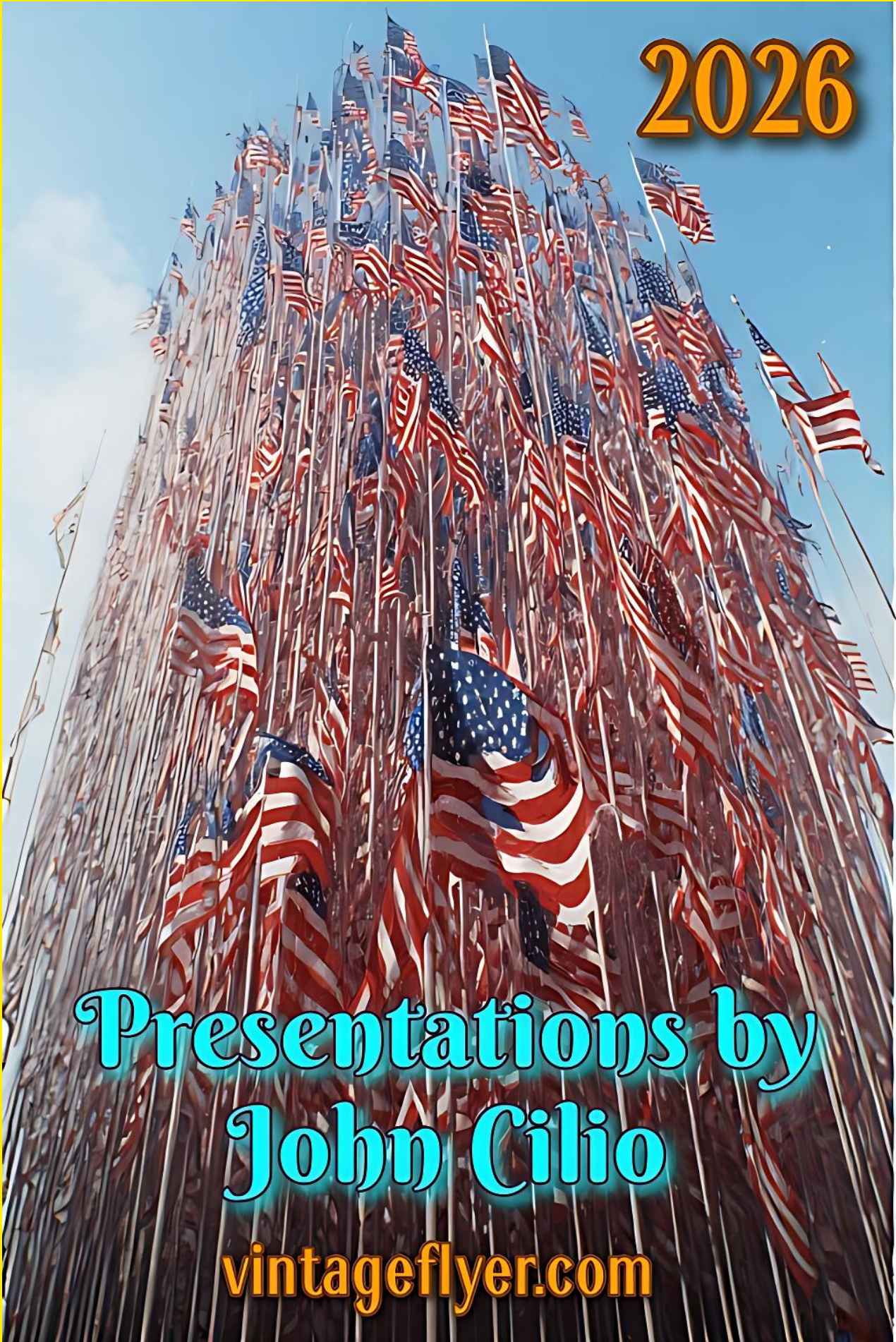


A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of a massive field of American flags. The flags are densely packed and appear to be waving in the wind, creating a sense of height and movement. The perspective draws the eye towards the top of the frame where the flags meet a clear blue sky. The overall image has a patriotic and celebratory feel.

2026

**Presentations by
John Cilio**

vintageflyer.com

Thanks for opening my 2026 catalog of topics!

- > Each presentation is designed to be delivered in Zoom or in-person and is designed for the young adult to senior audience level of interest.
- > Every presentation tells its story using vintage photographs, narrative developed through hours of research and insights from period documents.
- > If a presentation lends itself to localized insights, like the talk on watermills or taverns, slides and discussion are added to highlight local stories where possible.
- > Additional topics may be developed during the year and introduced through new versions of this online catalog published on the website, vintageflyer.com.

I hope you will find some topics that interest you and your patrons.
References are available upon request.

John

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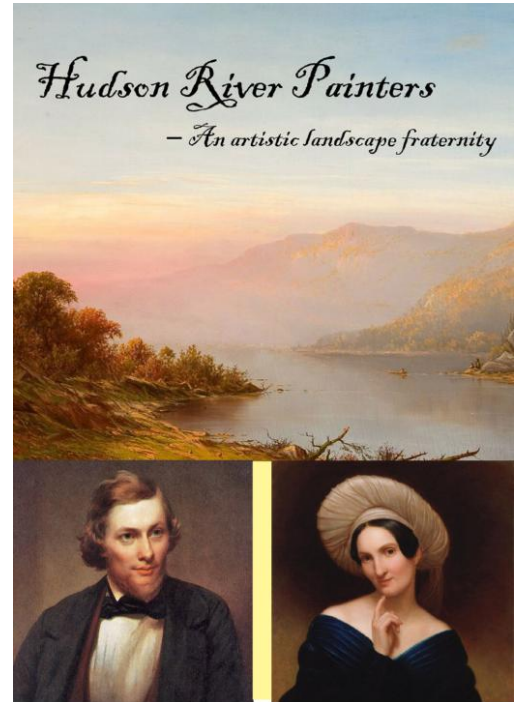
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- Art History -

Hudson River Painters - An artistic landscape fraternity

The Hudson River School was America's first true artistic fraternity, dating back to the 1820s. This loosely organized group of painters focused on capturing the unique natural beauty of the American continent. During this time of significant social, political, and economic change in American history, the paintings of the Hudson River School reflected a sense of hopefulness and a deep appreciation for the untouched American landscape. As time passed, their artwork also began to convey a sense of sorrow for the changing landscape.

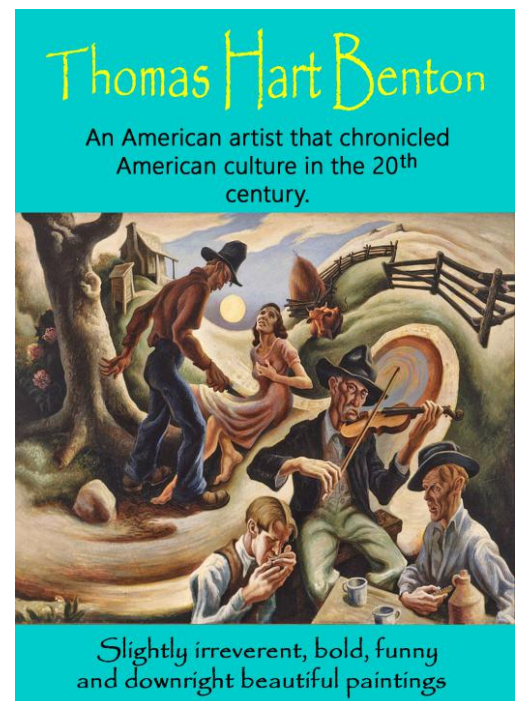
Join me for an exciting illustrated presentation that delves into the storied lives, locations and symbolism of these visionary painters. They fearlessly blended realism with fantasy on canvas to create stunning images of America the Beautiful.



Thomas Hart Benton - An American artist that chronicled American culture in the 20th century

With a unique and captivating style, Thomas Hart Benton documented the American landscape from the 1930s through the 1970s. He is widely recognized as one of the most prominent American muralists, with his smaller paintings and prints also receiving high praise. Trained professionally in both America and France, Benton rose to fame by portraying the people and culture of the American Mid-west in his artwork. He dedicated extensive time to researching his commissioned pieces, particularly when historical elements were involved. Unafraid to confront historical truths, Benton was not hesitant to challenge art critics and defend his work. His most famous pupil, Jackson Pollock, even posed for several of Benton's paintings.

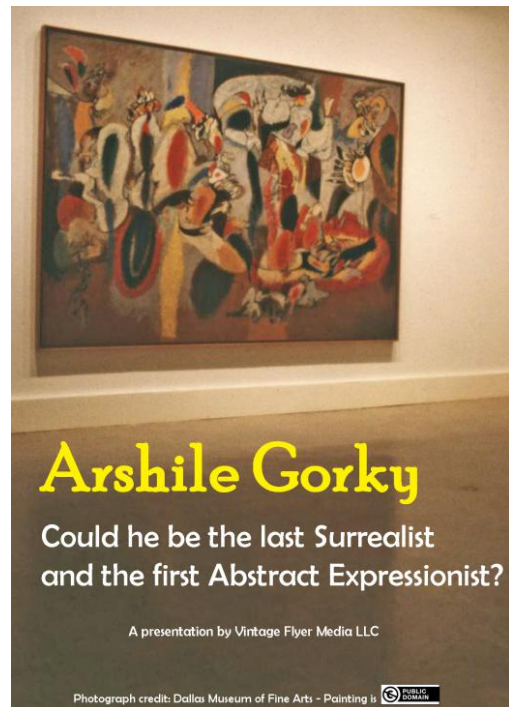
Join me as I delve into the fascinating journey of this renowned painter, who also happened to be a folk music recording star, as he evolved into a true American artistic treasure.



Arshile Gorky - Could he be the last Surrealist and the first Abstract Expressionist?

Arshile Gorky, a self-taught immigrant artist from the early 20th century, was a trailblazer in the art world. In the 1940s, he spearheaded the Abstract Expressionism movement by combining styles he had learned from early modern artists with his own futuristic concepts. Many consider Gorky's diverse and prolific body of work to be the most daring, innovative and influential of the American modernist movement. His art and philosophy left a lasting impact on the leading modern artists of the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

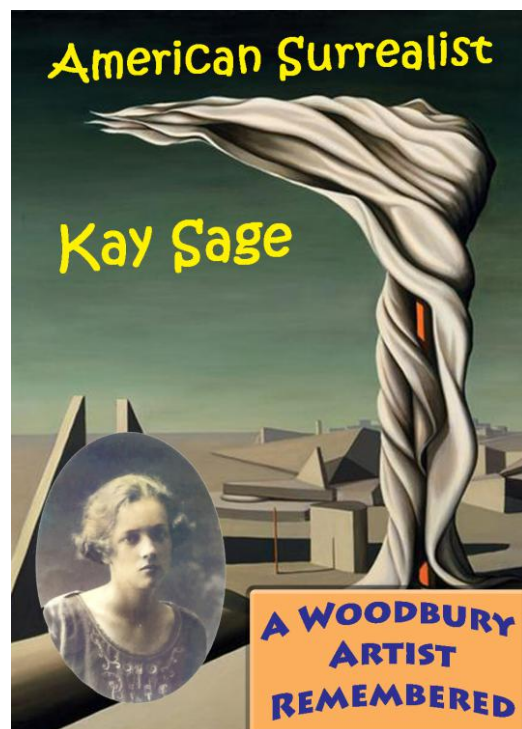
Join John Cilio for an educational presentation to delve deeper into the life and work of this extraordinary artist who, for several years, called Connecticut home. Get ready to be inspired and amazed by the brilliance of Arshile Gorky!



American Surrealist Kay Sage - A Woodbury artist remembered

Women surrealist painters are a rare find in the history of art, but one Connecticut resident, Kay Sage, defied the odds and became a renowned surrealist artist. Settling in Connecticut in the 1940s, Sage led an extraordinary and often dramatic life. Originally from New York, she married young and was given the title of Her Royal Highness, but she found the role too restrictive and chose to remain fiercely independent. In the late 1930s, an exhibition of Sage's paintings in Paris would forever alter the course of her life.

