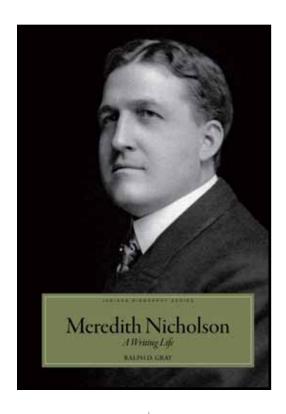
TEACHER RESOURCE

by Erica M. Christie, Curriculum that Matters, LLC

for the Indiana Historical Society Press publication

Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life

by Ralph D. Gray





This is a publication of the Indiana Historical Society
Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center
450 West Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269 USA
Teacher Resource available online: http://www.indianahistory.org
Book orders (telephone): (800) 447-1830
Book orders (fax): (317) 234-0562

Copyright 2012 Indiana Historical Society All rights reserved

Except for copying portions of the teacher resources by educators for classroom use, or for quoting of brief passages for reviews, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), without written permission of the copyright owner. All inquiries should be addressed to the Indiana Historical Society Press.

Overview

Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life is a compelling biography of an Indiana author and diplomat. Written by Ralph D. Gray, the book examines Nicholson's life and work and provides an important glimpse into the history of the golden years of Indianapolis and the prominence of Hoosier authors from 1880 to 1920.

This teacher resource provides suggested learning activities that relate to Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life, a 2007 publication of the Indiana Historical Society Press. These resource materials creatively integrate literature, writing, and social studies themes for high school students in grades nine through twelve. To enrich and deepen their understanding of the text, students will engage in a wide variety of learning activities. For example, students may write about their own Hoosier identity, map influential places in Nicholson's life and in their own, analyze images of important Indiana landmarks erected during the golden years, conduct research on one of the four major Hoosier authors of this time period, read one of Nicholson's essays or fictional texts, consider the role of public figures as advocates for social change, and write an obituary about Nicholson. Additionally, this resource provides suggested online resources and publications to supplement teaching with Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life and exploring this period in Indiana history.

Grade Levels

High school grades nine through twelve

Academic Standards

The learning activities in this teacher resource meet the following academic standards.

- Grades 9-10 Common Core English/ Language Arts Standards
 - 9-10.RI.1—Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

- 9-10.RI.2—Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 9-10.RI.7—Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person's life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- ° 9-10.W.2—Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- 9-10.W.3—Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- ° 9-10.W.4—Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- 9-10.W.7—Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- 9-10.W.8—Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- 9-10.W.9—Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- 9-10.SL.1—Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades nine and ten topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- 9-10.SL.4—Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- 9-10.SL.5—Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Grades 11-12 Common Core English/ Language Arts Standards

- o 11-12.RI.1—Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- ° 11-12.RI.2—Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- ° 11-12.RI.7—Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

- ° 11-12.W.2—Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- ° 11-12.W.3—Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- ° 11-12.W.4—Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- ° 11-12.W.7—Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a selfgenerated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and over reliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation.
- ° 11-12.W.9—Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- o 11-12.SL.1—Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on- one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades eleven and twelve topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- of 11-12.SL.5—Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Indiana Academic Standards for Social Studies: United States History

- Output

 Out
- USH.2.2—Identify key ideas, movements and inventions and explain their impact on rural communities and urban communities in the United States.
- Our USH.2.3—Identify the contributions of individuals and groups and explain developments associated with industrialization and immigration.
- USH.3.7—Explain the impact of immigration, industrialization and urbanization in promoting economic growth.

- Our USH.3.8—Describe the Progressive movement and its impact on political, economic, and social reform.
- OUSH.9.1—Identify patterns of historical succession and duration in which historical events have unfolded and apply them to explain continuity and change.
- USH.9.2—Locate and analyze primary sources and secondary sources related to an event or issue of the past.
- USH.9.4—Explain issues and problems of the past by analyzing the interests and viewpoints of those involved.
- USH.9.5—Use technology in the process of conducting historical research and in the presentation of the products of historical research and current events.

Big Ideaa/Concepts

Hoosier authors, golden years of Indianapolis, Indiana history, and biography

Essential Questions

- Why were Hoosier authors able to be so successful in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century?
- In what ways did Indianapolis experience its golden years during this time period?

Instructional Objectives

Depending on the learning activities selected, students will:

- Analytically read and discuss a biographic text.
- Write about their Hoosier identity.
- Map significant places in Nicholson's life and work.
- Create a map of the geography of their lives.
- Write an essay explaining how place has influenced their life.

