

Stratford History - Pre-Baldwin Center

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

Construction began on the existing Lovell Building in Stratford Center in June, 1919. Harold Lovell, who was Town Clerk at the time, decided to replace the former L. H. Todd hardware store with a brand new building. The new building would be much larger than the old L. H. Todd store, and house other businesses, the town post office, as well as residential apartments. As you'll read in the story below, some behavioral adjustments were also required with the new building.

The Bridgeport Times
July 17, 1919

Stratford, July 16. (Special to the Times) - With the removal of the steps of the old hardware store, the arch gathering place of a number of the men of the town, who nightly for years past have congregated at the center and sat on the stoop or on the tube or other things belonging to the store that were left outside has gone and with it the only place in town for the men to hang out. The building to which the steps belonged was moved a few days ago but Town Clerk Lovell who is the owner

and for whom a new building is being erected out of the goodness of his heart let the steps remain until the last moment so that the men could enjoy the summer evenings and watch the constant stream of automobiles go by.

The old hardware store building which has stood on the same site at the center for over 40 years was for years the meeting place of the older men who would gather about the store and in the summer nights on the steps. The name Stove Club which has probably been heard from coast to coast originated from the men gathering about the stove on the winter evenings. The men discussed the affairs of the town state and nation and if some of the suggestions made by the hard thinking men who were members of this club could have been carried out undoubtedly the country would have been no worse off. Very few of the old men are left who were the original members of this club but there are younger men who have taken their places and have kept up the discussion.

Speaking of discussions one was indulged in yesterday morning which shows one of the things talked about and thoroughly gone over before the men quit the subject. The matter this morning first was which animal was the most intelligent - elephant, horse or dog. Captain Coley who led the discussion was satisfied that the intelligence laid in the order named above, David L. Rhoades, Louis E. Peck, Lucious Judson and others were present and took some part in the talk...

Up to the time when Harold Lovell took charge of this hardware store the nightly gatherings of the men of the town inside the store was the regular thing but Mr. Lovell decided that he would not keep open evenings and the club was partially disorganized.

"But," as one of the steady nightly visitors at the center said yesterday, "changes have to come and as the town is so much bigger I suppose we had to have a building at the center and a place for men to meet each other done away with. Most of the old men have gone away anyway and it has not been the same for a number of years now," he continued.



H. C. Lovell Co. c. 1918