

History Making Productions Presents:

Fever: 1793
Student Materials:
Blank Notesheet
and Worksheets

- Learning through Media -

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Yellow Fever Vocabulary

- Microcosm—a small, representative system that is similar to a larger system
- Catalyst—something that that provokes or speeds significant change or action
- Saint Domingue—a French colony in the Caribbean that prospered based on sugar plantations that used slave labor. A revolt by the enslaved that began in 1791 led to the creation of the independent nation of Haiti in 1804.
- Cargo—goods or merchandise carried in a ship, airplane, or vehicle
- Emanate—to come out from a source
- Privy—a toilet located in a small shed outside a house or other building; outhouse
- Reformer—a person who seeks to change things for the better
- Wharf—a place where ships can unload cargo
- Refugee—a person who flees to a foreign country to escape danger
- Palliative—something that relieves the symptoms of a disease without curing it
- Bloodletting—the withdrawal of small quantities of blood from a patient to cure or prevent illness and disease.

Fever: 1793—The Basics: Note Sheet

Fill this in as you watch. Sentences in italics are direct quotations from the episode.

1. How is Philadelphia a *microcosm* of the nation?
2. What is the *catalyst* that is creating opportunity for Philadelphians?
3. Ships owned by Stephen Girard and other merchants bring more than _____ French and _____ of their slaves to Philadelphia.
4. One of the theories is that Yellow Fever is coming off _____. Was it _____? Was it particular _____?
5. There is another theory: that the disease is emanating from streets _____ with refuse and wells contaminated by nearby _____.
6. It's called Yellow Fever because of the yellow color that occurs in the _____ and the _____ because of a product called bilirubin that builds up under the skin. Bilirubin is usually made by the _____ and emptied into the small intestine to aid with _____. But when the liver is failing, then this function can no longer occur and the bilirubin goes into the _____ as well.
7. Currie and a group of French physicians advocate a palliative regimen which means _____, mild _____, tea, _____; things to strengthen the body. Rush believes in _____ intervention (things like purging and bloodletting)
8. One in _____ Philadelphians died in the epidemic.
9. Reports accuse black nurses of _____ and price gouging.
10. How does Richard Allen respond to the accusations?
11. What steps does Philadelphia take to respond to the Yellow Fever crisis?

Fever: 1793—Key figure

Use this space to take notes on the actions of (circle one)

Richard Allen

Sarah Bass

Stephen Girard Ann Parrish

Benjamin Rush



Fever: 1793 - Primary Sources

Excerpt from *A Short Account of the Malignant Fever, lately prevalent in Philadelphia: with a statement of the proceedings that took place on the subject in different parts of the United States* by Matthew Carey.

When the yellow fever prevailed in South Carolina, the negroes, according to that accurate observer, Dr. Lining, were wholly free from it. "There is something very singular in the constitution of the negroes," says he, "which renders them not liable to this fever; for though many of them were as much exposed as the nurses to this infection, yet I never knew one instance of this fever among them' though they are equally subject with the white people to the bilious fever." The same idea prevailed for a considerable time in Philadelphia; but it was erroneous (*wrong*). They did not escape the disorder; however, there were scarcely any of them seized at first, and the number that were finally affected, was not great; and it is asserted, by an eminent doctor, "it yielded to the power of medicine in them more easily than in the whites." The error that prevailed on this subject had a salutary (*helpful*) effect; for, at an early period of the disorder, few white nurses could be procured (*obtained*); and, had the negroes been equally terrified, the sufferings of the sick, great as they actually were, would have been exceedingly aggravated. At the period alluded (*referred*) to, the elders of the African church met, and offered their assistance to the Mayor, to procure nurses for the sick, and aid in burying the dead. Their offers were accepted; and Absalom Jones, Richard Allen, and William undertook the management of these two several services. The great demand for nurses, afforded an opportunity for imposition, which was eagerly seized by some of those who acted in that capacity, both coloured and white. They extorted (*extracted by force*) two, three, four, and even five dollars a night for such attendance, as would have been well paid for, by a single dollar. Some of them were even detected in plundering the houses of the sick.

On examining the books of the hospital at Bushhill, it appears, that there were nearly twenty coloured people received there, of whom about three-fourths died.

1. Although Carey asserts that black people could develop yellow fever, why does he think that they can recover from the disease more easily than white people?
2. Of what two things does Carey accuse the "coloured and white" nurses of doing?