- Write letters to teachers who made a difference in their lives.
- Review primary source images and documents about buildings erected during Indianapolis's golden years.
- Collaboratively research one of four influential Hoosier writers.
- Present research findings to the class.
- Read and discuss one of Nicholson's writings.
- Discuss the role of public figures as advocates for social change.
- Write an obituary detailing Nicholson's legacy.

Time Required

The amount of instructional time needed will depend on how you read the text and which of the learning activities you choose to utilize in your classroom. The text is composed of eleven chapters (244 pages in total) and students might read the text in its entirely or be assigned selections to read.

Suggested Materials

- Copies of Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life by Ralph D. Gray
- Computer(s) with Internet access and projector
- Maps of Indiana and United States
- Writing paper and pens or pencils
- Board and chalk/markers
- Additional books, websites, and primary-source materials related to Meredith Nicholson, Hoosier authors, and Indiana history

Background Information

Meredith Nicholson is a noted Hoosier author, who was born in 1866 in Crawfordsville, Indiana. His interest in writing began at an early age, but he was unable to attend college or receive formal training. Instead, he went to work writing for the *Indianapolis Sentinel* and the *Indianapolis News*, where he worked until 1897. During this time he also wrote and published poetry, essays, and fiction. He wrote three national bestsellers: *The House of a Thousand Candles, The Port of Missing Men*, and *A Hoosier Chronicle*. Nicholson later became involved in Indiana politics, serving on the Indianapolis city council. He also served as a U.S. diplomat in South America. Nicholson died in 1947.

Nicholson was part of an era known as the golden age of literature in Indianapolis.

Nicholson, along with fellow Hoosier writers

James Whitcomb Riley, George Ade, and Booth

Tarkington, received local and national acclaim
for their writing at this time. This literary boon
coincided with Indianapolis's own golden age,
which was a time of great growth and building
in the city.

Learning Activities

A True Hoosier

Nicholson is often described as a true Hoosier. He asserted that Indiana was a "land of opportunity, with advantages and privileges enjoyed by no other state, principality, kingdom, or power" (See Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life, p. 2). Use this quote to begin a discussion about Nicholson's advocacy for Indiana and the unique qualities he saw in the Hoosier State. Encourage students to share what aspects of Indiana they personally find most unique and appealing, as well as those they find less satisfactory. Provide time for students to write about what it means to be a "true Hoosier" and whether or not they see themselves in this light. After sharing their writing with a partner or in small groups, facilitate a class discussion about the nature of Hoosier identity.

Shaped by Place

Nicholson's life and work were greatly influenced by his deep sense of place. Lead a discussion with students about the ways that geography shapes identity and livelihoods. Encourage students to share examples from the text illustrating how Nicholson's life and writing were shaped by the geography of his life. Ask students to use the text to identify five specific places that were particularly influential in Nicholson's life. Have students locate these places on a map. If desired, seek out historic images of these places in the Indiana Historical Society, Digital Image Collections (accessed 11/15/2012) at http:// www.indianahistory.org/our-collections /digital-image-collections, and compare these images with modern-day images obtained from Google Maps and other digital sources. Conclude this activity by asking students to consider how a sense of place has shaped their own lives. Have students identify personally significant places and create maps showing the geography of their own lives. Provide students the option to write an essay about how place has shaped their sense of self or utilize a more artistic medium such as photography, collage, or painting to creatively explore this topic.

Teachers as Mentors

After reading chapter two, lead a discussion about how Nicholson succeeded despite his lack of educational opportunities. Nicholson credits his intellectual growth to the numerous teachers who mentored him outside of the traditional classroom, contributing to his writing abilities and his sense of self-worth (See Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life, p. 31). Encourage students to consider their own education in this broad sense, thinking about the people and experiences that have influenced their learning and identity. Ask each student to write a letter to a teacher, at school or elsewhere, who has made a difference in their own life. Share these letters with a partner. Lead a discussion about the value of both in-school and out-of-school learning and mentoring to students' overall growth.

Indianapolis's Golden Years

The 1880s and 1890s have been referred to as Indianapolis's golden years and the "city's springtime" (See *Meredith Nicholson:*

A Writing Life, p. 36). Ask students to analyze these phrases and make inferences about what they might tell us about Indianapolis during this era. Review pages thirty-five and thirty-six of Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life to learn more about some of the changes in Indianapolis during this time. Ask small groups of students to select and research one of the public buildings that were built at this time, such as the state capitol, city hall, the Commercial Club (Chamber of Congress), Das Deutche Haus (the Athenaeum), Central Library, and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. (Refer to page seven of this resource for links to related images in the Indiana Historical Society's Digital Image Collections.) Encourage students to browse the Indiana Historical Society, Digital Image Collections (accessed 11/15/2012) at http://www .indianahistory.org/our-collections /digital-image-collections and other online and text resources to gather information about the history of these Indianapolis landmarks. Have student groups share their research findings with the class. Lead a discussion about why this time period was so critical in the city's history.

