



Source E: Winning Over the Martin County Locals

For use on Day 2 of the lesson "Snapshots in the Life and Power of Martin Himler"

Notes & Instructions

In this excerpt from Martin Himler's autobiography, he reflects on what life was like in the early days of Himlerville and the steps he took to win over the local Martin County, KY residents. Read and discuss it with your partner/small group, then respond to the questions that follow.

To combat the antagonism of the local Martin County population, I engaged a local man to edit the only English weekly newspaper Martin County had ever had, the Martin County Advertiser. The extent of this antagonism, artificially created and fed by some local politicians, was so great that for two years, I had to carry riot insurance. I kept a deputy on the job day and night for I feared that an attack would be made on my men. Slowly, but very slowly, I won over the best of my antagonizers, mostly by giving them employment in the mine and also by treating them as well, or better, than the company's own stock-holder workers.

I was against the common practice of charging outrageous prices in the mine commissary and thus keeping out competition. I encouraged the establishment of small private stores to force the commissary managers to compete. Even antagonistic natives took advantage of our low prices. We sold everything from steak and ice cream to ladies' hats. Our best year provided us a business of over \$400,000. Sometimes I went to New York to buy men's and women's clothing in job lots, and I put on a sales drawing drawing crowds from even nearby towns in West Virginia.

Note-taking Space:



1. What types of power seem present in this source? What types of power seem absent?

2. Thinking critically about this excerpt as a historical source, is there anything that it makes possible or empowers? Is there anything that it prevents or challenges?

3. How does this excerpt make you feel? Why might you feel either connected or disconnected from it?

About the Source

Citation:

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. Page 183.