Continued, Fever: 1793 - Primary Sources

A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793: And a Refutation of some Censures, Thrown upon Them in Some Late Publications by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones

Excerpt I

We feel ourselves sensibly aggrieved by the censorious epithets of many, who did not render the least assistance in the time of necessity, yet are liberal of their censure of us, for the prices paid for our services, when no one knew how to make a proposal to any one they wanted to assist them. At first we made no charge, but let it to those we served in removing their dead, to give what they thought fit—we set no price, until the reward was fixed by those we had served. After paying the people we had to assist us, our compensation is much less than many will believe.

We do assure the public, that *all* the money we have received, for burying, and for coffins which we ourselves purchased and procured, has not destroyed the expense of wages which we had to pay to those whom we employed to assist us. The following statement is accurately made:

CASH RECEIVED.

The whole amount of cash we received for burying the dead, and for burying beds, is, - -
- - £233 10 4

CASH PAID.

For coffins, for which we have received nothing - £33 0 0


For the hire of five men, 3 of them 70 days each, and the other two, 63 days each, at 22/6 per day, - - - 378 0 0

411 0 0

Depts due us, for which we expect but little, - £110 0 0

From the statement, for the truth of which we solemnly vouch, it is evident, and we sensibly feel the operation of the fact, that we are out of pocket, - - - - £177 9 8

What are the major points made by Jones and Allen in the excerpt above to refute accusations against African Americans who helped out during the yellow fever epidemic?



Continued, Fever: 1793 - Primary Sources

A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793: And a Refutation of some Censures, Thrown upon Them in Some Late Publications by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones

Excerpt 2

We feel ourselves hurt most by a partial, censorious paragraph, in Mr. Carey's second edition, of his account of the sickness, &c. in Philadelphia; pages 76 and 77, where he asperses the blacks alone, for having taken the advantage of the distressed situation of the people. That some extravagant prices were paid, we admit; but how came they to be demanded? The reason is plain. It was with difficulty persons could be had to supply the wants of the sick, as nurses;--applications became more and more numerous, the consequence was, when we procured them at six dollars per week, and called upon them to go where they were wanted, we found they were gone elsewhere; here was a disappointment; upon enquiring the cause, we found, they had been allured away by others who offered greater wages, until they got from two to four dollars per day. We had no restraint upon the people. It was natural for people in low circumstances to accept a voluntary, bounteous reward; especially under the loathsomeness of many of the sick, when nature shuddered at the thoughts of the infection, and the talk assigned was aggravated by lunacy, and being left much alone with them.

What are the major points made by Jones and Allen in the excerpt above to refute accusations against African Americans who helped out during the yellow fever epidemic?



Continued, Fever: 1793 - Primary Sources

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Excerpt 3

We wish not to offend, but when an unprovoked attempt is made, to make us blacker than we are, it becomes less necessary to be over cautious on that account; therefore we shall take the liberty to tell of the conduct of some of the whites.

We know, six pounds was demanded by, and paid, to a white woman, for putting a corpse into a coffin; and forty dollars was demanded, and paid, to four white men, for bringing it down the stairs.

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor both died in one night; a white woman had the care of them; after they were dead she called on Jacob Servoss, esq. for her pay, demanding six pounds for laying them out; upon seeing a bundle with her, he suspected she had pilfered; on searching her, Mr. Taylor's buckles were found in her pocket, with other things.

An elderly lady, Mrs. Malony, was given into the care of a white woman, she died, we were called to remove the corpse, when we came the woman was laying so drunk that she did not know what we were doing, but we know she had one of Mrs. Malony's rings on her finger, and another in her pocket.

What are the major points made by Jones and Allen in the excerpt above to refute accusations against African Americans who helped out during the yellow fever epidemic?



Continued, Fever: 1793 - Primary Sources

A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793: And a Refutation of some Censures, Thrown upon Them in Some Late Publications by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones

Excerpt 4

We can assure the public, there were as many white as black people, detected in pilfering, although the number of the latter, employed as nurses, was twenty times as great as the former, and that there is, in our opinion, as great a proportion of white, as of black, inclined to such practices. It is rather to be admired, that so few instances of pilfering and robbery happened, considering the great opportunities there were for such things: we do not know of more than five black people, suspected of any thing clandestine, out of the great number employed; the people were glad to get any person to assist them—a black was preferred, because it was supposed, they were not so likely to take the disorder, the most worthless were acceptable, so that it would have been no cause of wonder, if twenty causes of complaint occurred, for one that hath.

What are the major points made by Jones and Allen in the excerpt above to refute accusations against African Americans who helped out during the yellow fever epidemic?



