



PROGRAMMER'S GUIDE

T*he Bronzed Project: Should My Uncle John be in Your Public Square?* offers four free essays that include a host of characters talking about race, class and politics as well as a Story-Sharing section that lays the groundwork for people of opposing views to share narratives—not opinions—in an effort to improve and humanize public discourse. The goal: to team with trustworthy, neutral, nonprofit organizations such as historical societies or sites, museums and educational institutions, to use the wealth of material I've pulled together over the last three years as a common free text from which you can build a program that serves the needs of your group.

I began the project after the violence in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017 over the proposed removal of the Confederate General Robert E. Lee statue, which inspired me to drive the country to visit my own bronzed relatives in town squares—I have many on my maternal side. I used the trips as an excuse to talk with others from all sorts of points-of-view about class, race and politics. Along the way, I tapped into my 30 years as a professor of narrative nonfiction and personal essay writing to plot out a plan for using the road trip essays as common text for a larger project about effective story-sharing and improving public discourse in the United States.

The Bronzed Project: Should My Uncle John be in Your Public Square? seeks to return participants to their common humanity. While on the road, no matter whom I was speaking with and no matter what we were speaking about, I remained convinced that we could move our public discourse forward. All of us must agree to study the context of a situation or statue, acknowledge many issues require us to hold conflicting ideas in our minds, and practice empathy.

At www.TheBronzedProject.com programmers will find separate links that they can use—for free—to build programs that best suit the needs of their group. For example, if you decide to run a seminar on improving public discourse around the issue of Class/Economic Disparity, you could assign the narrative on the riverman Larry Connors honored by a statue in Bangor, Maine, and the Sullivan Paper Company in Massachusetts as the shared text. That in turn could lead to an essay writing workshop where participants exchange their work or, for those that don't feel comfortable putting pen-to-paper, they could record their stories or speak out loud to the group. See the next page for two more detailed recommendations on how to use the materials on this site.

In the end, the most important thing is to get this engaging material in your hands and to show historical societies and museums that they can take on a leadership role in improving and, indeed, saving public discourse in America. I hope you will partner with me!



NEXT: Recommendations on how to use

The Bronzed Project materials

SAMPLE PROGRAMMING IDEAS

<u>ISSUE</u>	Class, economic disparity
<u>SAMPLE ESSAY</u>	Tuning into Class
<u>HOSTS</u>	Factory Owners Michael and Ed Sullivan, Sullivan Paper Co., Massachusetts, and Riverman Larry Connors, honored by a statue in Bangor, Maine

- Ask participants to read the shared text, *Tuning into Class*, and research a story of one of their ancestors with class/economic challenges in mind as the primary focus.
- They can elect to just jot down notes and share the back history with the group or pen an actual story about that ancestor/relative.
- Ask the group to read my Introduction and Reflections After the Road Trips and then reflect themselves on issues I raise in those more general essays. If they were to “bronzed” the relative they’ve decided to talk about, what would they be honoring?

GOALS

Tackle a complex issue by sharing personal family narratives and then reflect on those stories with the group. What did they learn from each other about the history of economic disparity in American society and its impact on health, education, housing, and more?

SAMPLE PROGRAMMING IDEAS

ART PROJECT

ISSUE

Who Would You Bronze in Your Town Square?

SAMPLE ESSAYS

Introduction, How to Hold a National Conversation, Reflections After the Road Trips and Visit a Foundry

- Ask participants to read the four sample texts. Discuss when, if ever, we should honor individuals with bronzed statues in public spaces, such as the National Mall, and how those choices should be made?
- Ask the group to use chalk, crayon, pen, paint, clay or some other art medium to design a sample statue of their own to someone or something that they admire.
- Ask participants to share their art work/designs/concepts with the group and discuss when, if ever, we should honor people with bronzed statues in public spaces? If so, why? If not, why not?

WRITING WORKSHOP

While I am confident that creative programmers can use the materials on this site without my guidance, I am available to run writing workshops on the art of the personal essay, with a special focus on processing complex social issues and sharing work with others. *I do charge a fee for leading a workshop.*

For more information, contact me, Mary Collins, at collinsmae@ccsu.edu.

