

## A Teacher's Guide to

# NOAH'S RAVEN

by

Robert T. McMaster

### THE NOVEL AT A GLANCE

**SETTING:** *Noah's Raven* is an historical novel about life in an American industrial city in the nineteen-teens. The setting is Holyoke, Massachusetts, but this is a story that could have occurred in any American city a century ago.

**HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:** From the onset of World War I in 1914, Americans were deeply divided over the question of whether this nation should enter the war. Finally, in April, 1917, the die was cast: America declared war against Germany and Austria-Hungary. By September the nation was fully mobilized and American men by the hundreds of thousands were headed to Europe to join our Allies, Great Britain and France, in the Great War. Back home patriotic fervor triggered a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment, particularly against immigrants of German or eastern European ancestry. Women filled many positions in mills and factories vacated by men going off to war.

**MAIN CHARACTERS:** The central characters of *Noah's Raven* are 18-year-olds Tom Wellington and Jack Bernard and their sisters, Anne Wellington and Claire Bernard. Tom has enlisted in the Navy; his ship is about to set sail for points unknown. Anne has recently graduated from high school and is working at the Holyoke Women's Home, a settlement house for young women just arriving in the city to work in the mills. Jack Bernard is attending college in Worcester, while Claire is entering grade eight at a Holyoke grammar school accompanied by a neighbor, Fergal Dooley.

**THEMES:** One central theme of *Noah's Raven* is stereotyping, drawing conclusions about a person based solely on race, ethnicity, or nativity. Tolerance of individual differences is a second theme, particularly with regard to Fergal Dooley. *Noah's Raven* also deals with the changing roles of women in American society.

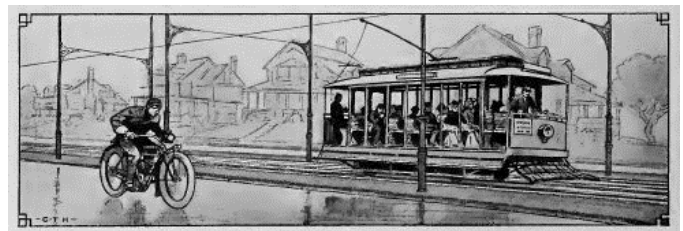
### TEACHING WITH *NOAH'S RAVEN*

High school and upper middle school readers will be easily engaged by *Noah's Raven*. The story has something for every reader: mystery, drama, humor, romance. The book immerses us in the lives of four teenagers shortly after America entered The Great War in Europe. It was a tumultuous time in American history, but an era that has more in common with today's world than one might expect.

This guide is offered to aid teachers who wish to use *Noah's Raven* as part of a language arts, social studies, or other academic program.

**Part I: Enrichment activities** for individuals, small groups, and classes are provided. Activities may be used before, during, or after the reading of *Noah's Raven*. Subject areas include language arts, social studies, science, math, and technology.

**Part II: Additional resources**, available either in print or on-line, are also included for use by teachers and students.



## PART I: ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

### LANGUAGE ARTS

#### A. Characters

1. Choose one of the characters from *Noah's Raven* listed below. Describe the character in enough detail so that someone who has not read the book can understand the character. Include physical appearance, personality traits, strengths, and weaknesses.

Jack Bernard  
 Charles Bernard  
 Marie Bernard  
 Claire Bernard  
 Tom Wellington  
 Anne Wellington  
 Helen Wellington  
 Carolyn Ford  
 Nina Calavetti (Carolyn's mother)  
 Fergal Dooley  
 Eamon Dooley  
 Beatrice (Fergal's aunt)

Jake Muller  
 Hank Köhler  
 Manfred Becker  
 Werner  
 Professor Henry Smith  
 Lawrence Whittemore  
 Meira Goldstein  
 Avi Goldstein  
 Sarah Muller  
 Albert Albrecht  
 Bromley  
 Arnold Wilmot

2. The "arc" of a character refers to changes in a character in response to events in a story. Some may be physical changes, others emotional or spiritual. Some changes are dramatic, some subtle, some for the better, some for the worse. Choose one of the central characters from *Noah's Raven*. Describe the arc of that character over the course of the story. Cite events from the story that were important for the development of the character. You might include several direct quotes from the character that show evidence of the change. Discuss how your feelings about that character changed over the course of the book.