Continued, Fever: 1793 - Primary Sources

A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People, during the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793: And a Refutation of some Censures, Thrown upon Them in Some Late Publications by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones

Excerpt 5

It has been alleged, that many of the sick, were neglected by the nurses; we do not wonder at it, considering their situation, in many instances, up night and day, without any one to relieve them, worn down with fatigue, and want of sleep, they could not in many cases, render that assistance, which was needful: where we visited, the causes of complaint on this score, were not numerous. The case of the nurses, in many instances, were deserving of commiseration, the patient raging and frightful to behold; it has frequently required two persons, to hold them from running way, other have made attempts to jump out of a window, in many chambers they were nailed down, and the door was kept locked, to prevent them from running away, or breaking their necks, others lay vomiting blood, and screaming enough to chill them with horror. Thus were many of the nurses circumstanced, alone, until the patient died, then called away to another scene of distress, and thus have been for a week or ten days left to do the best they could without any sufficient rest, many of them having some of their dearest connections sick at the time, and suffering for want, while their husband, wife, father, mother, &c. have been engaged in the service of the white people.

What are the major points made by Jones and Allen in the excerpt above to refute accusations against African Americans who helped out during the yellow fever epidemic?

Fever: 1793 - A Virtual Tour

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, complete this chart. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

Location	Significance-Why is this place important in the history of the yellow fever epidemic of 1793?
Port of Philadelphia on the Delaware River	
Area near Benjamin Franklin Bridge	
Front & Dock Streets	
American Philosophical Society at 5 th & Chestnut Streets	
Christ Church Burial Ground at 5 th & Arch Streets	
Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church at 6 th and Lombard Streets	
Gloria Dei Church (Old Swedes') at Christian & Front Streets	
Presidents' House at 6 th & Market (High) Streets	

Continued, Fever: 1793 - A Virtual Tour

Northern Liberties/Heart of The Liberties (a separate city from Philadelphia in 1790)	
16 th & Spring Garden Streets	
The Lazaretto, Tinicum Township	
City Hall/Centre Square	
Fairmount Waterworks	

EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. *Pause at 7 minutes, 16 seconds. What building is shown in this engraving? What assumptions can you make about the neighborhood of Spring Garden at the time?*

2. *Pause at 8 minutes, 34 seconds. Compare this image of an eighteenth century hospital to modern day hospitals—what is similar and what is different?*



Continued, Fever: 1793 - A Virtual Tour

3. *Pause at 9 minutes, 57 seconds. What are three observations you can make about the people in front of the waterworks in Center Square? Why do you think they have gathered there?*

ANALYZING THE INFO: *If you were leading a tour of Philadelphia designed to tell the story of the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1793, which three sites would you visit and why?*

Anatomy of an Epidemic: Origins of Yellow Fever

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, take notes to complete this sheet. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

I. Yellow Fever Timeline: Note that events will not be presented in chronological (time) order. You will not be able to fill in the later dates until you have already answered questions II & III.

17th Century-

1690s-

1791-

1792-

1793-

1853 & 1878-

1905-

2. How was yellow fever epidemic connected to the slave trade?

3. Why did French refugees from Haiti come to North America instead of France?

4. What was *vomito negro*? What was its significance?



Continued, Anatomy of an Epidemic: Origins of Yellow Fever

EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES: *What symptoms of yellow fever are illustrated in the images shown at 4 minutes, 41 seconds and 5 minutes, 4 seconds?*

ANALYZING THE INFO: *Professor David Barnes says that the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1793 in Philadelphia was similar to the events of September 11, 2001? Do you agree with his comparison? Why or why not?*



Benjamin Rush: Statesman and Scientist

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, complete this sheet. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

Rush the Statesman

Hero -evidence that Rush had admirable ideas and performed positive actions	Hypocrite -evidence that Rush's actions did not always follow his stated beliefs

Rush the Scientist

Genius -evidence that Rush was a doctor ahead of his time	Quack -evidence that Rush was a doctor who caused much suffering and death



Continued, Benjamin Rush: Statesman and Scientist

EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. *Why do you think Rush decided to write AN ACCOUNT OF THE Bilious remitting Yellow Fever, AS IT APPEARED IN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA IN THE YEAR 1793 (shown at 6 minutes, 6 seconds)?*

2. *Pause at 6:23. Based on what you have learned about Rush's approach to medicine, how do you think the "tranquilizing chair" was meant to work? Do you think it would have been a successful medical innovation?*

3. *Pause at 6:25. What message was Rush trying to convey with his MORAL AND PHYSICAL THERMOMETER (note: "temperance" means abstaining from the drinking of alcohol)?*

ANALYZING THE INFO: *Professor Richard Newman says that Dr. Rush was "profoundly wrong in a way that permits others to be right". Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?*

Burying the Dead: Victims of the Yellow Fever Epidemic

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, complete this sheet. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

1. Fill in this chart.

Church and/or denomination	Role in the yellow fever epidemic of 1793
St. Mary's German Catholic Church	
St. Michael's Zion Lutheran Church	
Baptists	
Richard Allen's African American congregation	
Holy Trinity Catholic Church	

2. How many people died during the Yellow Fever epidemic of 1793?

EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. What do the images at 2 minutes, 43 seconds and 3 minutes, 4 seconds illustrate about death and burials during the yellow fever epidemic of 1793?