The Big Four

The golden age of Indiana literature in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century was led by four Hoosier authors: Nicholson, James Whitcomb Riley, George Ade, and Booth Tarkington. Draw students' attention to the image on page 118 in Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life of these authors and encourage students to share prior knowledge about these authors. Divide class into four groups and assign each group one of the authors. Ask each group to learn more about the author's life and his work, as well as read at least one piece of writing by this author. Groups should consult online and text resources, including primary-source documents and images, to learn about their group's author. Ask each group to create a presentation about the author's life and share an engaging read-aloud of a selected piece of the author's writing. As a class, compare and contrast the lives and writing styles

of these four Hoosier authors. Lead a discussion about why these authors were so successful and the legacy they left in Indiana.

In His Own Words

Enhance reading of this biographical text by having students read one or more of Nicholson's writings. Select a short essay, such as those featured in A Meredith Nicholson Reader, edited by Ralph D. Gray, or have students read one of Nicholson's novels, such as his most popular work, The House of a Thousand Candles. Many of his books are available as digital ebooks that can be freely downloaded for student use. (Refer to the Resources on pages seven and eight for more information.) Form book clubs within the class and provide time for these small groups to meet and discuss the texts in an informal way. Facilitate a class discussion about the insights students gained into Nicholson and Indiana history through reading his work.

Authors as Advocates

In his later years, Nicholson became very involved in Indiana politics. In the 1920s, he was particularly outspoken in his criticism of the Klu Klux Klan, despite the Klan's power at this time. He used his position as a notable author to advocate against the Klan and was angered that fellow authors, including Tarkington and Ade, remained quiet on the situation. Encourage students to consider whether authors and other public figures have a duty to advocate for social change. Have students identify other examples of public figures throughout history who have used/not used their status to advocate for a cause.

Nicholson's Legacy

Draw students' attention to the Indianapolis Times profile (See Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life, p. 238) and the quote from his New York Times obituary (See Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life, p. 243). Encourage students to consider Nicholson's lasting legacy on Indiana. What impact did Nicholson leave on the Indiana literary scene, Indiana history, and Indiana

politics? Extend this discussion by asking students to write a brief obituary about Nicholson. Students should utilize information from his biography to state the legacy of his life and work.

Assessment

The learning activities described in this teacher resource offer many opportunities for meaningful assessment. Possible assessments include:

- Collect one or more of the writing activities to assess (i.e. "True Hoosier" responses, "Shaped by Place" essays, "Teachers as Mentors" letters, and "Nicholson's Legacy" obituaries). If desired, have students select the one piece of Nicholson-related writing that they are most proud of and submit this to be assessed. To develop and customize rubrics to assess student work, go to Rubistar resource (accessed 11/15/2012) at http://rubistar.4teachers.org/.
- Assess students' presentation and research skills in the "Indianapolis's Golden Years" and "The Big Four" activities. Work with students to create a presentation rubric and/or have students assess their own presentation skills.
- Informal assessment opportunities are plentiful. Print a class list and place it on a clipboard that is always in reach. As students engage in small group discussions and activities about the text, walk around the room and jot down quick notes about student participation and engagement. These notes can be used to guide future instructional decisions.

Enrichment/Extensions

Biography Genre Study

Utilize Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life as part of a larger study of the biography genre. Create book clubs within the class where students select different biographies to read and discuss. Choose biographies of people from a certain era or time

period, corresponding with academic standards at your grade level. Alternatively, choose biographies of specific types of people, such as authors or Hoosiers, and spend time comparing and contrasting the texts. As a class, have students consider the genre for biography and compare it with other literary genres.

Field trips

If time and resources allow, take students on a field trip to further enrich their understanding of Nicholson and this time period in Indiana history. Suggested sites include:

Meredith Nicholson House—1500 N. Delaware in Indianapolis—is also known as "The House of a Thousand Candles." It currently houses Indiana Humanities and several other not-forprofit organizations. The Indiana Humanities website (accessed 11/15/2012) at http://www .indianahumanities.org/about_mer_nich _house.aspx provides more detail about the historic home.

James Whitcomb Riley Museum Home—528 Lockerbie Stree in Indianapolis—was where Riley, one of Nicholson's most notable Hoosier contemporaries, once lived. It is now a museum. For details, go to the Riley Children's Foundation website (accessed 11/15/2012) at http://www .rileykids.org/about/riley_museum to learn more.