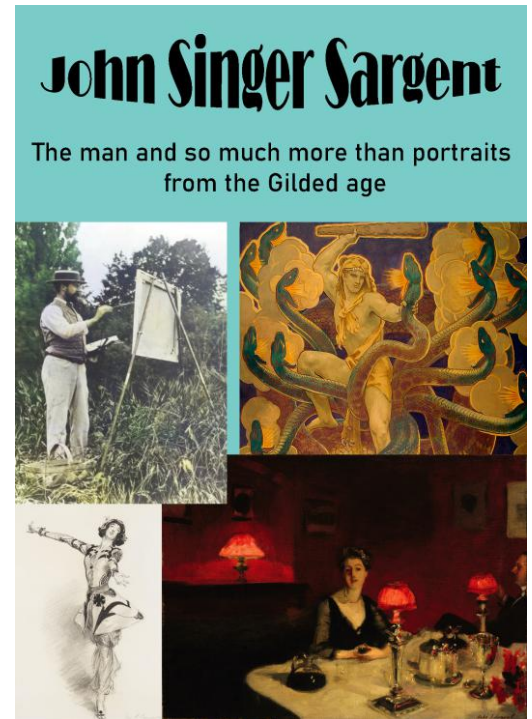
Join me as I delve into the fascinating world of Kay Sage's now famous paintings. Discover how her art evolved over time and how she played a crucial role in helping numerous European artists escape the horrors of WWII Nazi persecution. Get ready to be captivated by the incredible story of this trailblazing artist.



John Singer Sargent - The man and so much more than portraits

Are you ready to be inspired by the brilliance of John Singer Sargent? Discover the fascinating world of the renowned painter with our storyteller John Cilio. Many people are familiar with Sargent's masterpiece portraits from the Gilded Age, but there is so much more to his story. Did you know that Sargent painted over 3,000 paintings, sketched hundreds of charcoal images and created stunning watercolors?

Join me as I unravel the secrets behind Sargent's success and the inspirations behind his work, from his grand murals to his unconventional painting techniques. Sargent's artistry will leave you in awe. Don't miss this opportunity to delve into the life of a true artistic genius and explore the hidden gems of his vast body of work.

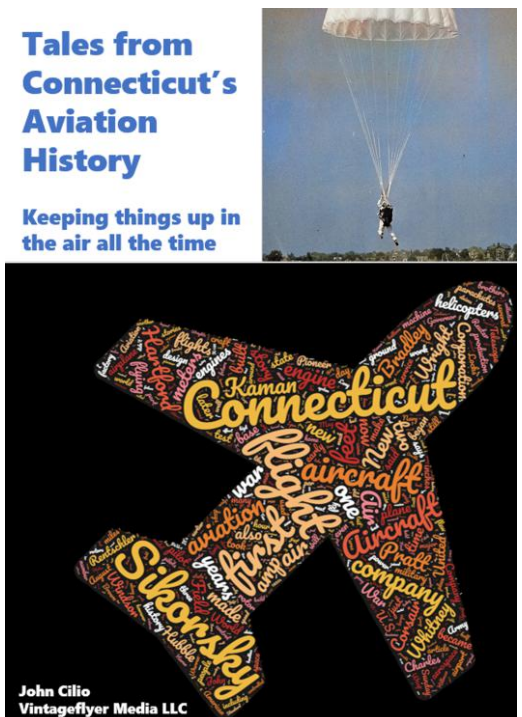


- Aviation History -

Tales from Connecticut's Aviation History - Keeping things up in the air all the time

Get ready to be amazed by the incredible stories that have unfolded in Connecticut's rich and enduring history of aviation! Over the past seventeen decades, inventors and entrepreneurs in CT have achieved remarkable feats that many believed to be impossible. Discover forgotten tales, such as how a Connecticut woman proved that nylon could play a crucial role in making D-Day a success.

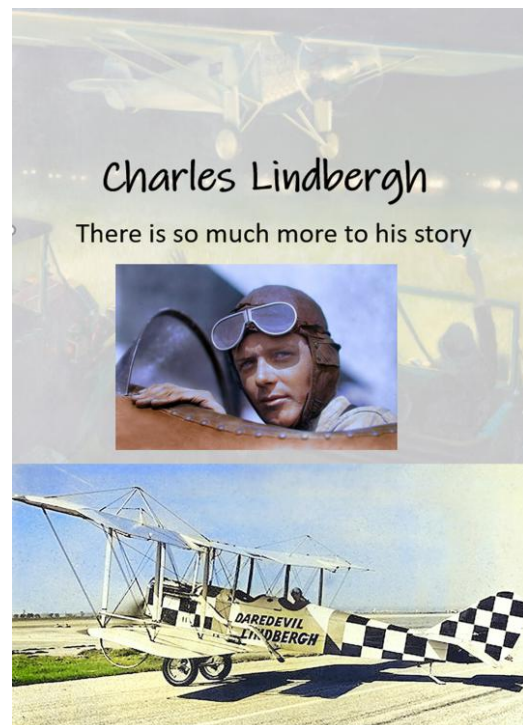
Our state has been at the forefront of early flight innovation, inspiring courageous pilots to reach new heights. Who would have thought that Connecticut, once a leader in U.S. stagecoach travel, would become a hub for groundbreaking aviation technology? Join me as I share some fascinating stories from Connecticut's aviation past.



Charles Lindbergh - There is so much more to his story

Charles Lindbergh was a legendary pilot who stands out among the many aviators of his time. He was one of the 68 brave men who dared to try and fly across the Atlantic Ocean non-stop, and he was the first to successfully complete this daring feat. Lindbergh had a natural talent for flying and thrived on the thrill of danger. He served as an Army Air Service Cadet in the U.S. Army, navigated treacherous airmail routes for the U.S. Postal Service, and dazzled audiences with his barnstorming performances across the country. He even lent his expertise to assist other pilots during World War II. His wife, also a skilled pilot and accomplished author, shared his passion for flight.

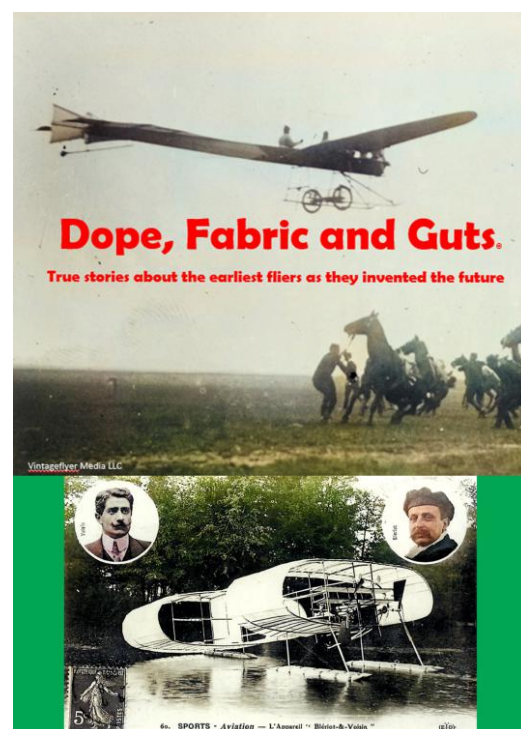
Join me as I explore the fascinating life of Charles Lindbergh, surveying his achievements, controversies and his significant contributions to conservation efforts.



Dope, Fabric and Guts - True stories about the earliest fliers as they invented the future

Experience the captivating stories of the early aviation pioneers and their inventions with me. Back in 1903, the world was abuzz with excitement as inventors raced to create the first piloted, powered, heavier-than-air flying machine. The competition was fierce, with everyone vying to be the first to achieve controlled flight. The definition of a successful first flight was up for debate, but one thing was certain - the future of aviation was being shaped before our very eyes.

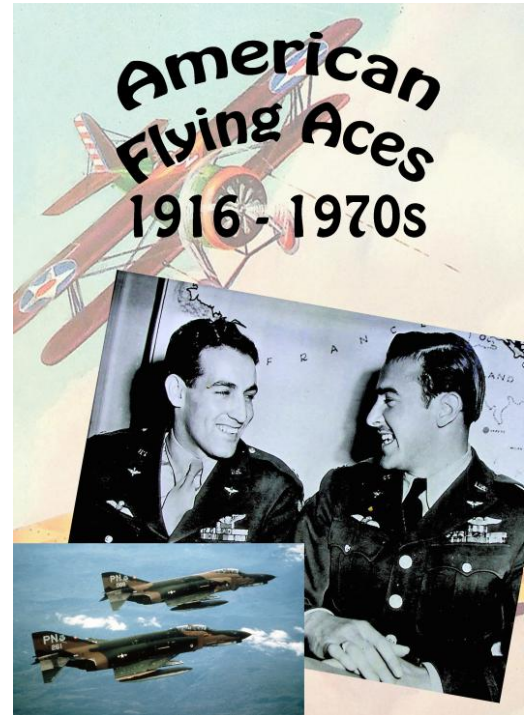
As these daring individuals pushed the boundaries of what was possible, the term "aeroplane" was coined to describe these miraculous flying machines. The skies were a battleground, with birds and humans alike vying for dominance in the air. It is a time when dreams took flight and the impossible became reality.



American Flying Aces - 1916 -1970s

An American Fighter Ace is a true hero - a U.S. citizen who has fearlessly served as a fighter pilot in the U.S. military or in the service of a nation not at war with the United States, and has taken down five or more enemy aircraft in intense aerial combat. Over one thousand, four hundred and forty pilots have earned the prestigious title of Fighter Ace from WWI through Vietnam. Despite the different eras of conflict, these Aces all faced similar harrowing situations.

In a patriotic tribute to America's exceptional pilots, John Cilio reminds us of the incredible impact that one individual can have. Their unwavering focus, unparalleled technique and unmatched bravery in the heat of battle serve as a true inspiration to us all. These Fighter Aces are the epitome of courage and skill, and their stories deserve to be celebrated and remembered for generations to come.



American Airpower - Bombers of WWII and the Cold War

Over 75 years ago, the world was engulfed in a devastating war that lasted 3 ½ years. One of the key offensive weapons used to end the war by the Allies was the bomber. Join us as we delve into the fascinating history of America's bomber airplanes that played a crucial role in winning WWII. Each aircraft was strategically used in different regions of the war, providing a unique perspective on the complexity of America's defense efforts.

The Korean Conflict saw the deployment of both propeller-driven and jet-based bombers, extending the era of strategic bombers into the Cold War. Join me as I take us on a thrilling journey through the U.S. Army Air Force and Navy bombers from the first bombers through the Cold War detailing the history of these war machines that ultimately helped bring peace.



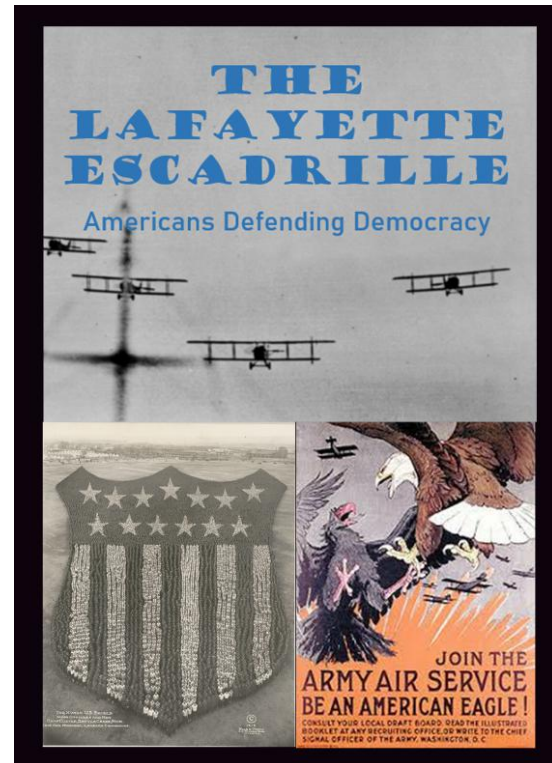
**American
Airpower - Bombers
WWII & the Cold war**



The Lafayette Escadrille - Americans defending democracy

On July 28, 1914, the Great War, also known as World War I, began - a conflict that would involve countries from all corners of the globe. It marked the first time in history that airplanes were used in warfare, with America having only six military planes compared to the Allies' 315 and the Germans' 180. In April 1917, America officially entered the war, but even before that, 220 young American pilots had already joined the fight, flying for the French in the famous Lafayette Escadrille squadron.

