



# RECLAIMING THE HALL:

## Empowering Community Voices at the Hall of Fame

### CURRICULUM GUIDE

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The Archives can be a place committed to fostering authentic work that honors the people, place, and community. There is concern that current emphasis on place-making misses the value of community arts practices in collaborative ways. Using the archives as a starting point for discussion and creative practice, this workshop provides community arts-based partners an opportunity to learn about how they can embed archive-based learning in their arts-based curricula.

#### BACKGROUND

The Bronx Community College (BCC) Department of Archives & Special Collections collects, preserves, and makes available materials that document BCC's history and that of its National Historic Landmarked Hall of Fame for Great Americans. Hall of Fame materials have recently been incorporated into exhibits, panels, and discussions focused on achievement, inclusion, diversity, and power. The BCC Archives is committed to collaborating on campus with the public more broadly to support research, inquiry, education, and public engagement. Building on connections developed through this work, The Schomburg Center Teen Curators program was invited to participate over the summer in 2019 to help co-develop a workshop curriculum targeted for K-12 and the general public with the aim to explore themes of memorialization, commemoration and the role of public art through the use of primary sources available at the Archives. The outcome was the development of the workshop lesson plan, inquiry-based discussion and activities included in this guide.

The Schomburg Center Teen Curators is a free art-history and curatorial program for high school students highlighting histories of

the African-Diaspora. Students participate in the program for two semesters and their culminating project is an exhibition of archival items appearing alongside their own artwork in the Schomburg Center's American Negro Theatre, designed and curated by them (and remaining in the space for a year!). At the end of the program, 10 of the teen curators join the team as paid interns during the summer.

During July 2019, a group of 10 teen curators visited the Hall of Fame for Great Americans at Bronx Community College (BCC), viewed some related items from the Hall of Fame for Great Americans archival collection at BCC, and participated in a workshop to help them think through the issues related to the effort to rethink and reclaim the Hall. In the workshop, students had the opportunity to reflect on their experience of the Hall, debate and discuss who they would select for inclusion in the Hall, and collectively produce an artwork/or research project based on their deliberations. The resulting artworks/or research projects were included in the September 21, 2019 Diversity in Public Art: Empowering Community Voices at the Hall of Fame event, where students were invited to present their final work.

## PRIMARY AUDIENCES: K-12 & COMMUNITY AUDIENCES

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Primary-source based activities will develop students' historical thinking skills.
  - Students will learn information literacy skills such as evaluating information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.
  - Students will understand many of the social issues surrounding the use of information.
  - Students will be able to access needed information effectively and efficiently.
  - Develop Visual Literacy: Produce creative works that demonstrate innovation in concepts, formal language and/or materials.
- SAA-ACRL/RBMS Joint Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy (2018)
    - Learning Objective 4A, 4B, 4D, 4F
  - One pre-archive visit session, one two hour workshop session, with one one hour followup session, over a two month span.
  - Items (Including Collection/s Used):
    - Access to an archival collection
    - Notebooks and pencils

### PRE-LESSON & LESSON PLANS

When creating a pre-lesson plan it's important to begin at a central point of access for the students participating in the lesson. For example, for this cohort of students one of the primary areas of focus was understanding how historical events, persons and places have been remembered and how the actions of memorialization have shaped a current narrative of cultural memory. We found 2-3 current news articles and video clips that explored these issues and facilitated a group discussion on them. The group of ten students sat in a circle and talked about the role busts, monuments and memorials play in how they understand history as well as the fact that a more diverse and inclusive set of persons have yet to be celebrated.

Shortly after lesson plans have been developed, plans for the archival visit should take place. Teaching with archival images and documents can help to further engage students in the subject matter. An active learner-centered activity is implemented throughout the workshop for students. Instead of asking students to pose research questions, identify and request material, or navigate entire archival collections, focus on an initial encounter with a selection of 10 archival images or objects culled from the collection that will provide socio-political background and provide some context. We then follow this up with

a breakout activity with 3 or 4 discussion prompts that make space for perspectives on inclusion, diversity, and bias in redefining Great Americans through creative expression (i.e., visual art, music, dance, spoken work, media and performance). This will tie into the larger themes of memorialization, commemoration and the role of public art.

