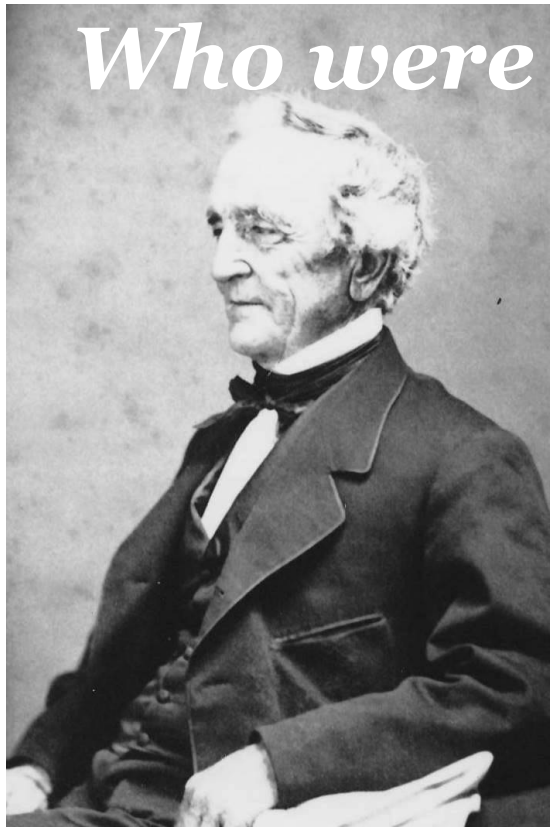


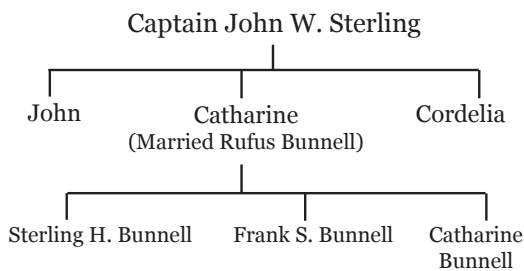


The two wives of Capt. John Sterling. Above, first wife, Mary Judson. Below, his second wife and the mother of his three children, Catherine Tomlinson Plant.



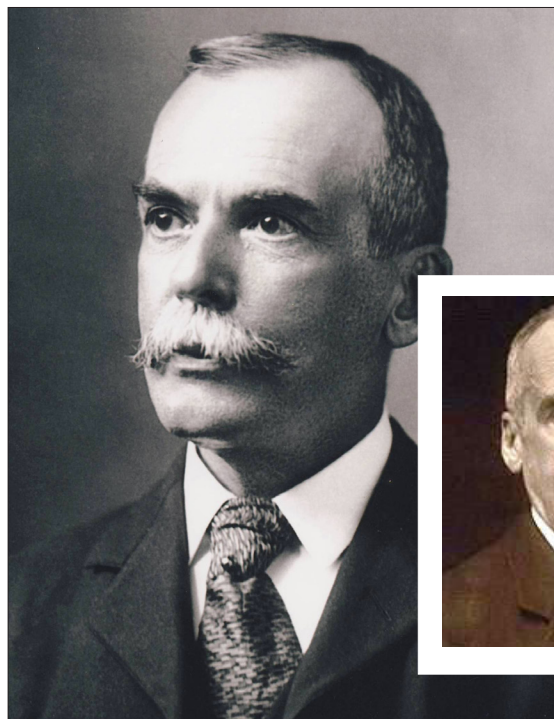
# Who were the Sterlings?

Captain John W. Sterling was born Sept. 4, 1796, and reportedly learned to sail when he was 16-years-old during the War of 1812 era. Captain Sterling was a prominent figure in Stratford as well as along the eastern seaboard and played a major role in American trade with the Asian Far East in the early 19th century. In 1823 at the age of 27, Captain Sterling was commander of the 800-ton sailing vessel, *Splendid*, the largest ship at that time. He sailed as far as Canton, China. He married his first wife, Mary Rebecca Judson, in 1832. Tragically, their seven-month-old daughter, Mary Judson Sterling, died in Sept. 1838. Mother Mary died soon thereafter. After the death of his first wife, Capt. Sterling married his first wife's cousin, Catharine Tomlinson Plant, and they had three children: Catharine Mary Sterling (1840-1931), John William Sterling (1844-1918) and Cordelia Sterling (1846-1931).



## John William Sterling: his life, successful career

John William Sterling, brother of Catharine and Cordelia, was born in Stratford. It was his money, land and House that were eventually willed by Cordelia to create Sterling House. He received his undergraduate degree in 1864 from Yale, later valedictorian of the class of 1867 from Columbia Law School. Sterling became a corporate lawyer in New York City and helped found the law firm of Shearman & Sterling in 1871. The firm represented Jay Gould, Henry Ford, the Rockefeller family, and Standard Oil, among others. Attorney John Sterling became very wealthy and well known. He died in 1918, setting up individual trust funds for members of his family.



Sterling's first daughter, Catharine, above, was born in 1844, and was the sister of John William Sterling, left, and Cordelia. Catherine and Cordelia both died in 1931.

The younger John Sterling is pictured, in two portraits, at left. He left \$30 million to Yale upon his death in 1918, and \$300,000 in trust to Cordelia.

