

FOR ALL INQUIRIES:
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Sarah Albee Biography

Sarah Albee was born in Cleveland, Ohio, the youngest of four siblings. While she was in elementary school, her family moved to South Burlington, Vermont after her father accepted a professorship at UVM. She graduated from South Burlington High School, where she played basketball and ran track (hurdles, high jump, long jump, pentathlon). She was a captain of both teams her senior year. She played principal second violin in the Vermont Youth Symphony Orchestra. She attended Harvard College, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and American Literature. While at Harvard, she was a member of the humor magazine, the *Harvard Lampoon*, and was a frequent orchestral player in *Gilbert and Sullivan* and other theatrical performances. She also had the opportunity to study with Seamus Heaney, Stephen Jay Gould, and Helen Vendler.

After graduating from college, Sarah Albee lived for a year in Cairo, Egypt, where she worked at the press office of the American University in Cairo (AUC), and also as a freelance illustrator of ESL textbooks. She played basketball on an Egyptian semiprofessional women's basketball team. Upon returning, she moved to New York City and found a job at Children's Television Workshop (now called Sesame Workshop), where she worked for nine years, and where she had her first books published. She also freelanced as a professional newspaper illustrator.

In 1991 she married Jonathan Willson, a high school history teacher, whom she met on the basketball court while she was playing in a men's basketball league. They have three grown children, and now live in Connecticut, where her husband is a teacher/coach/administrator at an independent high school.

Sarah Albee has published approximately 150 children's books. Many of her early titles were published under pseudonyms. (Her Sesame Street pen name is Constance Allen.) For the past ten years, she has written exclusively nonfiction, with an emphasis on history.

Here is a brief summary of some of her more recent NF books:

Fairy Tale Science (Macmillan/Odd Dot 2021), a book of 25 classic tales where readers can explore a scientific question such as “Can a pair of glass slippers sustain an evening of ballroom dancing?” or “Could human hair support the weight of a prince?” The book includes hands-on experiments.

Accidental Archaeologists: True Stories of Unexpected Discoveries (Scholastic, 2020) takes readers on an adventure through time to relive some surprise discoveries made by ordinary people that changed what we thought we knew about history.

North America: A Fold-Out Graphic History (What on Earth/Smithsonian, 2019): A richly illustrated, foldout graphic history of the United States, Canada, Mexico, and the islands of the Caribbean, published by What on Earth Books in partnership with Smithsonian.

I Can Read: History (Six carefully-researched biographies of famous Americans, with HarperCollins, 2018 - 2020) The series is geared toward younger readers. Sarah Albee's books include George Washington, Martin Luther King, Jr, Alexander Hamilton, Jane Goodall, Helen Keller, and Albert Einstein.

Dog Days of History (National Geographic, 2018): An exploration of the fascinating history of how humans and canines became best friends. Includes biographies of many famous dogs from history.

Poison: Deadly Deeds, Perilous Professions, and Murderous Medicines (Random House, 2017). Part history, part chemistry, part whodunit, the book traces the role poisons have played in human history from antiquity to the present, and shines a ghoulish light on the deadly intersection of human nature . . . and Mother Nature.

Why'd They Wear That? (National Geographic, 2015) A history of the outrageous, politically-perilous, funky, regrettable, and life-threatening creations people have worn throughout the course of human history, and including the workers who toiled to create these fashions. From spats and togas to hoop skirts and hair shirts, why people wore what they did is an illuminating way to look at the social, economic, political, and moral climates throughout history.

Bugged: How Insects Changed History (Bloomsbury, 2014) Beneficial bugs have built empires. Bad bugs have toppled them. This combination of world history, social history, natural science, epidemiology, public health, conservation, and microbiology is told with fun and informative graphics and in an irreverent voice.

Poop Happened: A History of the World from the Bottom Up (Bloomsbury, 2010) is about the history of sanitation and how human societies managed (or failed to manage) the vexing problem of how to cope with their waste, organized chronologically from ancient times to the present.

Sarah Albee's books have won numerous awards, including the NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People, the Bank Street College of Education's Best Children's Books, and the Eureka! Excellence in Nonfiction award. Several of her books have been Junior Library Guild selections.

Sarah Albee lives with her family in Watertown, Connecticut. She enjoys reading, travel, exercise, gardening, drawing and painting, and cooking for her friends.

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