If we break into 2 groups, we'll all come together again at the end for discussion together, and report back on what we talked about in each group. Each group will have up to 5 minutes to share back. The instructor will keep time.

Primary sources give students opportunities to empathize with figures of the past and to understand history from varying perspectives. They begin to see connections between past and present. This guided interaction with primary sources will build critical thinking and information literacy skills, making students more engaged learners and better informed citizens. By the end of the workshop, students will be able to connect their historical understanding to present-day social/political issues, linking them to a collective national heritage in public art, and to their current lives.

### PRE-LESSON 1 (30-45 MINUTES)

#### OVERVIEW

This experience is designed to help students understand the role that memorials and monuments play in expressing a society's values and shaping its memory of the past. Students will explore how public spaces, monuments and memorials serve as cultural markers of the past, which in turn, largely shape our understanding of the past and present.

#### OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand that monuments, memorials and busts represent one way communities remember and celebrate the past as well as shape future generations' understanding of history.
2. Students will understand that when creating monuments, memorials and busts artists and communities make choices about what aspects of a particular history are worth remembering and what parts are intentionally left out.
3. Students will understand the connection between history and current events by visiting the Hall of Fame for Great Americans.
4. After visiting the archives of the Hall of Fame for Great Americans, students will produce creative works that demonstrates who they would nominate for the Hall of Fame for Great Americans

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of memorials, monuments and busts? What impact do they have on us and the way we think about history?
2. How can we shape public memory and influence people's beliefs and attitudes through the creation of (symbolic or real) memorials and monuments through activism?

### PART 1: THE ROLE OF MONUMENTS, MEMORIALS AND BUSTS

1. Before screening the video, have the group discuss these questions regarding monuments, memorials and busts (you can divide them into pairs or discuss as a whole group):
  - What are the role of historical monuments, busts?
  - What has been your experience in interacting with them? Do they matter to you, why or why not?
  - Why are they created? Why might people want to build them? (Brainstorm and list as many reasons as possible.)
  - Hypothetical Question: What might the future look like, will these monuments, busts still exist?

*NOTE: The following piece of media is optional and can be used as one example of how people in the South used monument-building to shape both the memory of those fallen in the Civil War and the discourse about what the New South would become. Created by Vox Media, the video on The United Daughters of the Confederacy was screened for the teens to understand how a group created what is described as an intellectual campaign of rewriting historical narratives and sought to preserve confederate culture by creating memorials and history textbooks throughout the South with the hopes of influencing future generations. This piece of media can be expanded upon and used as a part of a case study for how the larger context effects public memory through education and information.*

**Screen and Discuss** | *How Southern socialites rewrote Civil War history* (6:54 mins, Vox Media)

Questions to ponder with students:

- What role does power play in the shaping of these memorials and monuments?
- How did this particular narrative shape the way future generations understand history?

After discussion, students then thought out loud about monuments, memorials and bust as primary sources, and in preparation for their visit to the BCC archives, brainstormed questions to ask of each bust:

1. Who or what is the focus of the bust?
2. What values/beliefs does it express or represent?
3. How does the bust convey its intended story or message?

### PART 2: GREAT HALL OF FAME VISIT FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION & ACTIVITY (1 HR)

After viewing the archival materials and Hall of Fame, ask the group for their initial reactions and follow up with a few questions.

