

# History Term Paper

Please note that the April 2020 meeting has been canceled in accordance with local and state officials in response to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) situation. We hope to see you all again in May!

## Pandemic Pandemonium!

It's unfathomable how quickly our way of life has changed since our March meeting as a result of the novel Coronavirus. Officials recently announced the first case in Point Pleasant Beach, but it's sure to not be the last.

Infectious diseases flourish alongside the growth of human civilizations. Novel infections that develop when large numbers of people live in close proximity to each other and to animals, are spread across the Earth by travelers.

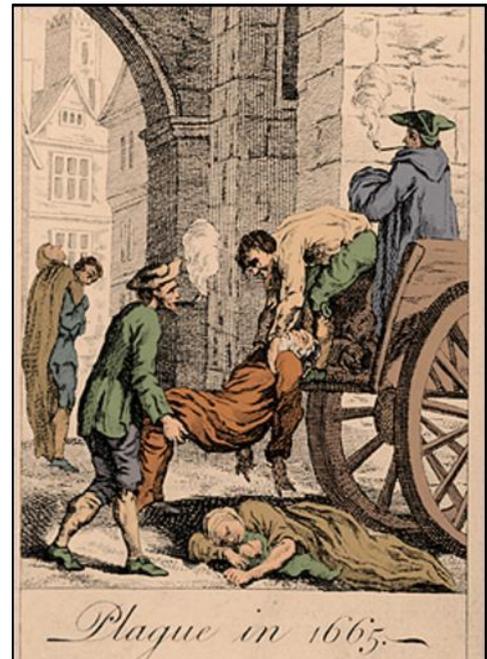
According to History.com, three of the deadliest pandemics in recorded history were caused by a single bacterium. The official name of the fatal infection is *yersinia pestis*, but you and I know it as *the plague*. The Plague of Justinian marked the first appearance of the plague. The infection arrived in Constantinople (the capital of the Byzantine Empire) in 541 CE from Egypt in plague-ridden fleas attached to black rats that ate grain in Egypt. The Plague of Justinian is believed to have killed half of the world's population after spreading across Europe, Asia, North Africa, and Arabia. An estimated 30 to 50 million people died from it.

When the plague return 800 years later in 1347, it claimed 200 million lives in only four years. You will recognize this particular plague as The Black Death. It was in the Venetian-controlled port city of Ragusa where officials decided to keep newly arrived sailors in isolation for 30 days, which became known in Venetian law as *trentino*. This was the first time the concept of quarantine was used to help thwart the spread of the virus. The Venetians increased the mandatory isolation period to 40 days, or a *quarantino*, which is the origin of the word quarantine and the beginning of its practice in the Western world.

In London, the plague resurfaced about every 20 years from 1348 to 1665 with 40 outbreaks in 300 years. Each new epidemic resulted in the death of 20 percent of the men, women, and children living in the British capital. England imposed the first laws to separate and isolate the sick in the early 1500s. Home stricken by plague were marked with a bale of hay strung to a pole outside. People with infected family members had to carry a white pole when out in public. The Great Plague of 1665 was the last and one of the worst of the London outbreaks, killing 100,000 in just seven months, most of whom were buried in mass graves.. Officials banned all public entertainment and victims were forcibly shut into their homes to prevent the spread of the disease.

Smallpox was another regional disease that menaced Europe, Asia, and Arabia for centuries. Three out of ten people infected died, and the rest were left with pockmarked scars. However, when the smallpox virus arrived in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with the first European explorers, indigenous people from the United States and Mexico had no natural immunity to the virus. As a result, tens of millions died. Smallpox actually was the first virus epidemic to be ended by a vaccine discovered by a British doctor named Edward Jenner in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. It took nearly two centuries, but the World Health Organization announced that smallpox had been completely eradicated from the face of the Earth in 1980.

Cholera killed tens of thousands in England in the early- to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Cholera has been largely eradicated in developed countries like the United States, but it still kills people in third-world countries who lack access to clean drinking water and lacking adequate sewage treatment. Source: History.com



The Great Plague of London in 1665. The last major outbreak of the bubonic plague in England. *Creative Commons/Public Domain*

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## Point Pleasant Historical Society *Serving Point Pleasant and Point Pleasant Beach*

THE PRESIDENT'S CORONAVIRUS GUIDELINES FOR AMERICA

### 15 DAYS TO SLOW THE SPREAD

Listen to and follow the directions of your **STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES**.

**IF YOU FEEL SICK**, stay home. Do not go to work. Contact your medical provider.

**IF YOUR CHILDREN ARE SICK**, keep them at home. Do not send them to school. Contact your medical provider.

**IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAS TESTED POSITIVE** for the coronavirus, keep the entire household at home. Do not go to work. Do not go to school. Contact your medical provider.

**IF YOU ARE AN OLDER PERSON**, stay home and away from other people.

**IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH A SERIOUS UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITION** that can put you at increased risk (for example, a condition that impairs your lung or heart function or weakens your immune system), stay home and away from other people.



For more information, please visit  
**CORONAVIRUS.GOV**

### Coronavirus (COVID-19) Information

Center for Disease Control:  
 cdc.gov

Have general questions about COVID-19?

The NJ Poison Control Center and 211 have partnered with the State to provide information to the public on COVID-19:

Call: 2-1-1

Call (24/7): 1-800-962-1253

Text: NJCOVID to 898-211

Text: your zip code to 898-211 for live text assistance

Visit [nj.gov/health](https://nj.gov/health) for additional information

Special thanks to *The Last Whippoorwill Bluegrass Band* for making the March meeting one to remember! Visit their website at <https://www.highlonesomebluegrass.com/>



**In accordance with the guidance from state and local health officials and our concern for our museum patrons, the Point Pleasant Historical Museum is closed to visitors until further notice.**

### *The 1918 Spanish Flu in New Jersey*

- The first recorded death from the 1918 Spanish Flu in New Jersey happened at Fort Dix in September 1918.
- 863 people were killed at Fort Dix between September and October, 1918.
- More than 2,100 people died in Newark between September and December 1918. Officials ordered all schools and business to shut on Oct. 10, 1918.
- As World War I ended, influenza in New Jersey was subsiding.
- A state Department of Health report listed 4,010 deaths in New Jersey in September 1918, with 222 caused by influenza. By the next month, there were 17,260 deaths in the state, with an astounding 8,477 attributed to the flu pandemic.

Source: Kaulessar, Ricardo. "100 years ago, Spanish flu pandemic brought dread to New Jersey." *northjersey.com*, 9 October, 2018, <https://www.northjersey.com/story/news/local/2018/10/09/1918-spanish-flu-pandemic-killed-thousands-new-jersey/1222214002/>. Accessed 18 March 2020.