3. Choose two characters from the list who were friends. Discuss their friendship. What made them good friends? What characteristics did they have in common? Were they different in other ways? Here are a few examples:

Jack Bernard and Tom Wellington  
 Anne Wellington and Carolyn Ford  
 Anne Wellington and Claire Bernard

Jake Muller and Hank Köhler  
 Claire Bernard and Fergal Dooley

4. Choose a character who faced an important decision in *Noah's Raven*. Explain the situation and the character's decision. Imagine what might have happened if the character had decided differently. Here are a few examples:

- Claire Bernard's decision to defend Sarah and Albert (Ch. 8)
- Fergal's decision not to accompany Claire on the trolley (Ch. 9)
- Tom's decision to re-enlist in the Navy (Chs. 23, 27, 44)
- Professor Smith's decision to work for the Bureau of Investigation (Ch. 41)
- Tom's decision (Ch. 44) to tell Jack about his war experiences
- Jack's decision to enlist in the Army (Ch. 44)

5. Fergal Dooley has some unusual personality traits and behaviors. Describe some of his quirks and discuss their effects on his relationship with Claire and others and their roles in the story. One example is Fergal's memory for details.

6. What are some problems and challenges for Jack in adjusting to college life?

7. Discuss the relationship between Carolyn Ford and Tom Wellington. Why do you think their engagement was eventually broken off?

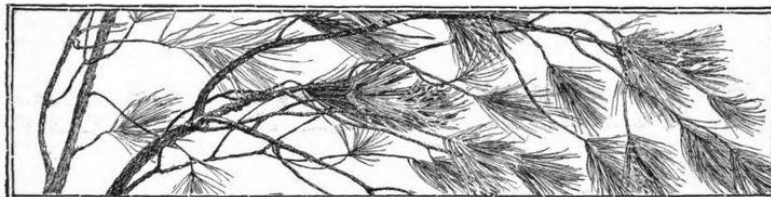
**B. Plot**

1. The story of *Noah's Raven* has a number of subplots. Try to identify and briefly describe two or three of the most important subplots in the book. Early in the book these subplots seem unrelated. Explain how they are connected by the end of the book.
2. Conflict is an important part of many stories and occurs in different forms: physical fights, verbal disagreements, and misunderstandings between characters. Give several examples of conflict between characters in *Noah's Raven* and explain the importance of each to the story.
3. Every good story has a surprise or two for a reader. What unexpected turns of events can you recall from *Noah's Raven*?
4. Writers often give hints or clues about the conclusion of a book earlier in the book, a literary device known as foreshadowing. What examples of foreshadowing can you recall from *Noah's Raven*? For example, do you recall any hints early in the book regarding Professor Smith's identity and role in the plot?
5. Sometimes an author will intentionally include details in a story meant to trick or deceive the reader. Can you recall any such devices in *Noah's Raven*?
6. Irony is a literary device in which a character (or the narrator) says one thing when he or she means something quite different. Give several examples of the use of irony in *Noah's Raven*. Be sure to quote the character's exact words, then explain the irony in those words. One example might be the last sentence in the book in which Claire says "Yes, Fergal, yes, I swear on a stack of bibles."

**C. Vocabulary**

Below is a list of words and expressions from *Noah's Raven* that were common a century ago but may be unfamiliar today. Pick a term from the list that is new to you, define it, then explain how it was used in the book. One page number is provided for each.

