

**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****DATE: January, 2024**Contact: Mahogany Waldon, 757/728-5316  
[mahogany.waldon@hamptoncvb.com](mailto:mahogany.waldon@hamptoncvb.com)**Hampton History Museum to host profound, Black history storytelling event  
January 28**

**Hampton, VA** – Master Storyteller Sheila Arnold of Artists Standing Strong Together presents a free event, stories and songs illuminating the lives of the enslaved who sought freedom by traveling area waterways, on Sunday, January 28, 2-4 p.m. at the Hampton History Museum. Museum admission will be free that day from 1-5 p.m.

“Locks Opened: Waterways to Freedom” is historical storytelling at its best. Through story and song, Master Storyteller Sheila Arnold shares about local waterways that were part of the Underground Railroad. Most of the stories are from an 1870s book written by William Still, a conductor for the Underground Railroad and secretary of the Philadelphia Abolitionist Society. His book shares the stories of over 500 people who ran from slavery, including some who used the locks, canals and waterways to escape. The program is suitable for all ages.

**Sheila Arnold**

Sheila Arnold, fondly known as Ms. Sheila has been presenting storytelling programs, historic character presentations, Christian monologues, professional development and inspirational/motivational speaking for schools, festivals, churches and organizations nationally and internationally since 2003. Sheila is also an historical consultant for museums, historical societies and organizations. One of Sheila's greatest joys is being the co-founder and Artistic Director of Artists Standing Strong Together (ASST), which formed during the COVID-19 crisis, and continues to be a source of inspiration, strength and action in the storytelling and artists world. Sheila has been honored as a 2021 MacDowell Artist Fellow, a 2020 Mt. Vernon Research Fellow and a 2019 Hewnoaks Artist Colony summer residence Noted Artist. In the past, she has worked as a Drama Ministry Director; Colonial Williamsburg employee; Substitute Teacher; and Social Worker for aggressive teens with emotional problems.

The Hampton History Museum is located at 120 Old Hampton Lane in Downtown Hampton. There is free parking in the garage across the street from the museum. For more information call 757-727-1102 or visit [www.hamptonhistorymuseum.org](http://www.hamptonhistorymuseum.org)

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Image attached: Sheila Arnold, courtesy of Sheila Arnold

Partially bordered by the Hampton Roads harbor and Chesapeake Bay, Hampton, with the 344,000 sq. ft. Hampton Roads Convention Center and the award-winning Hampton Coliseum, is located in the center of Coastal Virginia and the Hampton Roads metropolitan area. Hampton is the site of America's first continuous English-speaking settlement, the site of the first arrival of Africans in English North America, and is home to such visitor attractions as the Virginia Air & Space Science Center, Fort Monroe National Monument, Hampton History Museum, Hampton University Museum, The American Theatre, among others.