Common Themes

Prejudice:

- Prejudice is defined as, “an adverse opinion or leaning formed without just grounds or before sufficient knowledge.”
- Numerous characters, like the Livingstons and Duffs, unfortunately faced prejudice while they were alive. Anti-Semitism and racism are just a few examples of this.
- **Hilda & Sigmund Livingston** faced anti-Semitism like so many other Jewish people around the world. It is important to note that it was not just in Nazi occupied Germany either; Sigmund fought to teach U.S. citizens that these anti-Semitic beliefs were already present in the U.S. In the press, vaudevilles, films, etc., the spread of misinformation about Jewish people was extremely evident.
- **Alverta & Julia Duff** dealt with racism throughout their lives. This was especially true for Julia who lived through one of the worst acts of racism during her and Alverta’s lives. Julia lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma during the infamous Tulsa Race Massacre (May 31-June 1, 1921). The white individuals that participated in this horrendous act of racism murdered countless African Americans for no reason other than racism.
- **The Big Question:** Can prejudice ever be unlearned? According to Sigmund Livingston, it can. Sigmund believed it would need a rational approach to end prejudice. In his book *Must Men Hate?* he wrote, “For an honest person, one who is not completely enslaved by his emotions, will welcome the correction of any false belief or notion.”
  - **Attached Below:** Two links to lesson plans that go along the theme of prejudice. The first link teaches about anti-Semitism around the world. The second link teaches about the Tulsa Race Massacre.
    - [https://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/antisemitism-around-the-world-global-100](https://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/antisemitism-around-the-world-global-100)
    - [https://www.tulsaschools.org/tulsaracemassacre/lessonplans](https://www.tulsaschools.org/tulsaracemassacre/lessonplans)

War and Its Impact:

- Some of the wars fought during these individuals’ lives were the Civil War, World War I, and World War II.
- What does war do to a country? How do politics shape the wars we engage in? How did war affect the local individuals from the Cemetery Walk?
- **George Carman** fought during the Civil War. In a letter to the *Pantagraph*, under his pseudonym “Boswell,” Carman wrote, “War is a big thing…it makes and unmakes men.” Like most Americans at the time, the Civil War consumed Carman. Carman was a soldier in the Union Army who gladly fought against slavery. He believed that slavery had ruined the South; where he was originally born. Unfortunately, Carman

was discharged early for consumption (today known as tuberculosis). If he was physically able to, he would have continued to serve his country.

- **Hilda & Sigmund Livingston** were alive during both the World Wars. Anti-Semitism continued to grow as each year passed. As mentioned previously, Sigmund had to fight to remove prejudice beliefs about Jewish people. Sigmund not only went around the U.S. to dismantle anti-Semitism, but even around the world. In 1912, Sigmund travelled to Europe and the Middle East to help stop the spread of anti-Semitic beliefs. In following years, when Hitler took over Germany, Sigmund continued to fight against the misinformation spread about his religion. World War II had only amplified centuries old misconceptions about Jewish people, so it made Sigmund’s job that much harder. However, Sigmund continued the fight until he died in 1946.

  - **Attached Below**: Two links that help explain the lasting effects wars have on countries.
    - [https://www.britannica.com/topic/war](https://www.britannica.com/topic/war)
    - [http://www.warpp.info/en/m1/articles/effects-of-war](http://www.warpp.info/en/m1/articles/effects-of-war)

**American Identity:**

- What does it mean to be an American? Each character led rather different lives. Their stories and identities create a different perspective on what it means to be an American.
- **Mary Ann Marmon** was a descendant of McLean County’s earliest settlers. She was also a descendant of a Revolutionary War soldier. As a historian, Marmon ensured that the local history of white settlers was never forgotten. It is of no surprise that she was a very proud American.
- **George Carman** was a Union soldier during the Civil War. As previously mentioned, Carman was extremely proud to serve in the Union Army. He despised slavery and the thought of America becoming an aristocracy. America was the most divided it had ever been in its history. For Carman to come from the South, but serve for the North, shows the complexity of the time. He acknowledged the flaws of the time, but Carman was still a proud American.
- **Alverta & Julia Duff** were both African American women who faced many adversities. As mentioned earlier, Julia lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma during the Tulsa Race Massacre. Though their brother J. Walker fought during World War I, leaving with an honorable discharge, he still faced the same racism he had before the war when he returned. Alverta had to work as a maid despite the fact that she earned a business degree. All of these issues represented that there were not equal opportunities for all in America; which of course changes one’s perspective of what it means to be an American.
- **Hilda & Sigmund Livingston** were both Jewish Americans (Sigmund immigrated to America from Germany in 1881 and lived the rest of his life here). Jews had dealt with anti-Semitism for centuries, but it was especially evident during World War II. As mentioned earlier, the spread of Nazi propaganda was a widespread, yet fairly ignored issue in America. To enjoy the same life as other Americans, Sigmund hoped to end the adversities many Jewish Americans faced by working with the B’nai B’rith and the ADL (Anti-Defamation League).
• **William J. Rodenhauser** immigrated to America in 1882 from Germany when he was 40 years old. His wife and kids eventually immigrated to America in 1896. In Bloomington at the time, different nationalities kept to themselves. So, it was not uncommon for Germans to live and work around one another. Rodenhauser’s story dives into the debate of whether or not America represents a “melting pot” or a “salad bowl.” Did Rodenhauser’s German heritage melt into an American identity once he moved to Bloomington? Or was his heritage equally celebrated under his new American identity?

  o **Attached Below:** Two resources to help students think about what it means to be an American. The first link asks students to consider whether the diverse backgrounds of Americans melt into one singular identity, or if each identity can still stand out. The second link is a lesson plan to help students further understand what national identity means in America.

    ▪ **Melting Pot vs. Salad Bowl:**
      https://www.blog.voicetube.com/archives/56485
    ▪ **Many Voices, One National Identity (Lesson Plan):**