

Victorian Historian educates, enchants

By Andrea Grabenstein For the Gettysburg Times Mar 19, 2022



Adam Shefts, standing, the Victorian Historian, addresses matters historical at a Fairfield Area Historical Society gathering Thursday. (Andrea Grabenstein/Gettysburg Times) [Buy Now](#)



Old-timey music wafted through the Fairfield Village Hall, reminiscent of a phonograph, as Adam Shefts prepared to lead audiences back in time to the unusual happenings of the Victorian Era Thursday evening.

Always ready to bring local history to the community, Fairfield Area Historical Society (FAHS) welcomed Shefts, or the Victorian Historian as he is better known, to captivate spectators with tales of wonder and amusement dating back to the 19th and 20th centuries.

From frock to pocket watch, the Historian dressed as a true Victorian gentleman and regaled his audience with tales of the unknown starting from the 1860s.

Shefts, of Abbotstown, has been an avid researcher of all things Victorian for as long as he can remember and began the Victorian Historian presentations in 2018 to provide a one-of-a-kind showcase of all the quirky and unusual aspects of those bygone days.

Shefts proves people 150 years ago weren't all that different from today's world, with a clear focus on fashion (optionally laced with arsenic), party games (potential to leave you injured) and a certainty of superstitions.

Shefts has a particular love for the unusual, and obscure and revels in hearing the gasps and laughs from his audience.

Showcasing the fun side of history, Shefts yearns for his audience to walk away knowing the past wasn't as serious as textbooks often make it out to be.

"If I can make them laugh and entertain them, or shock them, all the better," he said.

Shefts finds the most enjoyable aspect of his presentations is connecting with the audience, who like him, are curious to learn about the wonders of Victorian life.

Shefts puts forth his passion for the era into a labor of love with slideshows, historical props, photographs, and audience participation.

"History doesn't have to be dry," he said.

Shefts leads participants through a blast to the past, working his way chronographically to reveal the origin of barbershop quartets, the story behind Abraham Lincoln's beard, the date of the very first camera selfie, and much more.

Proving the Victorian Era may be gone, but never forgotten, if it happened between 1860 and 1912, Shefts cannot only tell you all about it, but pull back the curtain to a whole new side of what you thought you knew.

More information about the Victorian Historian, as well as his "not dry" history books for sale with topics including ghosts and parlor games can be found at <https://thevictorianhistorian.com/>.

More information about the FAHS and events can be found at <http://www.fairfieldpahistoricalociety.org/> as well as by calling 717-642-5640.

Tickets are also still available for the FAHS's Patsy Cline tribute concert April 2 at the village hall.

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