

Stratford History - Always Amazing

By David Wright, Editor
Stratford Historical Society's
CUPHEAG CORNER

Holidays were, in many cases, observed in much the same way 150 years ago as they are today. Washington's Birthday was a day off from school marked by patriotic observances around town. As you'll note from the following, there was still a feeling of division remaining in Town following the end of the Civil War. Stratford had several well-connected "Copperheads", who supported the South during the War, living in town at this time.

The Bridgeport Evening Farmer
February 25, 1869
"Ephraim's" Stratford Gossip

One of the most impressive and interesting meetings which has occurred [sic] since the institution of "St. John's Adoptive Circle," of the "Order of the Eastern Star," took place at their hall, on the evening of the 24th, at which there was a large number of Sisters and Brethren present, among whom we noticed several from Bridgeport. The degrees were conferred in the most impressive manner. The interest, at first expressed on the part of the ladies in their beautiful and beneficent Order, still continues to be as strong and unwavering, notwithstanding that the number of initiates are but few, although the number is sufficient for the general welfare of all who belong to the Circle, and we trust that the interest, so far expressed, will be

maintained.

The celebration of Washington's birthday, in this town, was observed in a more extensive and patriotic manner than we had reason to expect. At an early hour in the morning, the flags were thrown to the breeze on the respective flag-poles of the two opposing parties—that of the Democrats on the spar on the saloon of Joseph F. Pendleton, and that of the Republicans on the lofty pole situated near the factory Booth & Russell, while a large number of our private residences displayed the bunting on their dwellings and elsewhere, and the little boys and girls were more than jubilant in exclaiming:—"This is Washington's birthday, and we have not got to go to school to-day." Not only were the children jubilant, but those of more mature age were exceedingly joyous, and passed away the day in numerous sports which were creditable to the occasion. At the saloon where that "fusil oil well" is in operation, there was a reading in part of General Washington's first inaugural address as President of these once blessed United States, but now most desolated in the world, brought about by the unconstitutional acts of the leaders of the Republican party. The reading was rendered in a certain professor's most eloquent style, receiving a hearty round of cheers at the conclusion from the quite large number in attendance.



Old Masonic Temple, St. John's Lodge, built in 1792 converted to EM Wells store, c 1905.