shielding row after row of plain archive boxes. More than any other part of the Carter complex, this section showed democracy in action, with part of his archives laid bare. The sight of the archive boxes—tangible evidence of the importance of the democratic process—moved me and made me think. Saving and documenting democracy does not simply happen: curators, archivists, and ordinary civil servants have to choose to keep leaders accountable.

While standing in the museum's final exhibit space, a store that sells Jimmy Carter pencils, peanuts, postcards, and peach ice cream, I understood better why I had easily reduced the Carter legacy to those small, tangible facts. The Carters have worked to wage peace for decades, yet it is easier in a cynical democracy to undercut the dream of world peace. It is also simpler to call Carter a peanut farmer; the truth is his family hired Black sharecroppers, a fact I learned at this museum. In the end there is much more I'd like to know about critics of the Carters, a task that is hard to begin in a place designed to preserve their legacy. The feeling of awe at looking up at archive boxes, cared for by people who know that this position wields an almost unthinkable amount of power, will stay with me. I will also continue to wonder about the Center and wonder about the people holed up in meeting spaces, trying to solve big problems, continuing the work of a man raised miles away, in a small place called Plains. This museum is as much about the work that will never be finished as a short, if impactful, presidential term.

Allison Horrocks, National Park Service

The Wren's Nest, Joel Chandler Harris Association, Susan Lasby, Operations Manager. Atlanta, Georgia. https://www.wrensnest.org/

Listening to a tale well told is a highlight when visiting The Wren's Nest, named for the wrens who made a home in the mailbox at the house belonging to Joel Chandler Harris and his family. Set back from a hot, almost treeless street where buses and cars dominate, The Wren's Nest—in need of some volunteer gardeners—is surrounded by leafy trees. There is shade, and a gate at the entrance to the sidewalk, which helps announce the site to those passing by. The Wren's Nest, in Atlanta's primarily Black West End Neighborhood, began life as a farmhouse and was Victorianized in the Queen Anne and Eastlake styles with an asymmetrical roofline, a deep wrap-around porch, and decorative siding.

Harris (1848-1908), was a journalist associated with Atlanta's New South movement, and the author of the wildly popular Uncle Remus stories. Featuring didactic animal tales passed down through African and Black American folklore and storytelling, the stories first appeared in the newspaper *The Atlanta Constitution,* became a book in 1873, and then a worldwide sensation. Harris knew the celebrity authors of his age such as Mark Twain and Rudyard Kipling—he was a celebrity himself—but he was also a homebody extraordinaire, preferring not only to stay

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Exterior, The Wren's Nest, in the West End Neighborhood of Atlanta, Georgia. Built circa 1870 as a farmhouse; journalist and author Joel Chandler Harris paid for an expansion and Queen Anne style renovation in the 1880s. The house became a National Historic Landmark in 1962. (Photograph by author)

home (he once ditched Mark Twain on a speaking tour just to get back to The Wren's Nest), but to write in the house downstairs, where the activity of his large family surrounded him.

Harris built the Uncle Remus stories out of his memories of the enslaved men and women he met and the stories they told him while working as an apprentice on a newspaper called *The Countryman.* Turnwold Plantation in Eatonton, Georgia, is the only known plantation to have produced its own newspaper. The politics and morality of Harris making a good life for himself and his family by appropriating the stories of Black enslaved Americans is the subject of many scholarly examinations, and rightfully so (see, for example, R. Bruce Bickley, Jr., *Joel Chandler Harris: A Biography and Critical Study,* 2008). But this kind of critical analysis of Harris's place in American society is not the point of the interpretation at The Wren's Nest. The centering and continuation of the role of storytelling—of passing down timeless stories, allegorical, metaphorical, and cultural—certainly is, and in this, The Wren's Nest provides a place to remember what it was like, even if just for a half an hour, when storytelling was an appreciated art form, and a collective experience for