Quarry (2)	Stationer (50)	Fulcrum (168)
Aspen (3)	IWWs (52)	Hoosier cabinet (175)
Pinafore (7)	Kaiser (55)	Auger (180)
Tortoiseshell (7)	Model-T (57)	Tip-ups (180)
Lollygagging (9)	U-boat (58)	Comeuppance (182)
Cravat (9)	Dust-up (59)	Contraband (186)
Deportment (10)	Magic Lantern (84)	Wrought iron (197)
Motorman (11)	Pince-nez (95)	Mordant (199)
Poplin (12)	Handset (97)	Lathe (222)
Gig (16)	Shirtwaist (105)	Muslin (241)
Electrics (19)	Rucksack (127)	Currying (241)
Macadam (20)	Fisticuffs (128)	Yeomanette (244)
Rhetoric (24)	Gangway (129)	Duck (255)
Postal (30)	Temperance (132)	Deerstalker (255)
Cobbled (34)	Keening (139)	Bowler (255)
Sledge (37)	Dyspesia (140)	Mustered (264)
Suffragette (41)	Livery (150)	Besotted (277)
Plus-fours (45)	Victrola (160)	Percheron (279)
Haberdasher (49)	Kerosene (167)	Doubletree (280)



**D. Quotations**

1. In Chapter 6, p. 51, Meira Goldstein says of the editor of the *Holyoke Daily Transcript*, “Dat man, he has no respect. He writes about patrioteesm, loyalty, like dey were de exclusive possessions of de rich – de old families of ‘olyoke – de mill owners.” Why is Meira so upset about the editorial? What role does that editorial play later in the book?
2. In Chapter 14, p. 96, Anne tells Jack about a letter she has received from Tom. She tells Jack, “I received a letter from Tommy in the morning post – it frightened me.” What about Tom’s letter had frightened Anne?
3. In Chapter 26, p. 151, when Anne tries to talk to her brother about his war experiences, Tom says, “Listen, Annie, I know you read a lot of books and magazines and newspapers. So just because you read about that Dr. Freud guy you consider yourself some kind of an expert?” What is behind Tom’s reaction to his sister’s efforts?
4. In Chapter 31, p. 195, Claire says to Fergal, “Really, Fergal Dooley, I don’t understand how someone who’s so smart can be so – so stupid.” Explain the importance of those words to the rest of the story.

**E. Reader’s theatre**

Working with 2 or 3 classmates, choose a scene from *Noah’s Raven* that you and your classmates enjoyed or found especially memorable. Assigns roles, write out dialogue, then rehearse and perform the scene in front of the rest of the class. Scenes that might work well include

1. Chapter 1, pages 11 – 12, Claire and Fergal discussing their “arrangement”
2. Chapter 5, pages 46 – 48, Manfred and Werner talking during the parade
3. Chapter 6, pages 50 – 52, Helen Wellington, Avi, and Meira Goldstein discussing the editorial in the Holyoke newspaper
4. Chapter 12, pages 79 – 83, Jake, Hank, and Manfred talking at *Das Beirhaus*.
5. Chapter 33, pages 204 – 207, Tom and Anne discussing the newspaper story about the New Jersey plot
6. Chapter 40, pp. 237 – 240, Helen Wellington and Marjorie Reid meeting with Lawrence Whitemore
7. Chapter 44, pages 262 – 263, Jack and Tom ice-fishing, talking about the past
8. Chapter 45, pages 275 - 279, Anne and Claire discussing Albert and the professor

**F. Writing fiction**

If you enjoy reading historical novels such as *Noah’s Raven*, maybe you’d like to try writing historical fiction. Choose a time period in the past that interests you and that you know something about. Create two characters living in that time. Then imagine the characters discussing something about their lives or their community. Write just enough dialogue so that a reader will be interested in your characters. Then share your scene with a classmate and see how he or she reacts. Here are a few ideas:

1. Imagine you are fourteen years old and living in Holyoke in 1917. Your best friend is from a family just recently arrived from Germany. You witness bullying and harassment of your friend because of his/her German ancestry. Write some dialogue between you and your friend about how to cope with this.
2. Imagine you are a German immigrant to the United States and you are approached by someone and asked to assist in a bombing plot. Do you agree to assist, do you decline, or do you consider becoming a “double agent” like Professor Smith? Write some dialogue between you and the agent, or between you and a friend, as you make your decision.