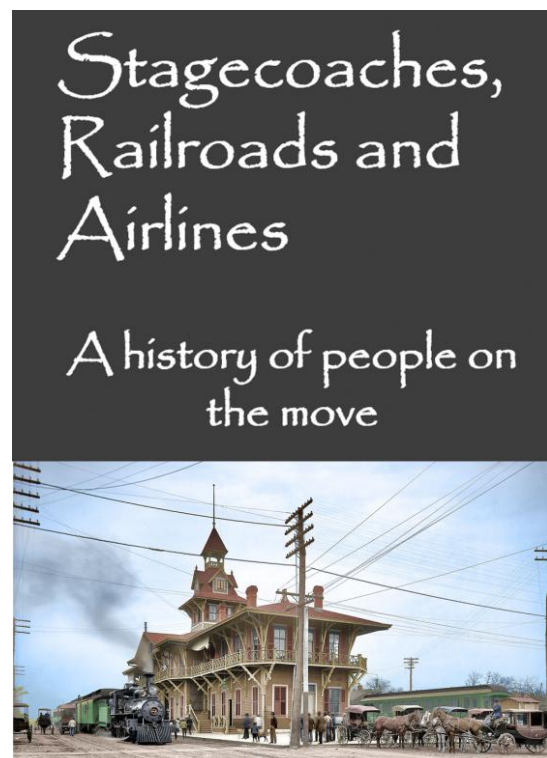
Their daring exploits captured the attention of the nation, inspiring patriotism and igniting dreams of becoming pilots. Join me as I share the incredible stories of these brave veterans, whose actions not only shaped history but also led to the creation of Armistice Day - now known as Veterans Day.



Stagecoaches, Railroads and Airlines - A history of people on the move

The story of America is a story of a country whose people have always been on the move. Initially people walked, used horses on paths and used boats along the rivers to get around. That is until the stagecoach came along. It connected the country, delivered the mail and was not dependent upon a waterway. America's early mass transit was the stagecoach. But as the country expanded and distances grew longer while populations swelled, a new invention, the railroad, developed. Railroads changed America, moving millions of people on schedule but eventually they too succumbed to a new invention, the commercial airlines.

Learn a little about the struggles and triumphs of the industries as the American public chose how they would travel. Commercial airlines have led for over 70 years. What's next?



The Space Race - From Sputnik to the Shuttle

The space race of the 20th century was an exhilarating competition between two Cold War rivals, the Soviet Union and the United States. Lasting nearly fifteen years, the race to be the first to land a man on the Moon was filled with intense excitement and anticipation. This fierce competition led to groundbreaking achievements, including the launch of artificial satellites, unmanned probes to various planets and human spaceflight in Earth's orbit and to the Moon.

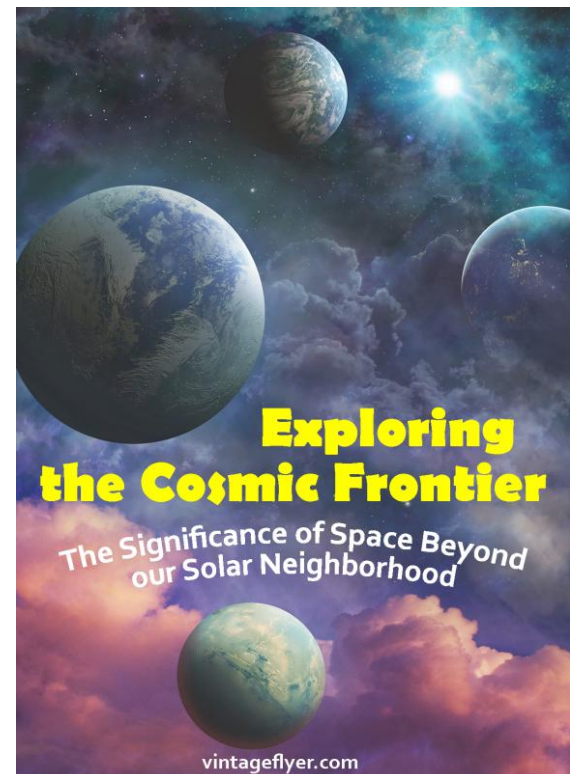
The final event that brought an end to the competition required man to travel nearly 240,000 miles from Earth, showcasing the incredible determination and courage of those involved. Winning the space race was not just a matter of pride, but also a crucial aspect of each country's national security. Join me as I highlight this thrilling chapter in history that began the exploration of Space.



Exploring the Cosmic Frontier: The significance of space beyond our solar neighborhood

The vast cosmic neighborhood extends far beyond our solar system, reaching out to nearby stars, exoplanets and interstellar phenomena. This expansive realm, known as the cosmic frontier, is filled with enigmatic elements such as dark matter, dark energy and cosmic radiation. These mysterious forces play a vital role in shaping the cosmic landscape, giving birth to new stars and planetary systems.

Delving into these cosmic mysteries is crucial for understanding the fundamental forces and structures that govern not only the universe but also our own planet. Join me on an exciting 50-minute journey as we set out to explore the wonders of the universe. Get ready to be amazed by the mysteries that lie beyond our solar system!



- American Revolution -

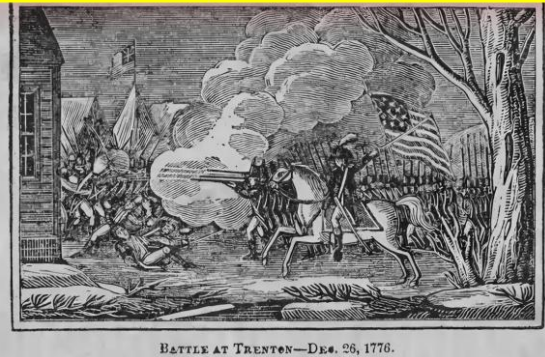
The American Revolution through the eyes of its people

This presentation will take attendees on an informative exploration of the events leading up to and during the American Revolution. We will examine the British efforts to unite the colonies two decades earlier, delve into the colonial power struggle, and analyze the political actions and domestic issues that defined the era. We will conclude by discussing the Treaty of Paris, which officially ended the war, and provide a brief overview of the two constitutions established in the aftermath.

To enhance the experience, we will share period illustrations, artwork, and documents that vividly represent the time. This presentation is based on a compelling 1785 book, while also incorporating various modern resources to reveal intriguing insights that were unknown to historians of that period. It promises to be a session that is both educational and engaging.



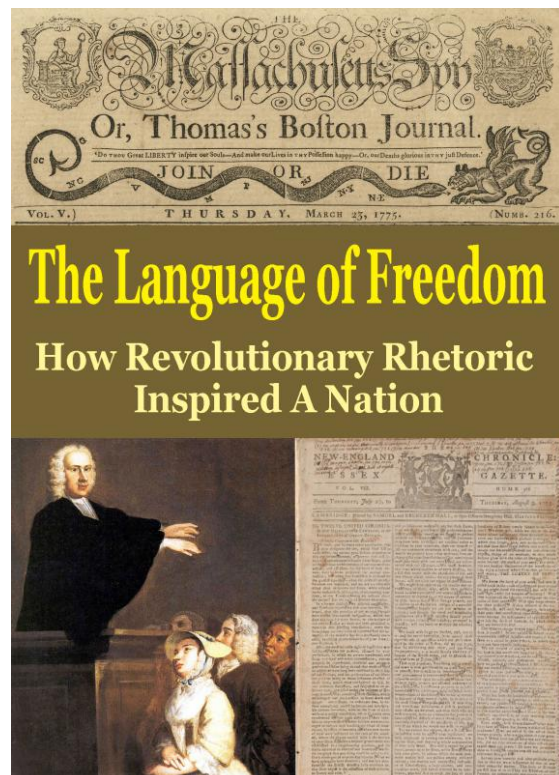
The American Revolution through the eyes of its people



The Language of Freedom: How Revolutionary rhetoric inspired a nation

This presentation takes an exciting look at the colonies before the Revolution and into the early days of the conflict. We'll delve into some inspiring sermons from various states and church ministers, explore selected newspaper articles, and discover how taverns served as lively hubs that encouraged colonists to consider rebellion as their best option.

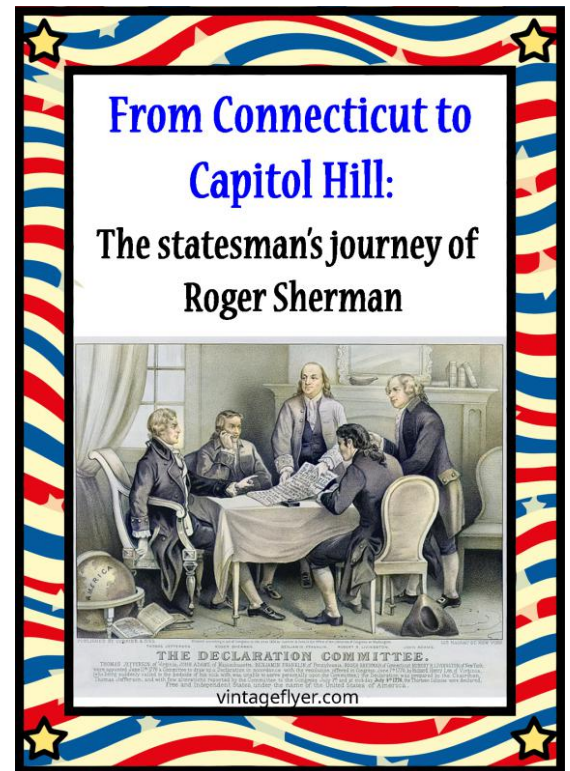
We'll be discussing sermons drawn from a detailed 1885 scholarly analysis, which provides us with valuable insights into that era. The newspaper articles and tavern discussions have been selected from a diverse range of early and contemporary resources, providing a well-rounded experience. While this presentation is rooted in scholarly work, we've designed it to be both entertaining and educational. We hope you enjoy the journey!



From Connecticut to Capitol Hill: The statesman's journey of Roger Sherman

Roger Sherman's foray into politics began with his election to the Connecticut General Assembly in 1755. During the tumultuous years leading up to the American Revolution, Sherman stood unwavering in his support for independence from British rule. His wealth of life experiences and keen legal mind, combined as a statesman and politician, provided the opportunity to be a signer of all four of the most important documents in American history.

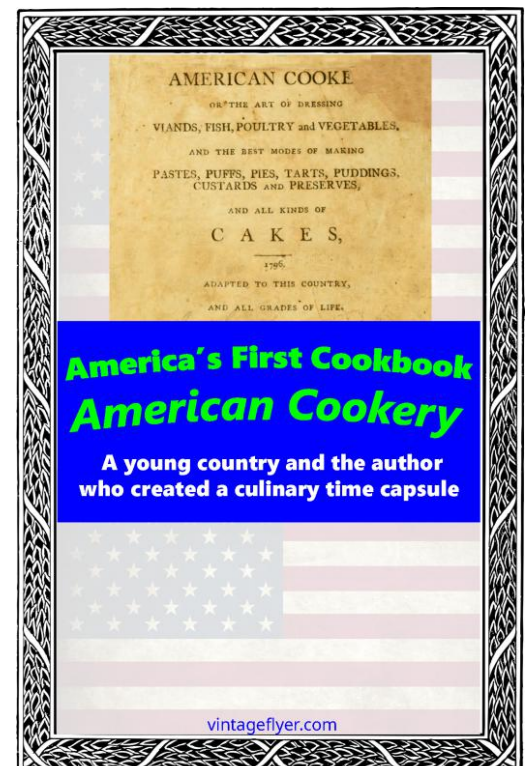
He was known for his sharp wit and keen intellect, a master of debate and negotiation. His ability to see both sides of an argument and find common ground made him an invaluable asset to the fledgling nation. Join our storyteller, John Cilio, who lives in Sherman, CT, as he explores a true American hero.



America's First Cookbook – *American Cookery* A young country and the author who created a culinary time capsule

Step back in time to explore the rich tapestry of early American cuisine, a melting pot of European traditions, Native American ingredients and innovative cooking techniques. Self-published in 1796, *American Cookery* is considered a culinary milestone in American history and stands as the nation's first-ever cookbook, penned by the enigmatic orphan, Amelia Simmons.

American Cookery isn't just a cookbook; it's a culinary time capsule because Simmons also shared a glimpse into the fusion of European and Native American culinary influences, cooking methods and ingredients of her time. Join me as I reflect on the enduring legacy of this groundbreaking cookbook, her life and accomplishments that have helped shaped the course of American cuisine over the centuries.



