

# Library talk delves into obscure Victorian history

By Everett Bishop  
The Citizen

Adam Shefts, a Victorian historian, came to speak at the North Haven Memorial Library on Friday, July 19.

Shefts' hour-long presentation gave audience members a taste of obscure Victorian history that's often overlooked in typical history classes.

"The 19th and 20th centuries were very significant times in American history. The 19th century saw a war that divided the nation in two. The 20th century saw the

prominent emergence of flight and automobiles," said Shefts. "But that's just surface history. If you dig deep, deep down, there is a

plethora of odd and unique information."

Shefts shared an ad for the

See History, A5

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Friday, August 2, 2019 **A5**

## History

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first commercial wireless telegraph that had people call the police questioning the legitimacy of the company after seeing how cheap the product was. He also talked about arsenic wafers women took to lighten their

skin tone and shared evidence of the first mirror selfies taken in the early 1900s.

"I've always been interested in this time period," said Shefts. "I remember young boys playing with Matchbox cars and I had old cars I would play with. So I've always been interested!"

Shefts' interest in "the weird,

the bizarre" is what led him to begin his hobby of presenting obscure Victorian history. When not sharing stories of the strange side of U.S. history, Shefts works back home in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in the mobility aid industry, providing support to people with impaired mobility.

Shefts' hobby took him to "libraries and historical societies throughout Pennsylvania and Maryland."

"I grew up in North Haven and I figured, why not come back to the library which I was always fond of," said Shefts. "I simply reached out to the North Haven Memori-

al Library to see if this was a program [they'd] be interested in hosting."

Shefts previously had come to the library to share a presentation on the paranormal. It was after the response to his last event in North Haven that Laurel Oravetz, the library technical assistant, had Shefts return.

"They seemed to have enjoyed his program," said

Oravetz. "We would have him back in a heartbeat."

For Shefts, audience enjoyment is all the validation he needs.

"I enjoy seeing the expressions on others faces when I share it with them. It's just something I love doing. Sharing this information with others brings me so much joy," he said.

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Former North Haven resident Adam Shefts explains the use of the courting candle.  
Everett Bishop, The Citizen

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