## SOCIAL STUDIES

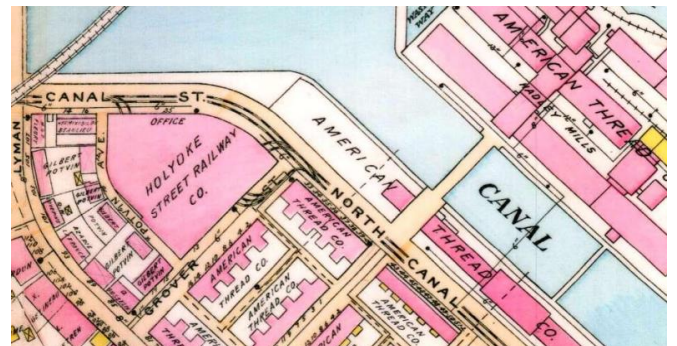
### A. History

1. **WORLD WAR I:** *Noah's Raven* takes place in 1917, shortly after the United States entered World War I in Europe. That war actually began in 1914. Why did America finally enter the war in Europe in 1917? Make a list of some of the factors that influenced that decision. Here are a few clues: the *Lusitania*, U-boat attacks, Teddy Roosevelt, and the Zimmermann telegram.
2. **WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE:** At the time of *Noah's Raven* women could not vote in national elections. Research the history of women's suffrage in the United States. Name some of the leaders of the women's suffrage movement and describe their roles in the movement. Create a time line showing the major events in the history of women's suffrage in the U.S.
3. **TERRORISM IN AMERICA:** Plots like those in *Noah's Raven* really did occur in America between 1914 and 1917. The most famous was the bombing of Black Tom Island described in Chapter 5. Research the history of such plots in the United States in that period. Describe several and find the names of some of the persons known to be responsible for them.
4. **THE SETTLEMENT MOVEMENT:** The Holyoke Women's Home is an example of what were known as "settlement houses" in American cities of that era. Research the subject of settlement houses. What was their role in cities of that time? Who were some leaders of the settlement movement? Do we have organizations of that type in our cities today?
5. **IRISH IMMIGRATION:** Several key characters in *Noah's Raven* were recent immigrants to America from Ireland. Research Irish immigration to America. Find out why so many Irish emigrated to America in the 1840s and 1850s. See if you can find out why many Irish-Americans were not enthusiastic about America's entry into the war in Europe.
6. **THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT:** The temperance movement was a very important social movement of the early twentieth century in the U.S. Research the movement. What was it about? What was "prohibition," when did it become law, and when and why was it eventually repealed?
7. **CANADA IN WORLD WAR I:** Early in *Noah's Raven*, we learn that Stephen Bousquet, a neighbor of the Bernards, returned to Canada, enlisted in the Canadian army, and was killed in Europe in July, 1917. Research Canada's role in World War I. Explain why Canada entered the war three years before the United States and why some Americans like Stephen Bousquet might have decided to return to Canada to enlist.
8. **IMMIGRATION:** Much of the success of the American textile industry a century ago was due to the availability of workers who had only recently immigrated to the U.S. Find out what countries or regions most immigrants to the U.S. came from between 1850 and 1915, what opportunities they had, and what challenges they faced.
9. **IMMIGRATION THEN AND NOW:** Immigration was a contentious issue in the United States a century ago and it remains so today. Compare immigration in 1917 to today in the United States. Consider questions such as the source and number of immigrants, the attractions for immigrants to America, and the attitudes of Americans to immigration then and now.