It's Official - The Great Seal of the United States

In 1776, following the adoption of the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress wasted no time in establishing a committee to craft the official seal of the United States. This seal was not just a mere formality - it was a symbol of American freedom and sovereignty to be proudly displayed on all official documents, from proclamations to treaties.

The seal was to serve as a powerful representation of our country's hard-won independence and commitment to self-governance, a visual embodiment of the principles upon which our democracy was founded. Join me as I investigate the fascinating history behind the creation of our nation's official seal, and the significance it holds in our country's story.

It's Official The Great Seal of the United States



The Liberty Bell - Symbol of American Freedom

The Liberty Bell, a remarkable emblem of our nation's history, has captivated hearts since its arrival in Philadelphia in 1752! Weighing over a ton, this iconic symbol has inspired countless generations of American patriots and proudly stands among the six most recognizable representations of the United States.

In the early years of America, bells played a crucial role in uniting communities, ringing not just for emergencies like fires and funerals but also for joyous celebrations and significant milestones. Though it faced challenges during the Revolutionary War and was once sold for scrap, the Liberty Bell emerged resilient, transforming into a cherished national icon.

More than just a relic of the American Revolution, the Liberty Bell resonates through the Civil War and both World Wars, symbolizing a broader sense of American dignity that has stood the test of time. Join me as I delve into the enchanting stories that surround the Liberty Bell! Each tale adds to its revered standing in American tradition, and I assure you, it's a journey filled with inspiration and discovery.

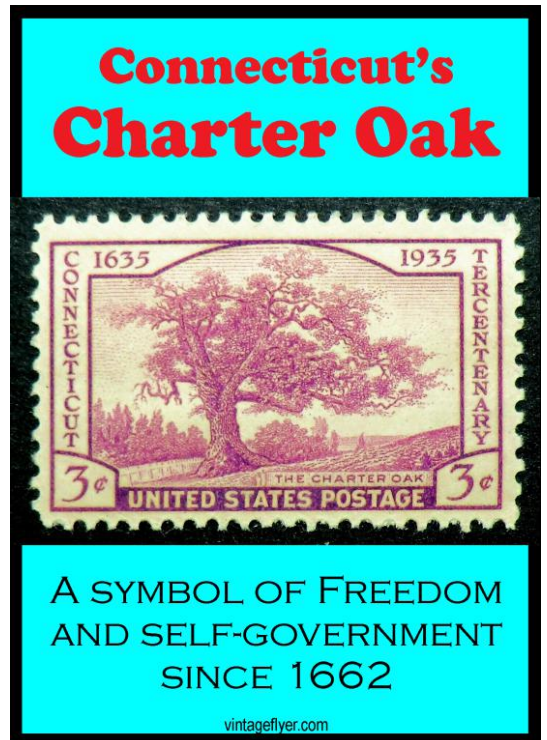
The Liberty Bell Symbol of American Freedom



Connecticut's Charter Oak - A symbol of freedom and self-government since 1662

The Charter Oak, a venerable white oak tree once located in Hartford, Connecticut, symbolizes the enduring spirit of independence and self-governance in American history. During a significant episode in 1687, when Sir Edmund Andros, the governor of the Dominion of New England, attempted to revoke the Connecticut Colony's original charter—an act that would have effectively stripped the colony of its autonomy—a group of colonial leaders hid the charter within the hollow trunk of this mighty oak.

The daring concealment allowed them to defy Britain's authoritarian rule and preserve their governance until 1692, when they reclaimed their rights after Andros was ousted. This incident not only underscored early American resistance against tyranny but also established the Charter Oak as a potent symbol of liberty and democracy that continues to resonate today. Join John Cilio as he discusses this early and important example of Connecticut's cultural identity.

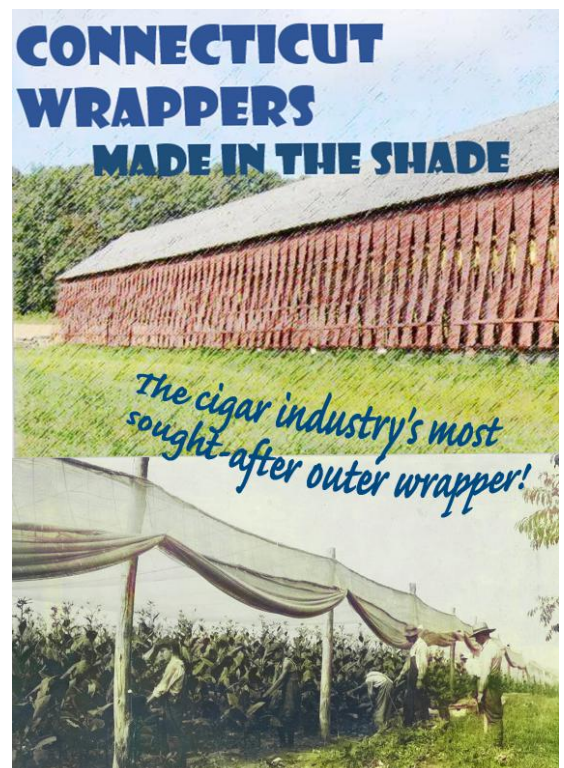


- Connecticut History -

Connecticut Wrappers - Made in the shade

A cigar wrapper is the beautiful tobacco leaf that encases a cigar, and it holds the power to enhance the delicate flavor profiles of a premium cigar. Connecticut has been a pioneer in tobacco cultivation since 1640, and in 1901, they began producing shade-grown tobacco specifically for cigar wrappers. The farmers in Connecticut have mastered the art of growing some of the finest wrappers in the world, using techniques like cheesecloth or nylon netting to shield the leaves from the harsh elements. Their dedication has propelled Connecticut-grown shade tobacco wrappers to the top tier of the industry, outshining over 50 other available options.

Join me as I delve into the fascinating histories of tobacco, cigars and Connecticut shade-grown wrappers. Let's explore the world of premium cigar wrappers together!



Connecticut Innovations that helped to change the world

Since the inception of federal patent issuance in 1790, Connecticut has stood out as a national leader in innovation. This trend persisted well into the 19th and early 20th centuries, with Connecticut residents receiving patents at a rate three times higher than the national average.

Join me as I share the fascinating world of groundbreaking discoveries, patents, and inventions that have emerged from the state of Connecticut. These visionary individuals dared to challenge the status quo, developing their ideas and passions to demonstrate that radical concepts have a place in transforming people's lives and shaping a better world.



Connecticut Landmarks are such special places

The early colonial residents of Connecticut played a crucial role in shaping our national democracy and securing victory in the revolution. As one of the original 13 colonies, Connecticut became the fifth state in 1788. The events and individuals that have called this state home have left a lasting mark, creating three centuries worth of captivating physical landmarks.

Join me in celebrating our rich history by delving into the stories behind some of Connecticut's 60 National Landmarks and numerous state landmarks across a variety of locations. Get ready to be amazed as John Cilio takes us on a journey to explore these unique sites and discover what makes Connecticut truly special. Get ready to be inspired and learn more about the incredible landmarks that make our state stand out!



Early Inns and Taverns across Connecticut and New England

Taverns in early colonial America were known by a variety of names including; Ordinary, inn, tippling house and public house to name a few. In New England, initially, inns were tightly controlled and licensed by the church-based government. During the American Revolution, the word "Inn" seemed too British and the inns became known as taverns. Whatever the name, these public houses became centers of rebellion.

Men and women were licensed to manage taverns and many became quite successful. Join me and smile at some of the highlights that will be shared about specific inns across New England with a focus on Connecticut locations. Several still stand.



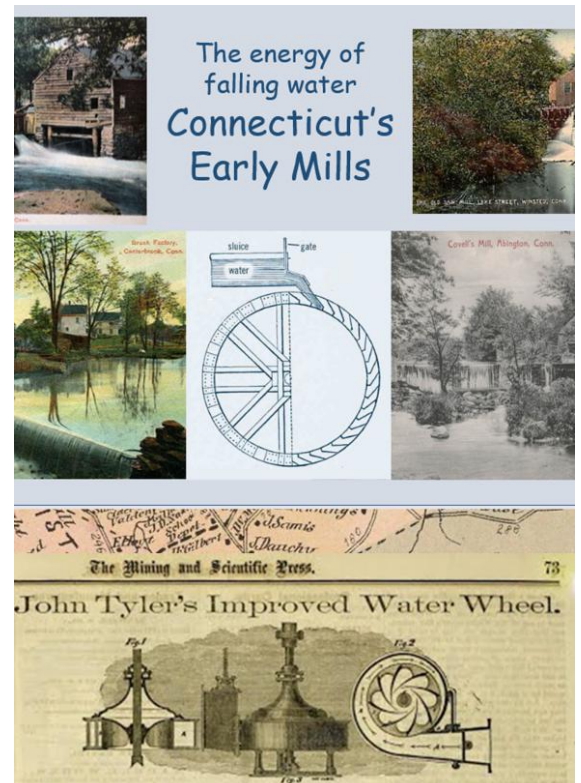
Early Inns and Taverns
across Connecticut and New England



The energy of falling water - Connecticut's early mills

In 1650, water-powered mills revolutionized Connecticut. Back then, each small village had to rely on itself for everything, with no electricity or steam power in sight. But water-powered mills changed everything! Villages sprung up around sawmills and gristmills, and soon factories producing cloth, hats, buttons, clocks, cider, plaster and paper emerged. By the mid-1800s, Connecticut's water-powered mills were serving a global market.

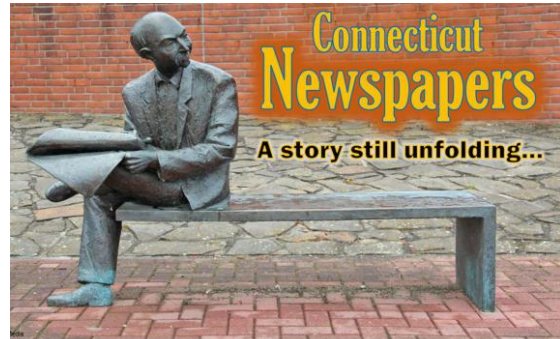
The importance of securing the right river sites for these mills cannot be overstated. Mark Twain himself once said, "Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting over." Join me for a fascinating exploration of Connecticut's historic water-powered mills and get ready to be amazed by the ingenuity and innovation that helped make Connecticut great!



Connecticut Newspapers - A story still unfolding

Join John Cilio as he breathes life into nearly 300 years of Connecticut newspaper publishing history! While Connecticut may not have been the first colony to publish a newspaper, there were already six CT newspapers in circulation before the American Revolution.

Newspaper publishing reached its peak at the turn of the 20th century, but the success of newspapers increasingly relied on the strategies of their publishers and editors. With the rise of the internet, the newspaper industry has faced a challenging decline. But is this the end? Not even close! The future of Connecticut newspapers is still bright, with new opportunities emerging in the digital age.



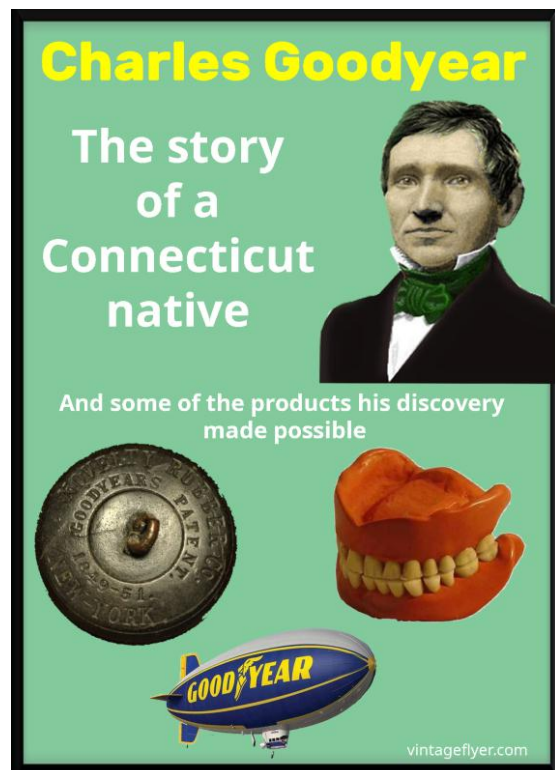
Connecticut towns have hosted more than 2,000 different newspapers since 1755.
- we've got the story



Goodyear - The story of a Connecticut native

Charles Goodyear was born over 200 years ago into a young United States. It was a time of economic and geographic expansion. Railroads didn't exist, cities and towns were small and farming was the primary occupation but - all of that was about change. Charles Goodyear, who inherited the inventor gene from his father, would be on the cusp of that change.