2. Pause at 4 minutes, 5 seconds. Which of the churches listed at the top of the document lost the most people in September of 1798?



Continued, Burying the Dead: Victims of the Yellow Fever Epidemic

ANALYZING THE INFO: Professor Allen Guelzo says that the yellow fever epidemic of 1793 erased **Deism** (the belief that human reason, rather than organized religion, can explain the natural world and the existence of God) in the United States. Why does he say this occurred? Does this reaction make sense to you?

Doctors and Cures: Treatments of Yellow Fever

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, complete this sheet. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

1. How did most people receive their health care? Why were people skeptical of doctors?

2. Begin this at the 2-minute mark in the webisode: List the suggested cures for yellow fever in the appropriate column. Decide whether the cure fits with the more gentle approach favored by doctors William Currie and Jean Deveze or with the "heroic" efforts promoted by Benjamin Rush.

Currie/Deveze	Rush

3. What was the theory of humors? How did it justify Rush's approach to curing yellow fever?

4. According to the webisode, gunfire was used in an unsuccessful attempt to end the yellow fever epidemic. What actually did end the spread of the disease?



Continued, Doctors and Cures: Treatments of Yellow Fever

EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. Pause at 1 minute, 11 seconds. The man standing in the center is saying to the African American woman, "Don't tell me you outlandish hussey of toast and toddy. I say it's the black vomit". (Note that "black vomit" was a symptom of yellow fever.) What seems to be actually wrong with the patient and who is being made fun of in this cartoon?
2. What are the terms for the objects shown at 2 minutes, 50 seconds and how were they used?
3. What is shown at 3 minutes, 27 seconds and how was it used?
4. Using a dictionary if needed, explain what the title shown at 5 minutes, 32 seconds indicates about the content of the publication.

ANALYZING THE INFO: What are the three most significant differences between how medicine was practiced in the 18th century and how it is practiced today?

The Healthy City: Early Public Health

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, complete this sheet. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

1. What were the two main explanations for Philadelphia's recurring yellow fever outbreaks?

2. Fill in the chart below.

Steps taken to clean Philadelphia and prevent spread of disease	Steps taken to calm Philadelphia during the yellow fever epidemic of 1793

EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Pause at 1 minute, 48 seconds. According to the first four lines of the document, what are captains or masters of ships required to do when they reach the Port of Philadelphia? (Note: you will usually need to replace "f" with "s" as you read.)



Continued, The Healthy City: Early Public Health

2. What procedure is illustrated in the image at 2 minutes, 25 seconds?

ANALYZING THE INFO: The webisode begins with the following poem by Philip Freneau:

Nature's poisons here collected,
Water, earth and air infected—
O, what a pity,
Such a city,
Was in such a place erected!

Does this quotation do a good job of describing Philadelphia in the 1790s? How about Philadelphia today? Answer on the back or on a separate sheet.



Fairmount Water Works: Ingenuity in Water Supply

GATHERING THE INFO: As you watch the webisode, complete this sheet. You may need to pause the webisode and/or watch it more than once to get all of the information.

1. Why was water so important in the early history of Philadelphia?

2. Fill in the blanks to describe Latrobe's original water system for Philadelphia as described by John Van Horne.

"Latrobe proposed an unorthodox approach to bring fresh water into the city from the Schuylkill River. He wanted to install _____ at the foot of _____ Street and from there the water would _____ through a _____ conduit to _____, where _____ now stands. From there he wanted a _____ that would raise the water into a series of raised cisterns or _____ and from there the water would be distributed by _____ through the city through _____ pipes."

3. Fill in the chart below with information about the 1801 Pump House.

Successes	Challenges



Continued, Fairmount Water Works: Ingenuity in Water Supply

4. Why were Charles Dickens and others so impressed by Philadelphia's Fairmount Water Works?

EXPLORING PRIMARY SOURCES:

1. *Pause at 5 minutes, 21 seconds. What two engineering marvels are depicted?*

2. *Pause at 5 minutes, 54 seconds. What observations can you make about the people outside of the Water Works? Why do you think they are there?*

ANALYZING THE INFO: According to Professor Steven Conn , "The Internet is as nothing when compared to drinkable water." What does he mean by this statement? What evidence did you find in the webisode that supports this comparison?