



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“Don’t Fire Until You See the Whites of Their Eyes”
Book talk on the life of Israel Putnam with author Michael Shay

(Hartford, CT): The Museum of Connecticut History at the Connecticut State Library invites the public to attend a book talk about Revolutionary War hero Israel Putnam on Thursday, November 13, 2025 at noon. Author Michael Shay will speak about General Putnam and his contributions to both Connecticut and the nation during the American Revolution.

General Israel Putnam was a prosperous farmer, tavern keeper, and politician from Brooklyn, Connecticut. After serving with great valor in the French and Indian War, “Old Put” volunteered to serve the Patriot cause at the age of 57. His role in the Battle of Bunker Hill in 1775 is legendary, as are the words often attributed to him: “Don’t fire until you see the whites of their eyes.”

In his 2023 book, [Whites of Their Eyes: The Life of Revolutionary War Hero Israel Putnam from Rogers’ Rangers to Bunker Hill](#), Shay recounts the life and times of Israel Putnam, the larger-than-life general, gregarious tavern keeper and farmer, and Connecticut folk hero whose exploits make him one of the most interesting officers in American military history.

Michael Shay is a retired Judge of the Connecticut Superior Court with a lifelong interest in American History. He is the author of eight works of biography and military history, including, in addition to his biography on Israel Putnam, [The Yankee Division in the First World War: In the Highest Tradition](#).

Michael Shay’s book talk on the life of Israel Putnam will take place on Thursday, November 13, 2025 from 12-1:00 p.m. in the Museum of Connecticut History at the Connecticut State Library, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106. Admission is free and open to the public. Registration is requested: <https://forms.office.com/g/fX6CxP9xN1>. The event will also be livestreamed on the CT State Library’s YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@CTStateLibrary>.

For more information, please contact the Museum of Connecticut History at museumofcthistory@ct.gov or (860) 757-6535. Directions and parking information are available at <https://portal.ct.gov/csl/about/hours-and-locations>.

This presentation is part of a Connecticut 250 series planned by the Connecticut State Library's Semiquincentennial Committee. In addition to advising on the Museum of Connecticut History's upcoming *Connecticut's Revolution* exhibit (opening in 2026), the Committee has curated a selection of Revolutionary War resources from the Connecticut State Library's vast collection, available here: <https://libguides.ctstatelibrary.org/america250>.

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About the Connecticut State Library

The Connecticut State Library is an independent Executive Branch agency of the State of Connecticut. Founded in 1854, it is home to the State Archives, Office of the Public Records Administrator, Museum of Connecticut History, the Division of Library Development and the Connecticut Library for Accessible Books, and three reference departments (history and genealogy; law and legislation; and government information). Through these units, the agency provides a variety of archival, public records, museum, library, information, and administrative services to the employees and officials of all three branches of state government, libraries, students, teachers, researchers, town governments, and anyone seeking information within its collections. Visit the CT State Library at [CT State Library](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)

About the Museum of Connecticut History

The Museum of Connecticut History, a unit of the Connecticut State Library, chronicles the growth of the state and its role in the development of the nation from the Colonial era to the present. The mission of the museum is to connect the experience of residents and museum visitors to the artifacts, images, and documents of the past, increasing awareness of and pride in the state's political, military, and industrial history and building commitment to preserving and sharing its cultural heritage. The Museum of Connecticut History is located within the Connecticut State Library and Supreme Court building, 231 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, CT 06106. Hours of operation are 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Admission is always free! Learn more at [Museum of Connecticut History](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#)