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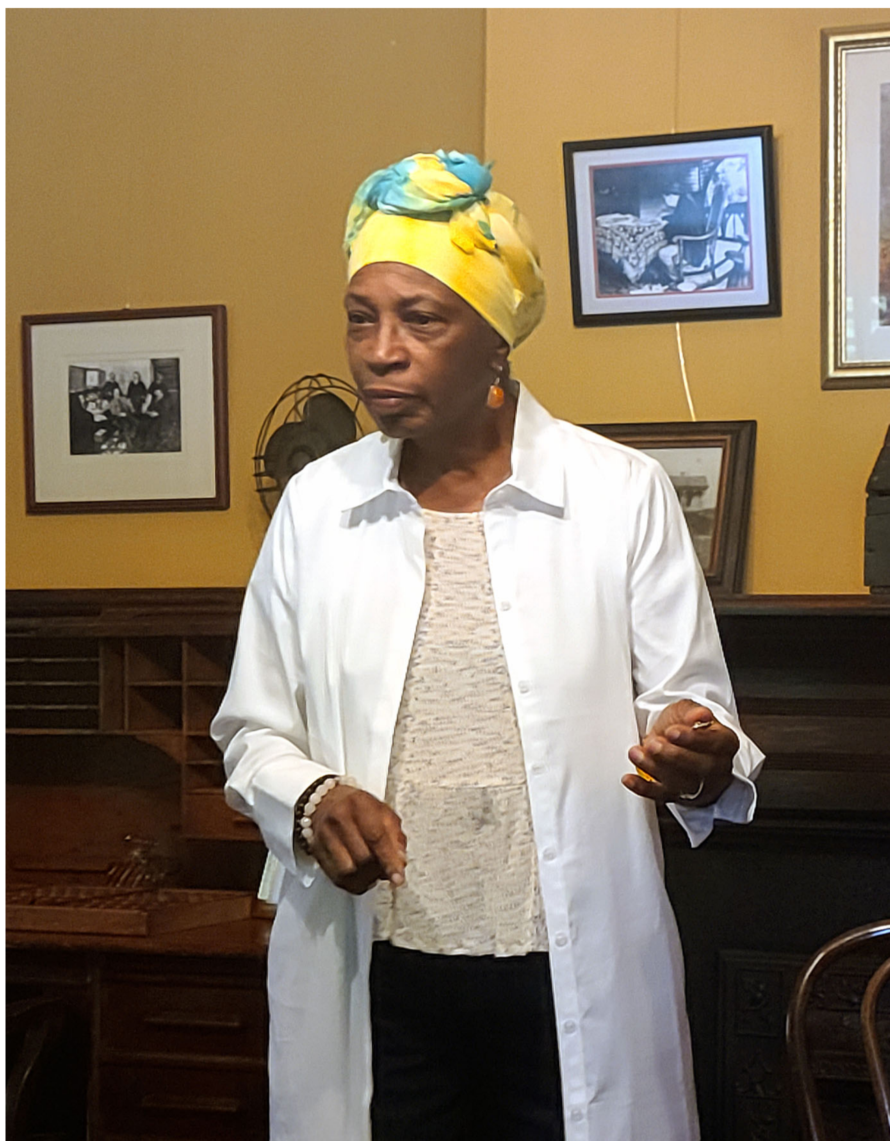
listening and watching someone perform in the most simple way possible: a person with a voice tells a story.

Although the Wren's Nest could be used to critically examine the role of National Historic Landmarks in the South during the Civil Rights era, the creation of public history in Atlanta (this was the first historic house opened in the city), or the relationship between the Uncle Remus stories, Walt Disney, and Ron DeSantis,



Storyteller Christine Arinze Samuel at The Wren's Nest on April 15, 2023. Every Saturday The Wren's Nest offers a storyteller session at 1pm with a house tour. Storytellers introduce Uncle Remus stories to new audiences, encouraging visitors to engage in creativity through the arts. (Photograph by author)

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it is not. The historic house and its interpretive practice serve instead as a sanctuary, surrounded by fading wallpaper and antique bedspreads, to tell and hear human stories in the guise of animals which have enlightened, entertained, and educated people across the globe for millennia.

When I visited and began poking around on the grounds looking at the architecture, Operations Manager Susan Lasby stuck her head out the door to welcome me and ask if I wanted to join the storytelling tour. Christine Arinze Samuel was the storyteller during my visit, and she was warm and engaging.

She brought to life the practice of storytelling by using her movement, her voice—which changed with the different characters—and her expressions. She started with two Uncle Remus tales featuring Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox, typological trickster characters which I imagine can be found in literature and oral tales the world over, and then relayed two tales of her own making. Before and after her tale telling, Samuels encouraged the audience—which consisted of adults and children—to write and draw and be creative. Sometimes a prompt like this is all someone needs to start (or restart). To help keep creativity at the center of the museum programming, The Wren's Nest also offers an academic year Scribes Youth Writers Program, and for the first time this year, a Scribes Summer Camp, both of which are aimed at middle grade students and bring professional writers to the house to work with students on their creative writing.

As a longtime historic house caretaker, museum employee and not-for-profit grant writing consultant, I'm not going to say it didn't hurt to see The Wren's Nest struggling. The struggle is not in the content, of course, but in the efforts American house museums must endure just to keep their doors open one day a week. It shouldn't be this way, but it is. There are hundreds of small historic house museums dedicated to influential people and their histories spread across this country. The Wren's Nest, like so many of these special places, deserves much more than what we give it. Go next time you visit Atlanta and show that house and its stories some love.

Laura A. Macaluso, PhD

Funk Heritage Center. Reinhardt University, Waleska, Georgia. James Funk, Jr., Museum Co-Founder; Reinhardt University, Co-Founder; Floyd Falany, Collaborator; John Bennett, Collaborator. November 16, 1999–Ongoing. https://funkheritagecenter.org/

The F. James and Florrie G. Funk Heritage Center markets itself as "Georgia's Official Frontier and Southeastern Indian Interpretive Center." Its stated mission is to interpret the history of settlers to Appalachian Georgia together with the history of Southeastern Native Americans to visitors who often know nothing

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