

# The Cats



## Library Directors

Anna A. Murphy 1893-1902  
Geneva E. Ricker 1902-1927  
Ethel Fish 1927-1947  
Doris Rollinson 1947-1968  
Ella Goldthwaite Bradley 1968-1971  
Gwendolyn Elliot 1971-1972  
Joanna M. Case 1972-2007  
Lois Hiller 2007-2015  
Christine M. Johnson 2015-2018  
Karen Wall 2018-2020  
Chris Bradley 2020 - Present

## The Friends

Organized in 1978, the Friends function as an important support group for the Library with a separate 501(c)(3) designation. By donating time or money to the Library, patrons become Friends. The Friends raise money through the Annual Spring Fair and Like New Holiday Book Sale, among other events, and have sponsored All Things Pumpkin, participated in the Edible Book Festival and organized a Library Book Cart Drill Team for the Irish parade. The Friends use proceeds from events to help support, among other things, the Summer Reading Program, Museum passes, yard care, special projects as requested by the Library, and donating to the Library Annual Fund. The Friends also sponsor Bookends, a newsletter that highlights special events, and news about the library, including its history.

## About Us

The Mystic & Noank Library is a public association library governed by a Board of Trustees. The area we serve includes Mystic, Noank, Old Mystic, Stonington, and Groton. The Towns of Groton and Stonington provide a financial stipend to the Library, however **nearly 70% of our funding comes from private sources like you.** Please consider supporting our Annual Fund Campaign. Visit the "Donate" page on our website at [mysticnoanklibrary.org](http://mysticnoanklibrary.org).

### Hours

**Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday:**

10 AM to 7 PM

**Thursday, Friday & Saturday:**

10 AM to 5 PM

**Summer Saturdays:**

10 AM to 2 PM



(860) 536-7721  
[mysticnoanklibrary.org](http://mysticnoanklibrary.org)  
40 Library Street, Mystic CT



HISTORY OF  
**Mystic &  
Noank  
Library**

# Our Story

In 1891 Captain Elihu Spicer announced that he planned to build a public library for the communities of Mystic and Noank on the corner of West Main and Elm Streets. The building would be two stories with a collection of books on the second floor, and a large public meeting room on the first floor.

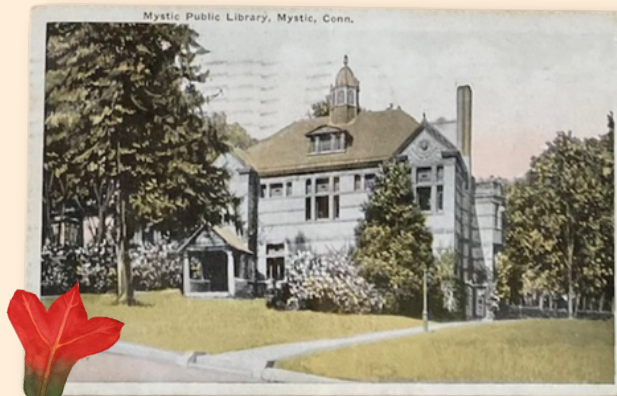
The Captain was born in Noank in 1825 and went to sea at the age of nine. He became a cabin boy at age fourteen and was master of the bark *Fanny* at age twenty-two. During subsequent years, he mastered many sailing ships for trade around the world.

In 1861 he entered into partnership with a life-long Mystic friend, Charles H. Mallory, to form the C. H. Mallory & Co. in New York. Their venture proved successful in the trade between New York, Florida, and Galveston, Texas and this success enabled Captain Spicer to engage in his philanthropic activities.

Spicer chose to erect his library across from his summer home on Elm Street and to include features that would reflect his inquiring interest in the many places and things that he had seen on his voyages. Unfortunately, Captain Spicer died on February 15, 1893, just months before the completion of the building. His sister, Mrs. Sarah Dickinson, with the aid of Mr. Mallory, carried out the Captain's wishes.



A portrait of MNL founder,  
Elihu Spicer.



William B. Bigelow of New York drew up the plans and Mertz's Sons of Port Chester was the contractor. Captain Spicer's own architect, William Higginson, supervised the construction. Ground was broken in the summer of 1892.

Building materials include Roman brick, granite from Leete's Island, Connecticut, sandstone from Longmeadow, Massachusetts and Numidian marble from Africa, as well as marble from Vermont and Tennessee. Some floors are tile mosaics from Italy and stained glass fills the window transoms. Sculptured tondi representing Minerva for literature and Apollo for the arts appear on the front facade.

The interior glows with polished and intricately carved oak. A handsome brick fireplace on the east wall of the second floor features a large oak panel with the inscription "*Elihu Spicer gave this library to the people. Large was his bounty and his soul sincere.*" A black wrought iron wreath accents the fireplace wall and this wreath motif is repeated in the carvings on the original bookcases and chairs.

The building was dedicated on January 23, 1894 with ceremonies held in the new Meeting Room. Over 400 persons attended to hear local ministers praise the building and its magnificent location, and proclaim the value of good books in the process of learning. Patron usage at the Mystic & Noank Library increased year by year. The many services and the friendly staff created a welcoming atmosphere.

In 1951 the Board of Trustees voted to move the books to the first floor and close off the second floor. However, by 1961 the first floor was overcrowded and they voted to move the children's collection upstairs. The Board hired architect John Dodge of Stonington to handle the design and to oversee the remodeling. His plan called for a dropped ceiling and a dividing wall to create both a Children's Room and a Meeting Room on the second floor.

By the 1980s major repairs were necessary and overcrowding was evident. To celebrate the upcoming Centennial year, the Trustees made another major decision and proposed an addition, which would triple the existing space, and a major restoration of the original building. A fund-raising campaign, launched in 1987, received overwhelming community support. In December 1991, the 6,000 square foot addition was dedicated and in May 1992 the restoration was completed. The architect, Charles King, successfully combined the old and the new.

An extensive renovation was undertaken in 2011. Carpeting in the second floor reading room was removed and the original oak floors were refinished. New shelving for periodicals was added and new energy efficient windows were installed. An area for teens was created on the first floor.

The Library is proud of its growth and development. It is a special place for the communities of Mystic and Noank and the neighboring areas, just as Captain Spicer had envisioned. He entrusted a grand gift to the care of the people and his trust has been accepted and fulfilled. Now it is our turn to care for the future of this community supported Library.

