

Sheila Arnold Biographical Information

Sheila Arnold is a Professional Storyteller, Character Interpreter and Teaching Artist currently residing in Hampton, VA. Through her company, History's Alive! Sheila has provided storytelling programs, historic character presentations, Christian monologues, dramatic/creative writing workshops, professional development for educators and inspirational/motivational speeches at schools, churches, libraries, professional organizations and museums, in 36 states since 2003. She is also a sought-after historical consultant for museums and exhibit designers helping to develop engaging stories from historical documents, artifacts, buildings and the historical use of land and water. Sheila has grown tremendously in her field – being selected as a Mt. Vernon (George Washington estate) Research Fellow and a noted artist selected as part of 2019 Hewnocks Artist Colony summer residency. Most recently, Sheila was awarded an artistic fellowship at the McDowell Artist Colony in Peterborough, NH for December of 2021.

Sheila has a long history of being a featured Storyteller at several Storytelling Festivals both nationally and internationally including:

- National Storytelling Festival (Jonesborough, TN)
- Toronto International Storytelling Festival (Toronto, ON)
- Timpanogos Storytelling Festival (Lehi, UT)
- White Mountain Storytelling Festival (Plymouth, NH)
- Paris Storytelling Festival (Paris, KY)
- Connecticut Storytelling Festival (New London, CT)
- Georgia Mountain Storytelling Festival (Young Harris, GA)
- Hearts Afire Storytelling Weekend (Richmond, VA)
- Stories: From Sea to Shore Storytelling Weekend (Norfolk, VA)
- Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival (Oak Ridge, TN)
- Culpeper Tells (Culpeper, VA)
- Storytelling Festival of the Southeast (Laurinburg, NC)
- Southern Ohio Storytelling Festival (Chillicothe, OH)
- Moonshell Storytelling Festival (Omaha, NE)
- Stone Soup Storytelling Festival (Woodruff, SC)
- Story Celebration Weekend (Kansas City, KS)
- Florida Storytelling Festival (Mount Dora, FL)
- The Clearwater Festival (Croton-on-Hudson, NY)
- Lititz Storytelling Festival (Lititz, PA)
- Colonial Williamsburg Storytelling Festival (Williamsburg, VA)

She is a repeat and favorite Teller-in-Residence at the International Storytelling Center, Jonesborough, TN. In 2019 Sheila was the initial presenter and storyteller for the International Storytelling Center's National Endowment of Humanities project "Freedom Stories". Sheila collaborates with storyteller, Darci Tucker, to produce the Tucker-Arnold Storytelling Concert and Retreat in Williamsburg, VA featuring nationally known Storytellers. Ms. Sheila, as she is commonly called, has also presented Professional Development sessions, Storytelling Programs and Character Presentations at educational conferences and teachers' institutes, including Colonial

Williamsburg Teacher Institute, Valley Forge Teacher Institute, Mt. Vernon Teacher Institute, Westchester Regional Social Studies Conference and Social Studies, and Reading Association Conferences in New York, Louisiana, Virginia, South Carolina, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Mississippi, the National Council of Social Studies and for many Teaching American History Grant programs around the country and has presented and performed on a variety of topics.

As an Historical Consultant, Sheila has worked with Montpelier in the creation of the script, along with arranging performer and coordinating and assisting in voice over for their short film, “The Mere Distinction of Colour”, a part of their African American exhibit. Also, she created scripts for Montpelier’s recreated buildings as portrayed by the enslaved persons on this site. She has also worked in creating scripts for the Niagara Falls Underground Railroad project, collaborating with Abigail Schumann in creating a theatrical reading for the premier of historian Edward Ayers book, *The Thin Light of Freedom*. In 2020 Sheila was commissioned to craft and perform the story of the Scarboro 85 detailing the integration of the Oak Ridge Schools in 1955. Through research, interviews with students and her time at MacDowell, Sheila crafted a moving and engaging performance which was premiered as the featured story of the 2022 Flatwater Tales Storytelling Festival in Oak Ridge, TN.

Christian Monologues are another area where Sheila has shown her talent for presentation, research and message. She wrote and produced the full-length play, “And the Women Were There”, which focuses on 7 women who followed Jesus, and received local acclaim for this work. Sheila rounds out her talents by also being a Drama and Creative Writing workshop leader for children and adults.

Previously, Sheila worked at Colonial Williamsburg Foundation as a Coordinator with the Teacher Institute, in Public Relations and Event Manager, and as a Storyteller and Theatrical Interpreter. Also, she has been a Social Worker, Hampton City Schools Substitute Teacher and a Mary Kay, Inc. Independent Senior Beauty Consultant. She is a graduate of UNC-Charlotte with a B.A. in African American & African History.

Sheila has 2 books: a picture book, “Weeping Willow, or, Why the Leaves Change their Colors”, and an historical fiction using biblical persons, “David’s Mighty Man: Benaiah”. She also has two storytelling CD’s, “Mini, Many, Minnie Tales” and “Hands Wide Open”. Books can be purchased by contacting Sheila at sheilaarnold39@aol.com and the CD’s are available through her website, www.mssheila.org and for download at Cdbaby.com.

Sheila is fortunate to live close to her son, Krisstopher; her grandson, Brooklyn, and her father and stepmother, Wallace & Vera Arnold, and she communicates often with her Atlanta-based sister, Stephanie. (www.mssheila.org)