

Stratford History - Always Amazing

By David Wright, Editor
Stratford Historical Society's

UPDATE

Booth's Hall, in Stratford Center, was THE place for all things social in the 1860's. Town Hall was located north of the Congregational Church on Church Street. Booth's Hall was located where I-95 crosses Main Street today. It's easy to imagine the convenience for anyone (even out-of-towners) desirous of attending activities at Booth's Hall as it was near the train depot. In the 1860's, the train depot was located at King Street and Linden Avenue.

While we've been unable to locate a picture of Booth's Hall from the 1860's, we've included a photo of "Booth's Block" from 1890. What may have been Booth's Hall is shown just to the right of the then Town Hall which was built on Main Street in 1875.

Imagine ladies, if you will, celebrating Leap Year by "cornering" your best beau at Booth's Hall as you were so entitled during a leap year. The Leap Year Party, described in the following, was such a success that it was even written of in the

Hartford Courant.

Bridgeport Daily Standard

April 7, 1867

STRATFORD—LEAP YEAR PARTY.

The ladies of the Old Salt Hay Town are not always behind in the performance of good deeds, and the Stratford boys who were favored with an invitation to the leap year party Wednesday night, will unite with me in saying, that Booth's Hall for once was converted into a little world of pleasure. About 8 o'clock the company commenced hurriedly to assemble, and the ladies claiming the rights that leap year allowed them, might have been seen leading the rougher sex up into the hall, and politely placing them in some uncomfortable locality, charged them to await for further orders. Ere long, a programme was placed in the hands of the fun-making committee, and with the poet I can exclaim—

*"When will my mouth assume
Its natural shape again?"*

And thus the fun continued until the "noon of night," when a different scene presented itself, and was appreciated by all. A beautiful collation had been spread, and our appetites yearned as our eyes beheld the scene. Soon,

hunger was appeased, and returning to the hall we commenced to laugh some more, and continued to do so until the "wee small" hours of morn. Much praise is due F. C. Smith for the excellent music furnished; also Miss Fryer and Miss Hungerford, Committee of Arrangements, have our hearty consideration. Thus the pleasant evening passed away, and before leap year is numbered with those that were, we hope to repay.

R.



In this 1890 photo, Town Hall is the large building in the center of the photo. Booth's Block is the white building to the right. Booth's Block is either Booth's Hall, or it is located where Booth's Hall was located in 1867.