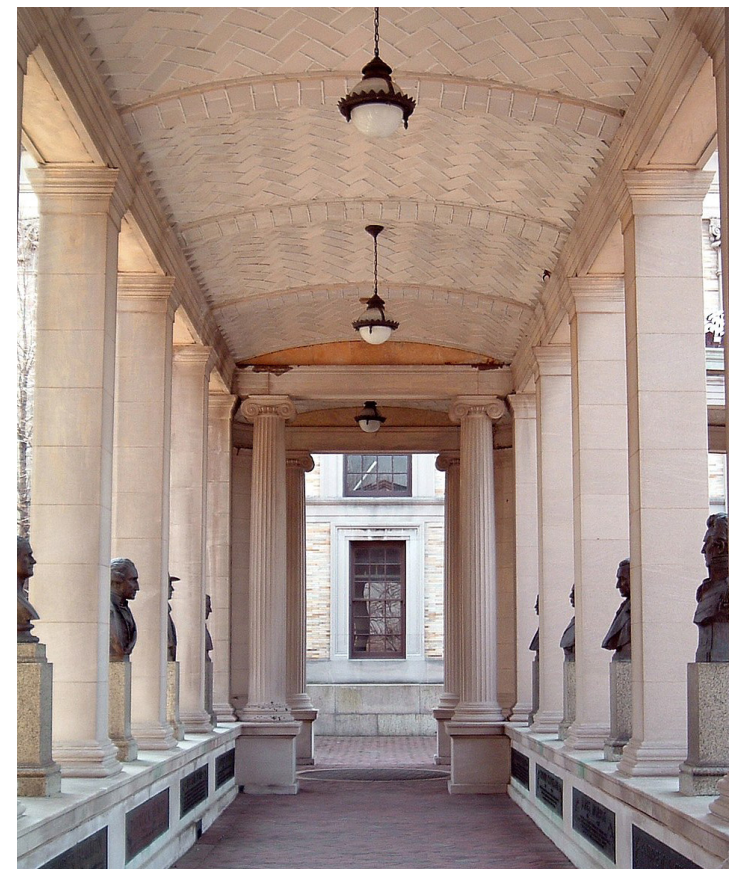
1. What historical individual stood out to you the most?
2. What message(s) or value(s) was that particular bust expressing?
3. If you could nominate someone to be in the Hall who would it be and why?

The students will then brainstorm who they would nominate to be represented in the Hall of Fame for Great Americans.

Students are divided into pairs to collaborate. Essentially this grants an opportunity for students to hone in on the skills they might enjoy: research, writing and art-making. Suggestions of materials include sketch paper, pencils, laptop/computers with access to the internet and if needed editing software for sketches.

Students are given 2-3 class sessions to prepare and then will present their plans using slides and include preliminary sketches of their nominee busts for consideration.

If students have time, they are encouraged to hone their projects creatively further, such as by designing art posters, digital sketches and etc.



## LESSON ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

### SPECIFIED BENCHMARK

70% of students will be able to reach the learning outcomes for the lesson.

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Identifies important information	Student lists all the main points of the archival image/object without having the archival image/object in front of him/her.	The student lists all the main points, but uses the archival image/object for reference.	The student lists all but one of the main points, using the archival image/object for reference. S/he does not highlight any unimportant points.	The student cannot list important information with accuracy.
Identifies facts	Student accurately locates at least 3 facts in the archival image/object and gives a clear explanation of why these are facts, rather than opinions.	Student accurately locates 2 facts in the archival image/object and gives a reasonable explanation of why they are facts, rather than opinions.	Student accurately locates 2 facts in the archival image/object. Explanation is weak.	Student has difficulty locating facts in an archival image/object.
Identifies opinions	Student accurately locates at least 3 opinions in the archival image/object and gives a clear explanation of why these are opinions, rather than facts.	Student accurately locates at least 2 opinions in the archival image/object and gives a reasonable explanation of why these are opinions, rather than facts.	Student accurately locates at least 2 opinions in the archival image/object. Explanation is weak.	Student has difficulty locating opinions in an archival image/object.
Relates Archival image/object to Event	Student accurately explains how archival image/object is related to a historical event, and accurately determines whether archival image/object agrees with the information that is revealed.	Student accurately explains how archival image/object is related to a historical event.	Student accurately explains how some portion of archival image/object is related to a historical event.	Student has difficulty relating archival image/object to historical event.
Summarization	Student uses only 1-3 sentences to describe clearly what the archival image/object is about.	Student uses several sentences to accurately describe what the archival image/object is about.	Student summarizes most of the archival image/object accurately, but has some slight misunderstanding.	Student has great difficulty summarizing the archival image/object.



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