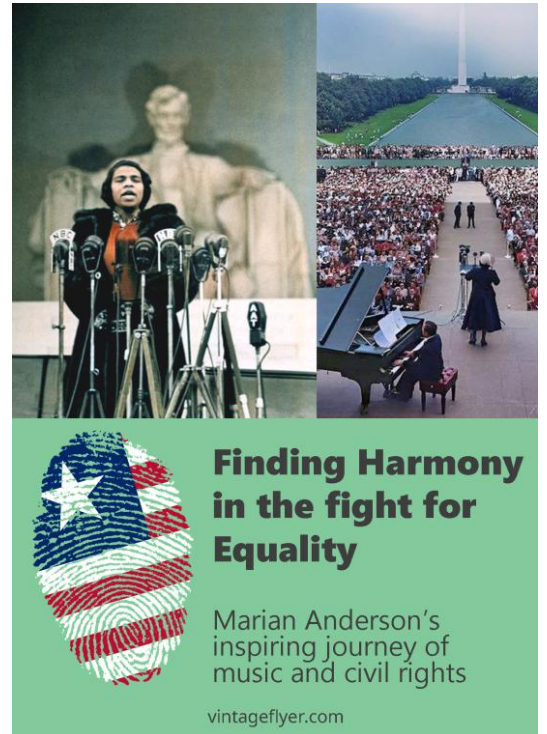
He was an inventor's, inventor - never being satisfied with his quest. His ten-year quest to uncover the secret to creating fully cured rubber, called vulcanized rubber, would feed the second stage of the world's industrial revolution. Join me as I unravel the folklore from reality about the amazing achievements of Connecticut's Charles Goodyear and how products made from his patents changed the world we live in.



Finding Harmony in the fight for Equality - Marian Anderson's inspiring journey of music and civil rights

Meet Marian Anderson, a Danbury, Connecticut, trailblazing contralto and civil rights activist who left an indelible mark on the world of classical music and the fight for racial equality. From her humble beginnings in Philadelphia to her historic performances at venues like the Lincoln Memorial, Anderson's journey was defined by both her extraordinary vocal talent and her unwavering commitment to breaking down barriers.

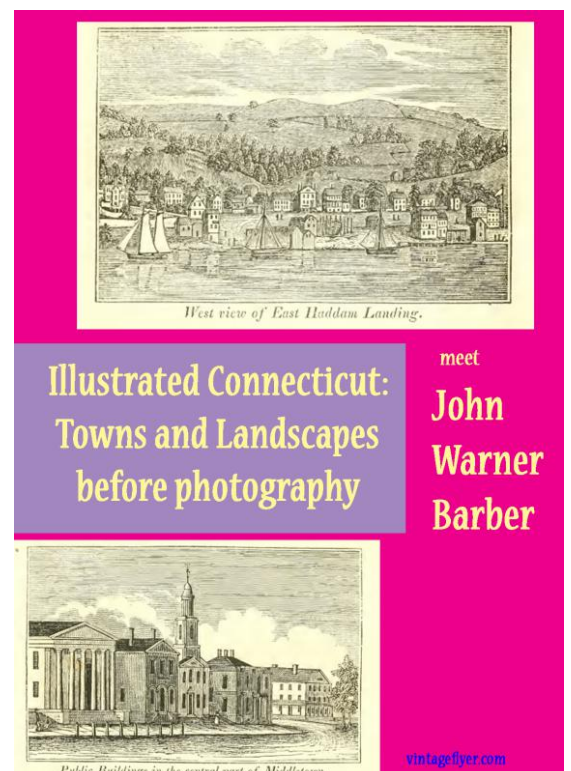
Join me as I explore the life and legacy of Marian Anderson, highlighting her rise to prominence in the classical music world, her pivotal role in the civil rights movement and the enduring impact she has had on future generations.



Illustrated Connecticut: Towns and Landscapes before photography - meet John Warner Barber

John Warner Barber was a prominent figure in American history known for his significant contributions as an engraver, illustrator and historical chronicler. Born in Connecticut in the late 18th century, Barber's artistic talents and passion for capturing the essence of American landscapes and architecture set him apart in his field. Throughout his career, he produced illustrations that serve as windows into a bygone era, inviting us to step back in time and experience the sights and stories of yesteryear.

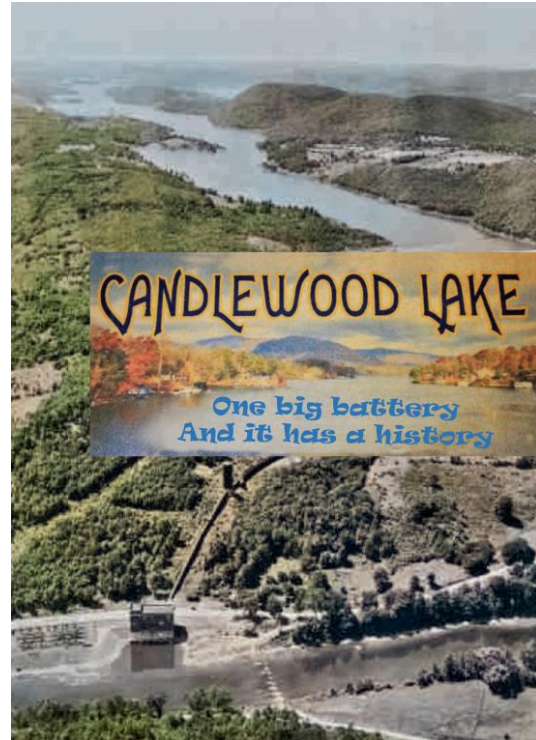
Join me as I delve into the life and works of John Warner Barber, highlighting his early life, career milestones, publications and lasting impact on American culture and history.



Candlewood Lake – One big battery and it has a history

Join John Cilio as he delves into the fascinating history behind the creation and operation of Candlewood Lake! The ambitious plan to create this stunning lake involved flooding 5,600 acres of land in the Rocky River basin. Back in the mid-1920s, the Connecticut Power and Light Company undertook this project to establish a another crucial hydro-electric power source for the state.

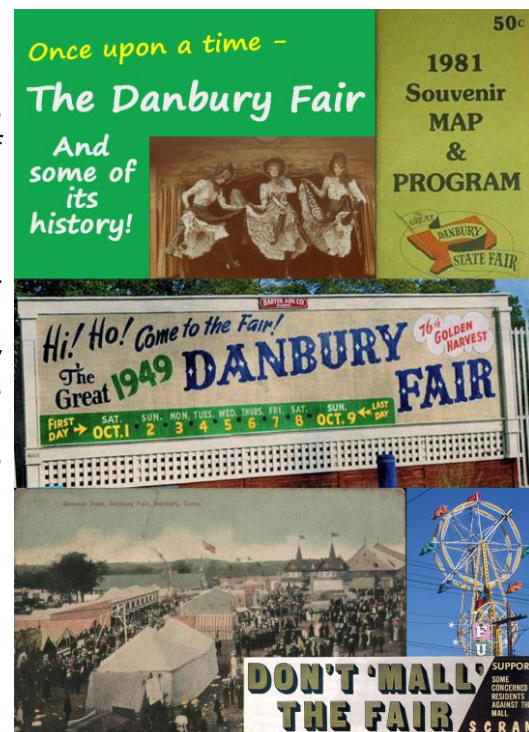
The project was a groundbreaking success. Today, Candlewood Lake serves as a monumental source of power, nearly a century old, that continues to provide us with endless enjoyment and benefits. Let's celebrate this incredible feat of engineering and marvel at the legacy of Candlewood Lake.



Once upon a time: The Danbury Fair and some of its history!

For over 100 years the Danbury Fair was a phenomenon that people from all across the region anxiously anticipated. People loved all of it, yet the fair came to an end on October 12, 1981.

An estimated 400,000 people attended that year to say good-bye. With an unceremonious end, everything was auctioned off and the Danbury Fair Mall was built upon the fairgrounds. Join me to look back through history and in a small way, remember some of the fun and tradition of the Danbury Fair.

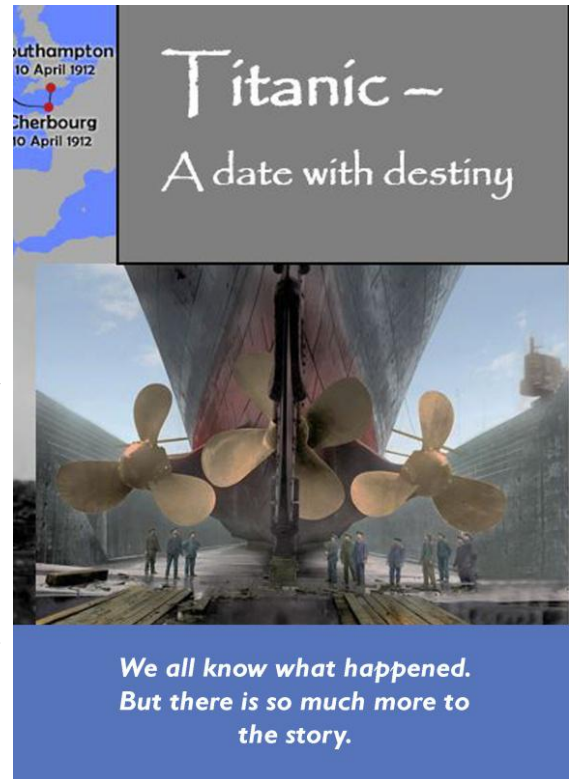


- General Topics -

Titanic - A date with destiny

In 1912, the magnificent RMS Titanic set sail, becoming the largest movable man-made object of its time. Today, we have the incredible opportunity to delve into the stories and highlights surrounding this iconic ship. From its construction to preparations for sailing, from its brave crew to its diverse passengers, we uncover the gripping tales of Titanic's journey.

Join me as I explore how the courageous crew battled to keep the ship afloat. Discover the fate of the passengers sailing to Connecticut - some survived the tragedy. Prepare to be amazed by the hair-raising account of the lone American crew member who defied the odds and lived to tell the tale. Was it destiny that led to her demise, or simply a stroke of bad luck and misfortune? The answer is yours to decide.



The Statue of Liberty - A symbol of American Freedom

Did you know that the official name of the iconic statue we all know as the Statue of Liberty is actually Liberty Enlightening the World? When the statue first arrived from France, she gleamed like a shiny new penny. But did you know that Americans had to build and fund its pedestal? New Yorkers were initially hesitant, but after years of donations and a brilliant newspaper campaign, the city finally embraced this incredible landmark.

Join me for an illustrated presentation to learn the fascinating story behind the Statue of Liberty. Get ready to be amazed by the history and significance of this iconic symbol of freedom!



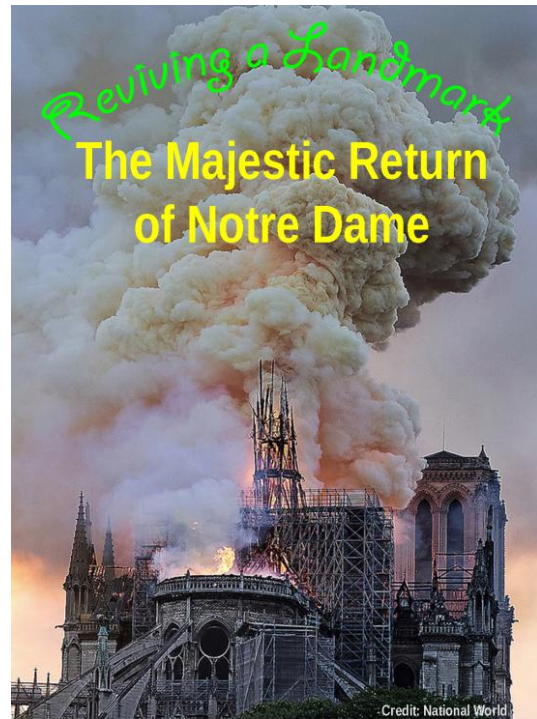
The Statue of Liberty
A symbol of American freedom

The Majestic Return of Notre Dame

In April 2019, a tragic fire broke out at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. In the early days, there were worries about whether the building could be saved. The effort to restore this architectural wonder has united experts from all over the world, working together to revive a masterpiece that holds so much cultural significance.

