years have been training these boys to total abstinence, and loyalty to God and man."

In 1898, a youth chapter was organized in Kendall under the name Do Right Temple No. 31. The pledge for children was: "I promise not to drink wine, beer, cider or any alcoholic or intoxicating



Our Hall. Photo 1896.

drinks. I promise not to use tobacco in any form. I promise not to use either profane or wicked words. I promise not to gamble."

With prohibition, temperance organizations must have felt they won their cause and interest waned. With the repeal of prohibition, I'm sure advocates of temperance must have felt they lost the cause completely. Lodges such as the one in Kendall fell into oblivion. In the mid-

1930s, Kendall Fire Company purchased the former I.O.G.T. hall for a fire house.

Noting the volume numerals and issue number of this column, you can see how long this column has been in existence. It was 25 years ago in January 1979 that I started Bethinking of Old Orleans.

That totals out now to 1,100 weekly columns which I have written since my beginning in this post a quarter of a century ago.