Crown Hill Cemetery—700 West 38th Street in Indianapols—is Indiana's most famous cemetery. Take the Author Tour to see the gravesites of Nicholson, Riley, and Tarkington. For tour information, visit the Crown Hill Cemetery's website (accessed 11/15/2012) at: http://www.crownhill .org/cemetery/tours.html/.

Resources

Indiana Historical Society's Digital Image Collections

Meredith Nicholson House, 15th and Delaware streets, 1905. http://images .indianahistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer .php?CISOROOT=/dc012&CISOPTR =9439&CISOBOX=1&REC=14/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

Indianapolis City Hall. http://images .indianahistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer .php?CISOROOT=/P0338&CISOPTR =296&CISOBOX=1&REC=1/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

1902 Dedication of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument. http://images.indianahistory.org /cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT =/P0130&CISOPTR=1479&CISOBOX =1&REC=4/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

View of the Indiana State Soldiers and Sailors Monument from South Meridian Street, 1904. http://images.indianahistory.org/cdm4 /item_viewer.php?CISOROOT=/V0002 &CISOPTR=446&CISOBOX=1&REC =11/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

Aerial View of the Indiana State Capitol, West Market Street, and the Cyclorama Exhibition Building, 1904. http://images.indianahistory .org/cdm4/item_viewer.php?CISOROOT =/P0130&CISOPTR=1568&CISOBOX =1&REC=6/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

Commercial Club Building. http://images .indianahistory.org/cdm4/item viewer .php?CISOROOT=/P0130&CISOPTR =1992&CISOBOX=1&REC=1/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

National Turnfest at Das Deutsche Haus (Athenaeum) Indianapolis. http://images .indianahistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer .php?CISOROOT=/V0002&CISOPTR =1902&CISOBOX=1&REC=17/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

Central Library of the Indianapolis Marion County Public Library system. http://images .indianahistory.org/cdm4/item_viewer .php?CISOROOT=/dc013&CISOPTR =268&CISOBOX=1&REC=1/. Accessed 11/29/2012.

Other Online Resources

- Ball State University. Indiana Author webpages. "Meredith Nicholson, 1866-1947." http://iwp.iweb.bsu.edu/IndianaAuthors /Pages/Nicholson,%20Meredith.html/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- Historic Indianapolis.com. "Indianapolis Then and Now: The House of a Thousand Candles, 1500 N. Delaware St." http://historicindianapolis.com /indianapolis-then-and-now-the-house-of -a-thousand-candles-1500-n-delaware-st/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- H-net, Humanities and Social Science Online. Book Review of Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life. http://www.h-net.org /reviews/showrev.php?id=13840/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- Indiana Historical Society. "Meredith Nicholson Collection, 1890-1942, Collection Guide." http://www.indianahistory.org /our-collections/collection-guides /meredith-nicholson-collection-1890-1942 .pdf/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- _. "The Golden Age: Indiana Literature, 1880-1920)." http://www.indianahistory.org /our-services/local-history-services /traveling-exhibits/the-golden-age-indiana -literature-1880-1920/. Accesed 11/15/2012.
- Indiana Humanities. "Meredith Nicholson House." http://www.indianahumanities .org/about_mer_nich_house.aspx/. Accessed 11/15/2012.

- Indiana University Lilly Library. "Literary Associates." http://www.indiana .edu/~liblilly/riley/docs/9_literary.html/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian. "Meredith Nicholson, 1866-1947." http://history.state.gov /departmenthistory/people/nicholson -meredith/. Accessed 11/15/2012.

Related Publications

- Gray, Ralph D., ed. A Meredith Nicholson Reader. Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2007. _. Meredith Nicholson: A Writing Life.
- Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2007.

Texts by Meredith Nicholson Available as Free Online Ebooks

- Nicholson, Meredith. A Hoosier Chronicle (The Project Gutenburg Ebook). http://www .gutenberg.org/files/15138/15138-h /15138-h.htm/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- . Blacksheep! Blacksheep! (The Project Gutenburg Ebook). http://www.gutenberg .org/files/21887/21887-h/21887-h.htm/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- . Otherwise Phyllis (The Project Gutenburg Ebook). http://www.gutenberg .org/files/28017/28017-h/28017-h.htm/. Accessed 11/15/2012.
- _. The House of a Thousand Candles (The Project Gutenburg Ebook). http://www .gutenberg.org/files/12441/12441-h /12441-h.htm/. Accessed 10/30/12.
- __. The Port of Missing Men (Arthur's Classic Novels Ebook). http://arthursclassicnovels.com /nicholson/13913-8.html/. Accessed 11/15/2012.