Join John Cilio as he shares some fascinating techniques, methods, and technologies that experts have used to bring Notre Dame back to life. We'll also dive into the exciting discoveries of medieval artifacts and architectural features that were uncovered beneath the debris, shedding light on historical building techniques.

It's incredible to see how modern innovations can honor and preserve the cathedral's historical essence, ensuring it stays true to its original beauty. This revival is not just a triumph of technology; it's also a wonderful testament to the best of humanity. Come with us to hear these inspiring stories that are now part of history!



An educational presentation by John Cilio

The Roaring 1920s

The 1920s was an era known by many names - the Jazz Age, the Age of Intolerance, the Age of Wonderful Nonsense and the Roaring Twenties. One of the most iconic aspects of this time was the fashion of young women, which not only set trends but also made powerful social statements. The 18th Amendment helped to fuel the decade.

The Women's Movement achieved a major victory with the passage of the 19th Amendment, granting women the right to vote after decades of struggle. The 1920s brought unprecedented prosperity to many middle-class Americans, until the devastating stock market crash. Join John Cilio as he helps us navigate the twists and turns of a pivotal decade in American history.



Secrets to time - The invention of photography

The invention of photography in the 19th century revolutionized the way we document and view the world around us. It marked a significant turning point in history, allowing us to capture moments with unparalleled accuracy and detail. In the last 25 years, advancements in technology have further transformed the way we take and share photos.

Join me for an exciting presentation on the rich legacy of photography and its lasting impact on our perception of time. Discover how this groundbreaking invention impacted Waterbury, CT, and shaped our understanding of the world. Learn about the pioneers who paved the way for the photography we know today and its enduring influence on society.

The secrets to time –
Limitless possibilities with the
invention of photography

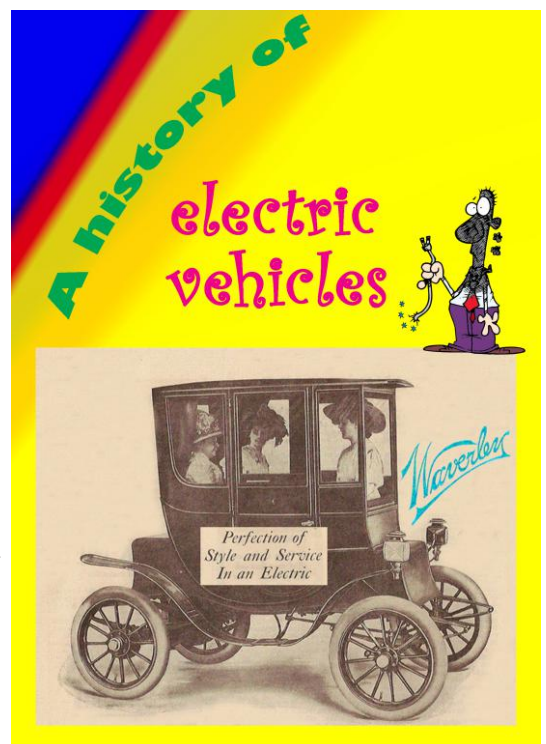
The people and stories that created the
means to capture a moment in time.



A history of electric vehicles

In 1890, New York City was home to over 150,000 hardworking horses. They were essential, but their numbers were becoming unsustainable. Enter a revolutionary new technology - the horseless carriage. Electric cars made their debut in the United States in 1890 and by 1897, the Columbia Electric Vehicle Co. in Hartford was churning out nearly half of the electric cars in the country.

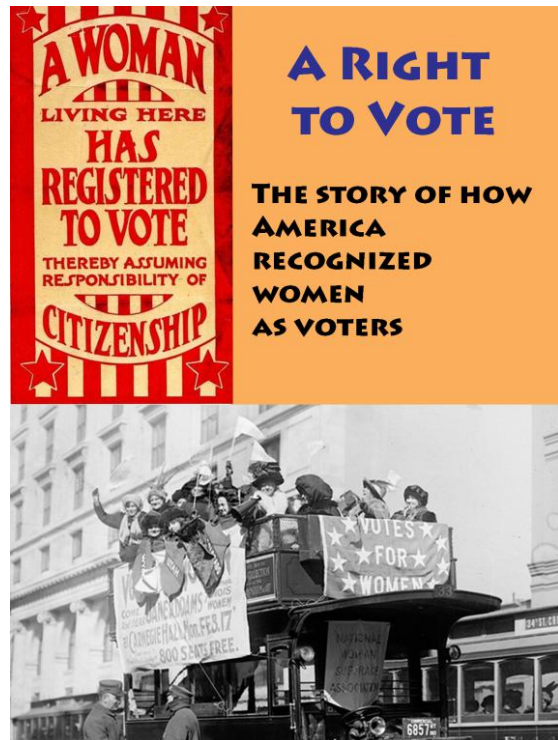
Buses, trucks and even street sweepers were going electric. They were outselling gasoline automobiles at the turn of the century - it was an electrifying time! But then, something changed. Join me as I delve into the fascinating history of the electric car craze that swept the nation and uncover the mystery of what caused the shift. Get ready to be shocked by this electrifying story!



A Right to Vote - The story of how America recognized women as voters

Can you believe that less than 100 years ago, women in America didn't have the right to vote? It's incredible to think about how far we've come since the 19th Amendment was passed, guaranteeing women the opportunity to have their voices heard. Through political engagement, resistance, and even physical confrontations, trailblazers paved the way for change. Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to hold federal office in the United States, famously said, "Men and women are like right and left hands; it doesn't make sense not to use both." Her words ring true to this day.

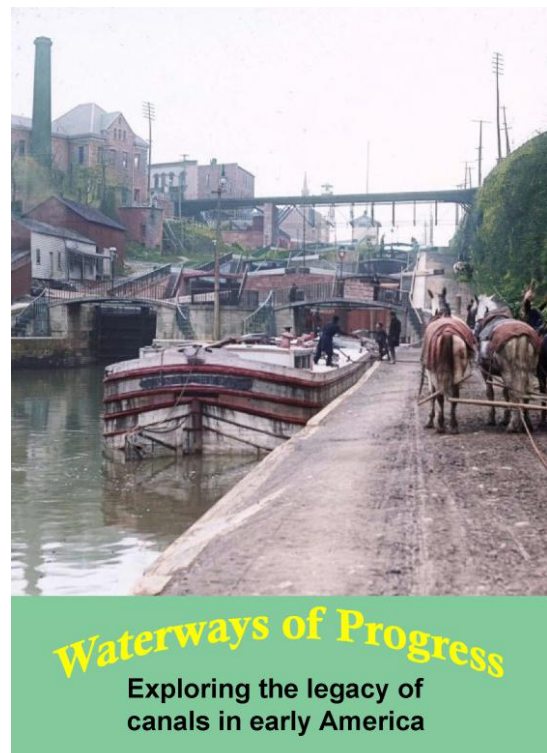
Join me as I highlight the journey of the 19th Amendment. It was a hard-fought victory, passing by just one vote on the very last day of the approval window. It's a reminder of the power of perseverance and the importance of every single voice.



Waterways of Progress: Exploring the legacy of canals in early America

Canals, once the vital arteries of early American transportation and economic progress, serve as lasting monuments to human creativity and determination. In this captivating presentation, we will delve into the intriguing history of four pioneering American canals, exploring their remarkable engineering achievements, the significance of locks within the canal networks and their enduring influence on the social, cultural and economic fabric of both the nation and Connecticut.

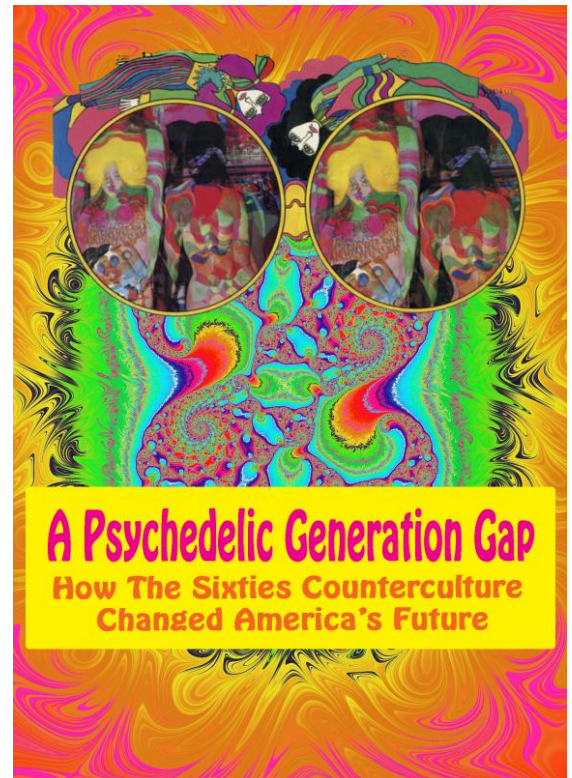
Embark on this thrilling adventure with our speaker, John Cilio, as he unveils the extraordinary tales behind these historic waterways and their profound impact on the world we inhabit today. Let's journey together through the fascinating world of early American canals!



A Psychedelic Generation Gap - How the sixties counterculture changed America's future

The 1960s were one of the most disorderly and divisive decades in world history. The number of American young people aged 14 to 25 jumped 40 percent in the era, representing 20% of the population. The gulf between their parents who suffered the hardships of the depression and the sacrifices of WWII and these youths, growing up during a period of peaceful, rapid economic growth, revealed a tremendous gap in perspectives.

Join me as I step back to the 1960s when young people questioned the previous generations authority and outlooks. They experimented with hallucinogens and other mind-altering drugs. Their scrutiny created a counterculture generation inspired by psychedelic music and lyrics that proved crucial to invigorate political ideas and common experiences.



Six remarkable achievements by women that changed the world

Discover the captivating stories behind six remarkable achievements spearheaded by women who defied the odds, envisioned a brighter future, and triumphed. Some dedicated a lifetime to their goals, while others tackled a specific challenge head-on. Regardless, their unwavering determination turned dreams into reality, ultimately improving the lives of countless individuals. Imagine a world without these groundbreaking accomplishments - it's simply unthinkable!

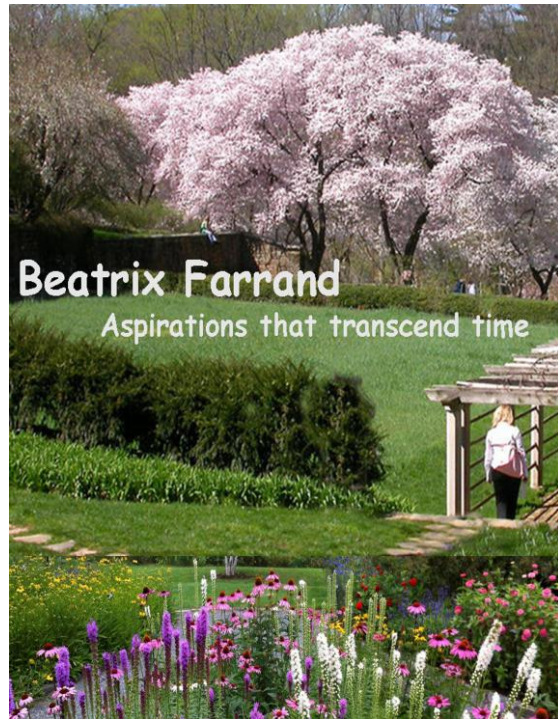
Join me as I delve into a lesser-known chapter of women's history, brought to life through vintage photographs and illustrations in this engaging presentation. Get ready to be inspired and amazed!



Beatrix Farrand - Aspirations that transcend time

Step back in time as I delve into the fascinating story of Beatrix Farrand, the trailblazing woman who established a successful landscape architecture business in 1895. Starting out in a humble home office, Farrand's business quickly grew to include offices and design studios in three different states. Her talent and vision led her to create stunning campus landscapes for prestigious universities and to beautify the homes and estates of clients nationwide.

