



Himler's Dream Town

For use on Day 1 of the lesson "Snapshots in the Life and Power of Martin Himler"

Notes & Instructions

Today we have learned a portion of Martin Himler's story, primarily his experience of settling in the United States, which eventually led to the creation of Himlerville, KY in what is now present-day Martin County, KY. Tomorrow, we will be considering several "snapshots" in his life by studying several excerpts from his autobiography, in addition to some other primary sources. In preparation for tomorrow, we are going to revisit and think critically about the excerpt from the beginning of class (reprinted below). As you think about the excerpt, consider it in the context of power. Power is not just any one thing, but can include:

Power over—being coercive, repressive, corrupt, etc., e.g. the government might have power over the people

Power to—doing something to shape or change your world e.g. a person might have power to sign a petition or volunteer their time

Power with—finding common ground, building collective strength e.g. people might find power collaborating with one another on a project or initiative

Power within—being able to imagine or feel hope; having personal resolve e.g. people may find power within to be brave, creative, resilient, confident

First - with your partner or within your small group, discuss which types of power you see in the excerpt. Do some types of power appear more visible than others? What words or phrases make you think that a specific type of power is present? Are any types of power absent or can you identify a type of power that does not fit into one of the four categories described above?

Second - after you have discussed with your partner/small group, proceed to answering the questions on the following page. Your answers to these questions should be **yours** and do not necessarily need to reflect the views of your partner or what the majority of your group thinks or feels.

As you re-read the excerpt, reflect, and respond to the questions that follow, think back to what you have learned today about Himler's life: *What part of his life do you think he was reflecting upon when he wrote those words in his autobiography? What else might have been going through his mind or influencing his thinking at that point?*

"I was tired of walking, I was penniless, and I was facing the unpromising immediate future. But I dreamt dreams. And in my dreams, I was building a town just like Roebling. Perhaps not quite as ambitious, not

quite as large, but with workers' homes containing bathrooms and populated only by Hungarians...I KNEW that sometime, somehow, the dream town would be built.

Madness?

Perhaps. But dreams are duty free, and youth's right is to dream. (It took me twelve years of dreaming but finally, to my joy and also to my deep and everlasting regret, the town of Himlerville, Kentucky, was built. And built it was with a bathroom for each coal miner.)

- Martin Himler

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1. What types of power do YOU see in the excerpt? What types of power seem absent?	2. Cite specific evidence from the excerpt to support your answers to Question #1.	3. Did thinking about it in the context of power change how you thought or felt about it compared to the beginning of class?

About the Source

Citations:

Himler, Martin. *The Making of an American: The Autobiography of a Hungarian Immigrant, Appalachian Entrepreneur, and OSS Officer*. Edited by Cathy Cassady Corbin. Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 2018, 97-98.

Sheya, Sarah and JusticexDesign. "Power, Possibilities, Me." *JusticexDesign*.
<https://www.justicexdesign.org/tools#h.xqtbbschisrqd>.