### B. Geography

1. The streets of downtown Holyoke have changed very little in a century. Find a current street map of Holyoke and print it out, then mark each of the following locations:

- Dinosaur Footprints Reservation (Rt. 5, Smith's Ferry)
- The Wellingtons' house (corner of Cabot and Beech Streets)
- The Women's Home (Maple Street near Suffolk Street)
- Wellington Textile mill (Race Street on the Second Level Canal)
- The streetcar line from Holyoke to Westfield (from High Street to Sargeant Street to Northampton Street to Cherry Street)



2. On a larger map of modern day western Massachusetts try to locate the following:

Holyoke

Westfield

Hampton Ponds on the Holyoke/Westfield border

The route of the Holyoke-Westfield trolley line (High St. to Sargeant St. to Northampton St. to Cherry St., then southwest to Westfield)

The route of the Holyoke-South Hadley-Amherst trolley line

3. Locate a map of your hometown a century ago. If there were streetcars in your town, try to find out where the lines ran. How has your city or town changed in the last 100 years?

### MATH, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY

1. Three automobile models are prominent in *Noah's Raven*. Find advertisements from that era for the Model-T Ford, Hupmobile, and Pierce-Arrow. Describe each vehicle and the features that made it popular.

2. Anne's job at the Holyoke Women's Home paid \$15 per week. If she worked 48 hours a week, what was her hourly wage? Find out what rate of pay was typical for workers in different kinds of jobs in the nineteen-teens.

3. Wellington Textiles was located on the "second level canal" in Holyoke. Much of Holyoke's canal system is still intact today. Find out about Holyoke's canal system, draw it or print a map of it, and explain what made it truly revolutionary for its time.

4. How did an electric streetcar or trolley work? Find out how and where the electricity was generated, how it was delivered to each car on a line, and how a trolley car was operated.

5. The introduction of electricity in homes changed the lives of all Americans. Find out when this occurred in your hometown and what effects it had on everyday life in American homes.

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200 lbs. weight.  
200 lbs. weight.  
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200 lbs. weight.

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This is true notwithstanding the developments which have taken place in the industry since the advent of the Hupmobile. It is true because of two things.

One of these is the low first cost of the Hupmobile and its splendid value.

The other is the fact that, in service, it is faithful and true; and the cost of upkeep and repairs is remarkably low, due to the high ideal which is maintained in its construction.

Investigation and comparison of Hupmobile value with values presented elsewhere will wipe out your last faint doubt, if you are in the market for a car at a price approximate with that of the Hupmobile.

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## PART II: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Non-fiction:** Some references for teachers or students wishing to learn more about early 20<sup>th</sup> century America.

*Dark Invasion* by Howard Blum. Harper Collins, New York, NY, 2014. A fascinating narrative of German sabotage efforts in the United States between 1914 and 1917.

*The First World War* by Hew Strachan. Penguin Books, New York, NY, 2001. A detailed account of World War I, how it began, how it was waged, and how it ended.

*On Convoy Duty in World War I: The Diary of Hoosier Guy Connor* by Jeffrey L. Patrick, [ed.]. Indiana Magazine of History, Volume 89, No. 4, pp. 335-352, 1993. First-hand account of the life of a young sailor during World War I.

*Spy Mad? Investigating Subversion in Pennsylvania, 1917-1918* by Philip Jenkins. Pennsylvania History: Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies, Volume 63, No. 2, pp. 204-231, 1996. Provides many examples of the excesses of xenophobia in one state during World War I.

**Historical Fiction:** Novels depicting life in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

*A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* by Betty Smith, Harper Brothers, New York, NY, 1943. Touching and inspirational story of an Irish-American family in New York City in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

*All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque, Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1928. A novel about the war experiences of a German soldier in World War I.

*One of Ours* by Willa Cather, Vintage Books, New York, NY, 1923. Pulitzer Prize-winning novel about a young American man who finds meaning in life as a soldier in World War I.

**Visit [www.TrolleyDays.net](http://www.TrolleyDays.net):** You will find some valuable learning tools for students at [www.TrolleyDays.net](http://www.TrolleyDays.net).

**Take a Tour** includes a map of Holyoke of that period with old photos and drawings of important localities from the stories.

**Meet the Characters** includes descriptions, quotes, and images of the major characters.

**Meet the Author** includes the words of Robert T. McMaster about his books and the influence of his parents, Holyoke history, and French-Canadian immigrants.