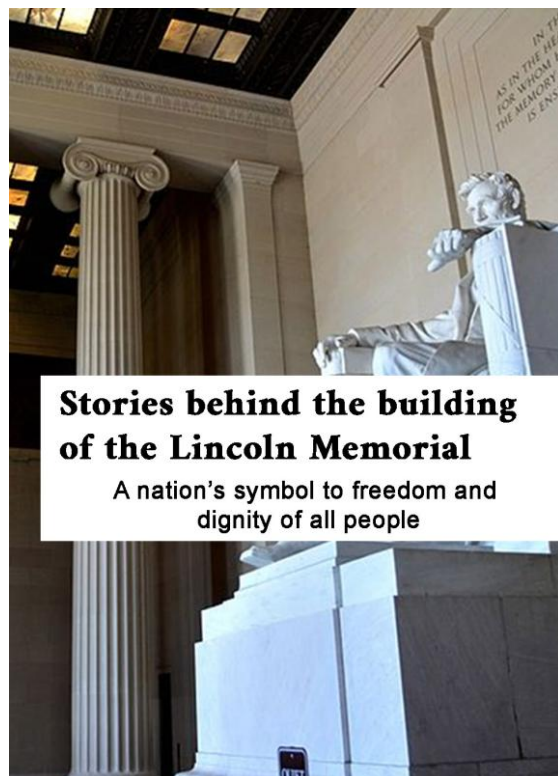
Despite the passage of time, twelve of her gardens still stand across the country, and we are thrilled to showcase the three surviving Connecticut gardens. Don't miss this exciting opportunity to learn about the incredible legacy of Beatrix Farrand and her lasting impact on the world of landscape architecture.



Stories behind the building of the Lincoln Memorial

Abraham Lincoln, the 16th President of the United States, is a figure revered for his unwavering courage in preserving the unity of our nation. His legacy includes the establishment of the Department of Agriculture, the Homestead Act, the abolition of slavery and the modernization of the U.S. Federal currency. Loved by many and despised by some, Lincoln's impact on American history is undeniable.

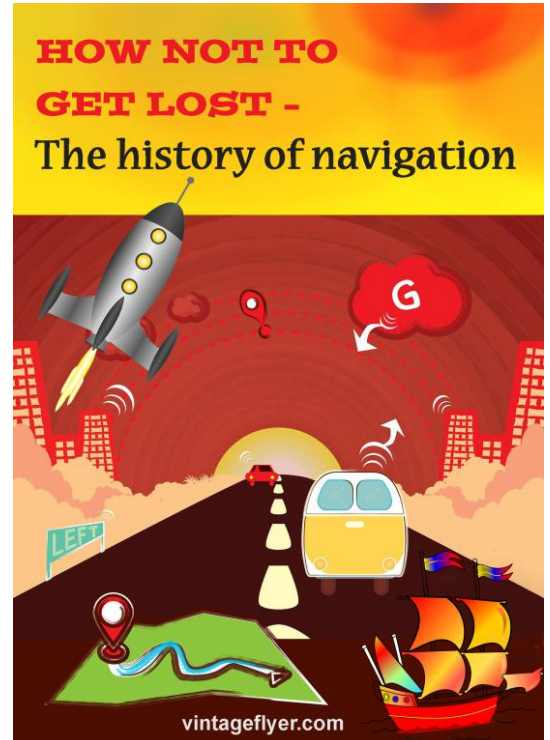
Join me as I delve into the fascinating background stories behind the creation of the Lincoln Memorial. Discover how this iconic monument came to be and how it continues to share Lincoln's legacy with the world. Get ready to be inspired and amazed by the enduring impact of one of America's greatest leaders!



How not to get lost - The history of navigation

Once upon a time, embarking on a journey to a new destination just a few towns over required a trusty map or some insider knowledge. But now, we live in a world where finding that hidden gem is as simple as plugging an address into our GPS. Have you ever stopped to wonder how we even got to this point?

The ancient Greeks were the pioneers of navigation, using the concepts of latitude and longitude to guide ships from one point to another over 5,000 years ago. And now, here we are, dreaming of voyages into deep space where traditional navigation tools like shorelines and compass directions are obsolete. Join me on this thrilling journey of navigation and learn how we have evolved from ancient seafaring techniques to cutting-edge space exploration.



The Chilling Chronicles of Ice Cream: A scoop behind one of Connecticut's favorite moo-velous delights

Ice cream is a delectable marriage of cream, sugar and flavorings, churned and frozen to create a luscious and indulgent treat. It can uplift even the gloomiest of moods. It's a cultural phenomenon that has been enjoyed for centuries. Ice cream holds a special place in the hearts of Connecticut residents, serving as more than just a sweet treat to beat the summer heat. Ice cream has become a beloved cultural staple in the state.

Join me as I explore ice cream's rich history and some of its local history that helped to define the state's ice cream adventure. I'll close with a special list of some hidden and not so hidden magical purveyors of ice cream across Connecticut.



The Chilling Chronicles of Ice Cream

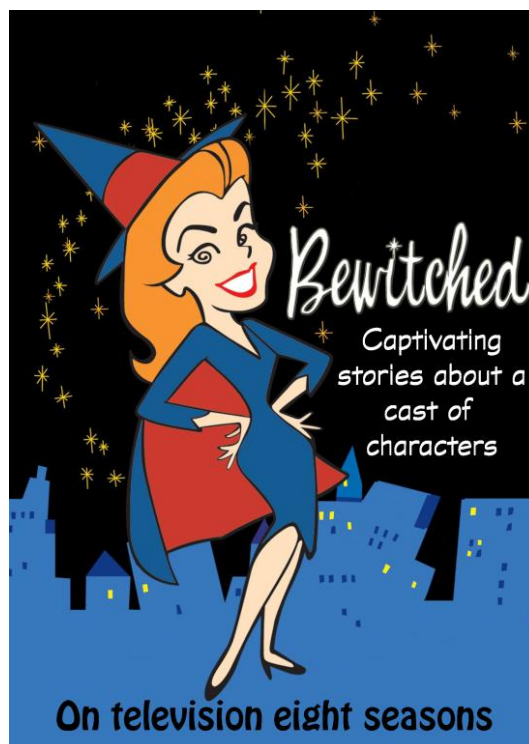
**A scoop behind one of Connecticut's
favorite moo-velous delights**

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***Bewitched* - Captivating stories about a cast of characters**

When *Bewitched* first graced our screens in the Fall of 1964, no one could have predicted that it would captivate audiences for eight incredible seasons and still be beloved in reruns sixty years later. The talented cast of actors brought to life a world where magic intertwined with the everyday struggles of a young family navigating the cutthroat world of advertising. One of the stars was born in 1883 with dreams of stardom, and her legacy lives on through the show.

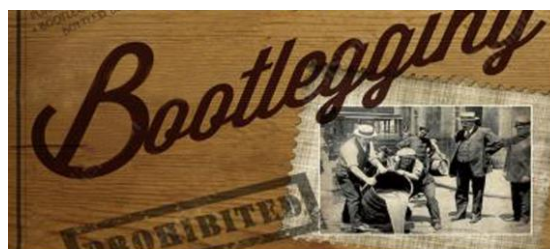
Did you know that Richard Dreyfuss made a guest appearance in 1966, alongside other famous faces like Raquel Welch and Willie Mays? Join me as I reveal trivia tidbits and heartwarming stories. You'll discover how the show even helped a lucky quiz show contestant become a millionaire. Get ready to be enchanted by the magic of *Bewitched*!



The Sport of Prohibition - Bootlegging

The Prohibition Era kicked off in 1920 with the passing of the 18th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Bootlegging was nothing new at the time, but this amendment opened up a whole new world of opportunities for bootleggers. Enforcing the law proved to be quite the challenge, leading to an intense competition between bootleggers and law enforcement. It was like a high-stakes game, with deadly consequences at times.

Join me as I share some of the most thrilling stories from this era, from Connecticut stills to daring rum runners. Get ready to be transported back to a time when bootlegging was more than just a crime - it was a way of life.



The Sport of Prohibition

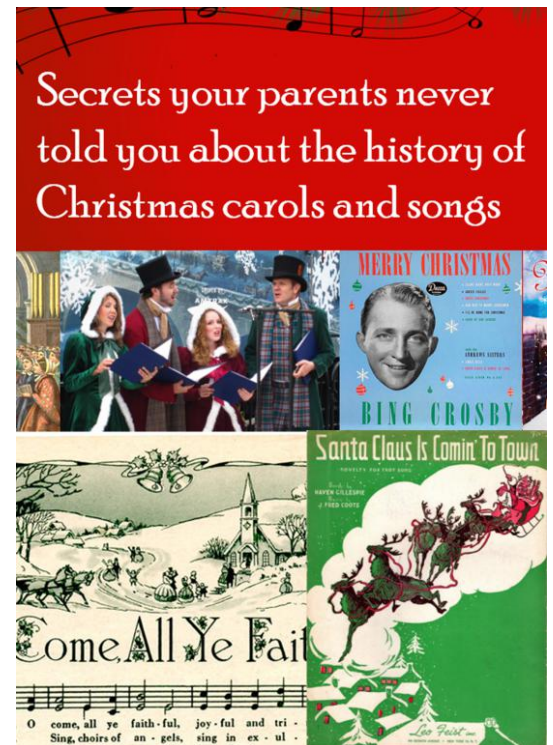


- Seasonal Topics -

Secrets your parents never told you about the history of Christmas carols and songs

Once upon a time, carols filled the air all year round, but now we only hold onto the beautiful tradition of singing them at Christmas. Early Christians cleverly replaced pagan solstice celebrations with Christmas and brought in their own Christian songs to celebrate the season. Over the years, the lyrics and meanings of these songs have transformed and evolved. Some of the classic verses or melodies were not even originally meant to be Christmas songs!

The stories behind most Christmas carols and songs are bursting with history and significance, yet many remain a mystery to most. Get ready to embark on a thrilling journey with our storyteller, John Cilio, as he shares some of the enchanting legends and truths that surround these timeless songs of the season.



Christmases Past – A nostalgic look at how we celebrated the holiday

Franklin Pierce was the first president to have a Christmas tree in the White House; it was 1853. Since that time Christmas trees and decorating for Christmas have become an important symbol of the holiday.

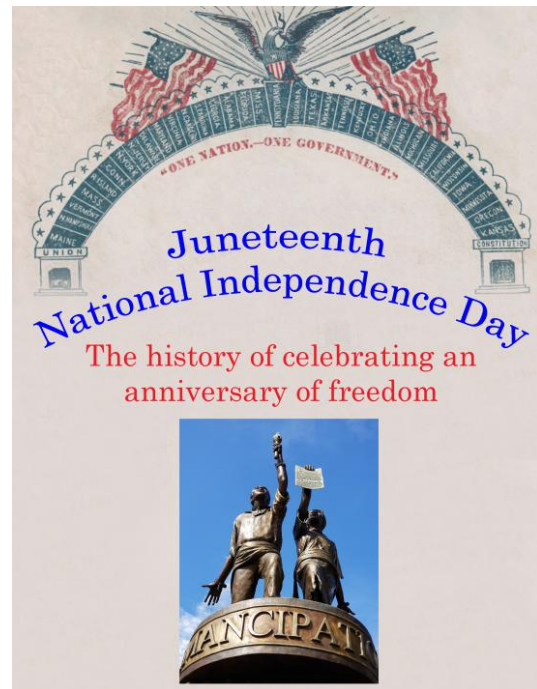
Real candles on trees were replaced by electric lights. Glittered cardboard candy boxes, shaped like little houses, surrounded our Christmas trees. Ornaments were made in the home and imported from Germany and later Japan. Join us for a 50-minute time travel to an earlier era of family celebration to remember Christmas trees, tinsel, ornaments and how we lit our trees in our nostalgic story of Christmas past.



Juneteenth - The first National Holiday authorized in the 21st century

Embark on a captivating journey with me as I explore the fascinating history and beginnings of America's youngest national holiday. Juneteenth, the 12th national holiday and the first of the 21st century, is now officially recognized in all 50 states, with Texas leading the charge by making it a state-paid holiday.

