

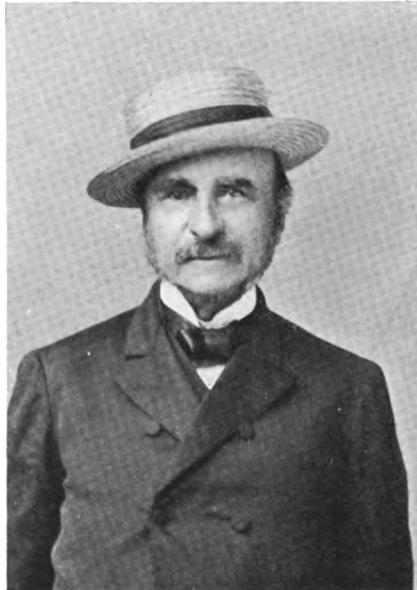
Stratford History - Always Amazing

By David Wright, Editor
Stratford Historical Society's
UPDATE

Inasmuch as November is the month when our attention is drawn to politics, it seems appropriate to remember one of Stratford's own who sought the highest office in the land. James Langdon Curtiss ran for U.S. President in 1884 and, again, in 1888. Although he didn't win the Presidency, yet was he a respected and admired man.

Men of Progress: Biographical Sketches and Portraits of Leaders in Business and Professional Life in and of the State of Connecticut
1898, page 399

General James Langdon Curtiss, formerly candidate of the American party for President, New York city, was born at Stratford, Connecticut, February 19, 1808. The name of Curtiss has been prominent in Connecticut for over two and a half centuries. Young Curtiss was educated in the public schools and Academy at Stratford. At the age of six-



teen, with all the ambitions and energies of youth he came to New York to seek his fortune.

He soon found a position as clerk in a store and rose so rapidly that at the age of twenty-one he was admitted to partnership in the large importing house of Henry DeGroot & Company... Always a rigid disciplinarian, he nevertheless possessed a kindly disposition and the faculty of winning the admiration and affection of his subordinates... During the Civil War his aid was invaluable in the organizing and despatching [sic] of troops for the War... Such nominations as he received were accepted for the sake of a principle and because he be-

lieved that by free discussion and agitation the right would finally triumph. It was with this spirit that he accepted the nomination for Governor of Connecticut by the Labor Party in 1884. His letter of acceptance of the nomination foreshadowed many of the ideas of the American party whose existence began with his nomination for President four years later. "Labor," he says, in his letter of acceptance, "is the real sinew and backbone of the country. It is the foundation stone of wealth, and it is the true interest of capital to go hand in hand with it. It is the duty of the state and Nation to protect labor by just and proper laws, establishing savings banks, guaranteeing the deposit of every working man, woman or child, so that in sickness or temporary failure of employment, they may feel sure that their previous savings are safe. We are all citizens of the United States. We want no solid South and no solid North, no solid East and no solid West. We have one country, one constitution, and with the blessing of God let us have one destiny."