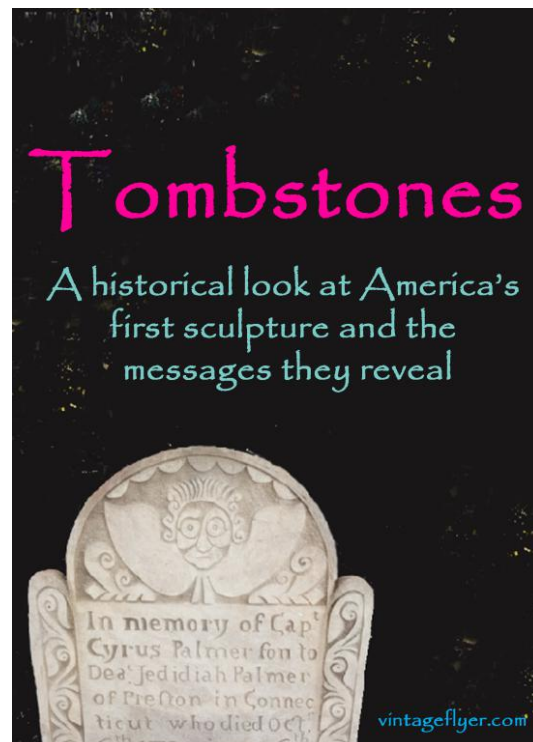
Juneteenth, a blend of June and nineteenth, commemorates the significant events of June 19, 1865, when the Federal Government declared the emancipation of the last enslaved African-Americans in the Confederate South. Originally called Jubilee Day, Juneteenth is a joyous celebration of the ideals of freedom and equality for all. Join us in commemorating this momentous day and the promising future it signifies for our country.



Tombstones - A historical look at America's first sculpture

Embark on a fascinating journey through an ancient cemetery and marvel at the intricate carvings adorning the tombstones of the departed. While these symbols and shapes may seem eerie or unsettling to us now, they held deep significance for our ancestors. Local stone carvers, often passing down their craft through generations, meticulously crafted these poignant motifs. From angels to cryptic messages, each carving tells a unique story waiting to be unraveled.

Join me as I delve into the history of America's earliest sculptures and uncover the hidden meanings left behind by our forebearers.

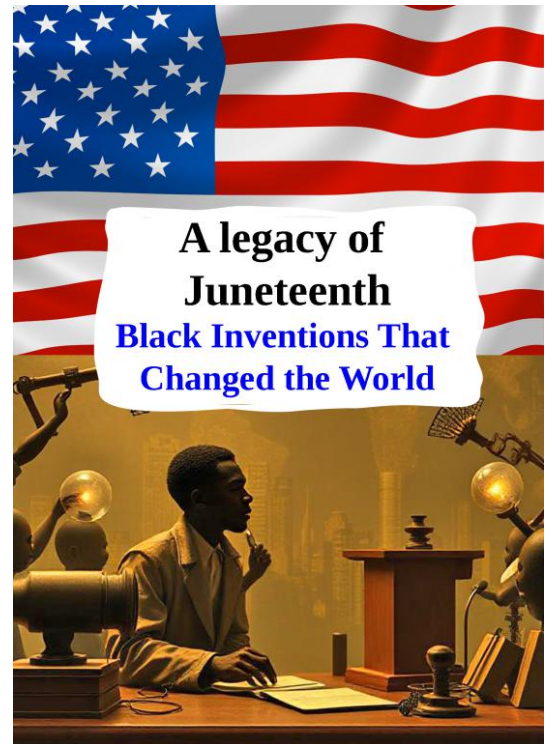


A legacy of Juneteenth - Black Inventions That Changed the World

Juneteenth, recognized as America's youngest Federal Holiday, celebrates freedom for all while commemorating the end of slavery in the Confederate states. Numerous organizations emphasize that freedom is essential, as it empowers individuals to make informed choices about their lives, express themselves freely, and pursue their own goals without unnecessary interference. This freedom stimulates creativity, promotes social harmony, and fosters personal fulfillment, all of which contribute to a more just and prosperous society.

One of the enduring legacies of Juneteenth, which highlights the significance of freedom, is the remarkable number of important inventions created by Black men and women. Many of the innovations discussed in this 50-minute presentation have profoundly impacted our world, yet their inventors remain largely unrecognized. Several of these discoveries have saved countless lives, advanced modern computer technology, and led to the establishment of organizations that employ thousands worldwide.

Join John Cilio as he emphasizes the immeasurable value of Juneteenth and the freedom it embodies. You may be surprised by the inspiring stories of incredible individuals whose inventions have truly transformed the world we inhabit.

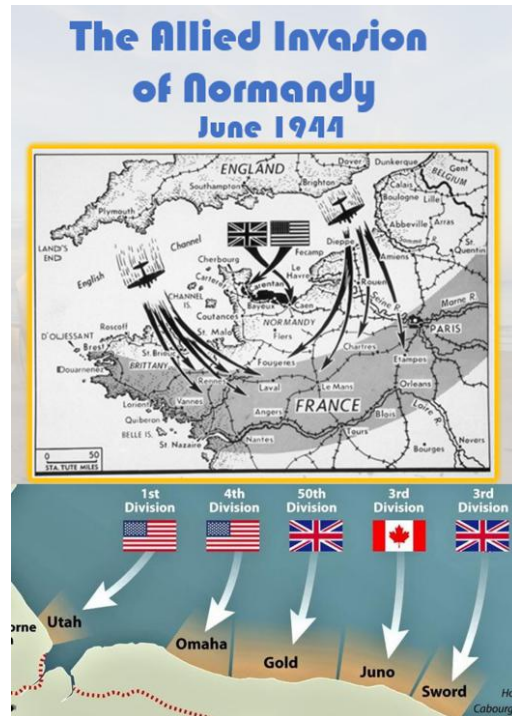


- WWII Topics -

The Allied Invasion of Normandy - June 1944

Join John Cilio for a thrilling and enlightening presentation on one of the most pivotal events of the 20th century - the Normandy Invasion of WWII Europe! This event was not only intricate and brilliant, but it marked the beginning of the end of the European conflict. Prepare to be spellbound as you discover the million plus items that were meticulously stockpiled, accompanied by vintage photographs and captivating stories that showcase how the allies outsmarted the enemy.

Don't miss this chance to delve into and admire the incredible efforts and sacrifices made during this historic event.



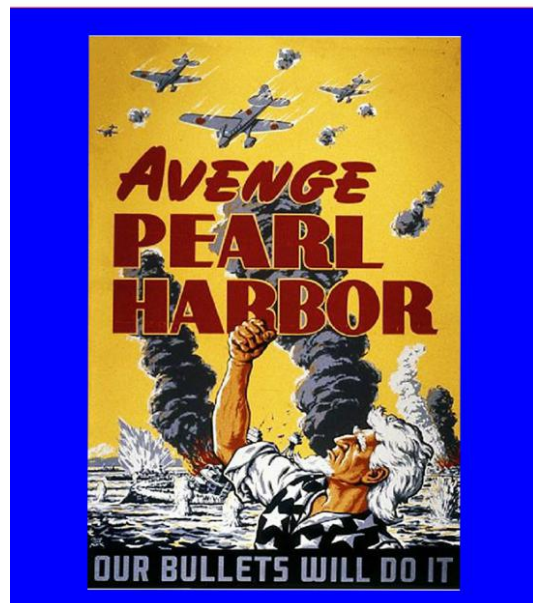
Pearl Harbor and the surprise puzzle

Decades ago, the world was rocked by the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor, where Japanese attackers traveled 3,400 miles across the Pacific to carry out their 110-minute assault. But was it truly a surprise? Join me as I share facts from the postwar 1946 Congressional Review of the attack, uncovering top secret government documents, communications and warnings issued at the time.

Regardless of the circumstances that led America into the war, our involvement ultimately led to the defeat of the Axis powers, the establishment of a new world order, and the salvation of the free world from destruction. You won't want to miss this thrilling exploration of how America entered WWII and changed the course of history forever! Get ready for an exciting journey through the events that shaped our world and discover the untold secrets that have been hidden for decades. Get ready to be amazed and inspired by the incredible story of America's day of infamy.

Pearl Harbor and the surprise puzzle

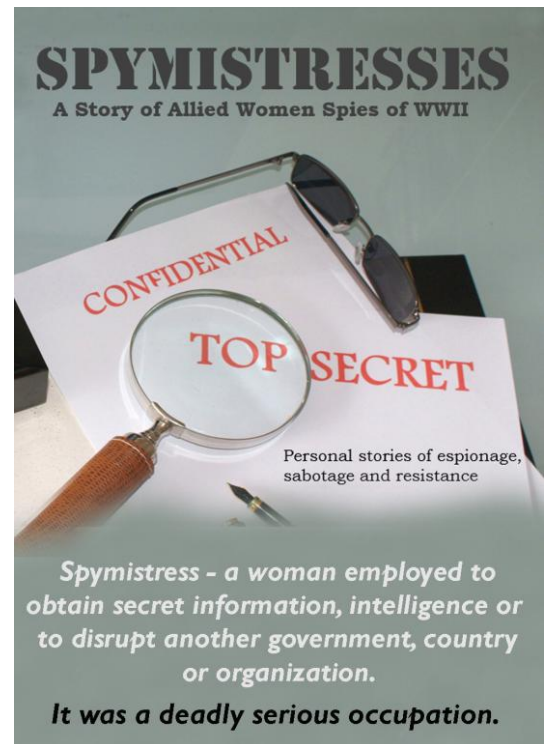
A story that changed world history



Spymistresses - A story of Allied Women Spies of WWII

Spies are part of an exclusive group of individuals with adaptable identities, flexible morals, and what some call situational ethics. They bravely take on perilous risks, accomplish their missions, and live to share their stories - while others do not. In the midst of World War II, numerous courageous women put their lives on the line to operate behind enemy lines and uncover vital secrets. Some received formal training, while others were natural masters of intrigue and deception.

These unsung heroes clandestinely aided the Allies and played a crucial role in the war effort. Join me as I embark into the captivating stories of these remarkable women who made a lasting impact in both the European and Pacific theaters of the war.



Baseball's little secret - Moe Berg is an OSS Spy

Let's delve into the captivating tale of a WWII spy who served with the OSS and was honored with a Presidential Medal of Freedom for his covert operations. Prior to his espionage career, he excelled as a linguist and a baseball player, showcasing his talents by speaking multiple languages and playing for several major league teams.

Throughout his tenure as a spy, he undertook crucial missions, including one where he was tasked with eliminating a German scientist to thwart the development of an atom bomb. Following his departure from the U.S. Office of Strategic Services in 1947, he continued his service with the CIA for many years. Join me as I unravel the enigmatic double life of this catcher turned spy. Get ready to be amazed by his extraordinary story!



Women's Work in WWII

As WWII began, the United States bravely faced overwhelming challenges and found itself in a difficult position. The country needed to mobilize millions of men to defend the country while also ramping up production of essential war materials. The demand for tanks, airplanes, trucks, ships, ammunition, food and medical supplies was unprecedented, stretching far beyond just the American military's needs.

In a surprising turn of events, American women stepped up to the plate, taking on roles in factories and serving in the armed forces, shattering stereotypes about women in the workforce. Embark on this exciting journey with me as I highlight the incredible efforts of women in the 1940s who transformed the course of the war effort and forever reshaped the employment landscape.

Women's Work in WWII

Inspiration Beyond Imagination



Women war workers remembered achieving near equality in the war workplace but it was non-existent in the decade after the war.

They would make sure that changed too!

About the presenter -

John is a fascinating historical storyteller, author and researcher who has been captivating audiences with his tales of the past for over 15 years. As a proud member of the Organization of American Historians and the Association for the Study of Connecticut History, and Connecticut League of Museums. John has shared his knowledge through numerous articles in national magazines and newspapers.

John is a Connecticut resident and is the author of eight historical books and has spoken at over 600 events on a wide range of topics in several countries. His goal is to make history relevant, engaging and enlightening. John believes that often the consequences of a historical incident were hidden from those that experienced it, yet looking back, one can sense the full impact of their moments in time.

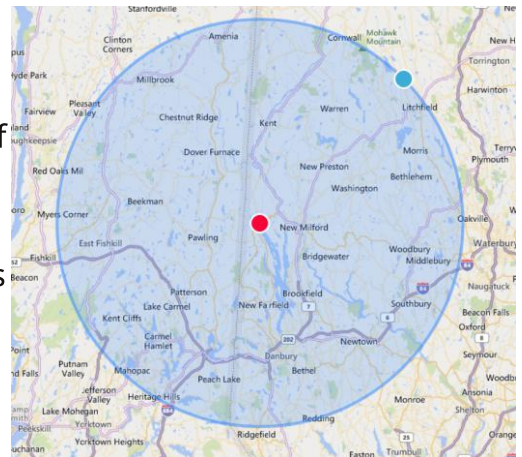


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