



**DEADLINE EXTENDED TO
SEPTEMBER 12TH!!**



SAVIORS & SURVIVORS:

**Philadelphia's Free Black Community
& The Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793**

SUMMER 2020 CONTEST

**Eligible Participants: High School Students within
the Northeast United States**

Contest closes September 12th, 2020

PRIZES:

1st place: Annual AAMP Family Membership, AAMP T-Shirt
and \$100 gift card to Uncle Bobby's Cafe

2nd place: Annual AAMP Family Membership, AAMP T-Shirt
and \$75 gift card to Sable Collective

3rd place: Annual AAMP Family Membership, AAMP T-Shirt
and \$50 gift card to Harriet's Bookshop

Essays can be submitted via email to seusebio@aampmuseum.org

Created by: Hannah Wallace, Educational Programming Manager
& Samantha Eusebio, Educational Programming Coordinator

ESSAY OBJECTIVE

By analyzing a primary account from 1793 by Rev. Absalom Jones and Rev. Richard Allen, contestants will identify social similarities and differences that emerged in Philadelphians who lived through the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 and those now experiencing the CoronaVirus Pandemic from 2019 to present.



Grade Level: 9th - 12th



Subject: Social Studies



Length of Time: 4 hours



OUTCOME:

Contestants will produce their own primary accounts that identify and respond to notable social similarities and differences between the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793 and the CoronaVirus of 2019-present day.

These primary accounts can take the format of either a narrative essay, compare & contrast essay, or critical essay. The essay should be a minimum of 500 words.

Page 5 lists and defines the different essay styles.

VOCABULARY WORDS

- **Refutation**

noun

I. the action of proving a statement or theory to be wrong or false.

- **Censure**

verb

I. express severe disapproval of (someone or something), especially in a formal statement.

plural noun: censures

II. the expression of formal disapproval.

- **Yellow Fever**

noun

I. Yellow fever is a viral infection spread by a particular type of mosquito. Illness ranges from a fever with aches and pains to severe liver disease with bleeding and yellowing skin (jaundice). There is no medicine to treat or cure infection.

- **Viral Infection**

noun

I. Viral infections are growths of a harmful virus inside the body. Viruses infect a host by introducing their genetic material into the cells and hijacking the cell's internal machinery to make more virus particles. Symptoms of the viral illness occur as a result of cell damage, tissue destruction, and the associated immune response.

- **Epidemic**

adjective

I. Also *ep-i-dem-i-cal*. (of a disease) affecting many persons at the same time, and spreading from person to person in a locality where the disease is not permanently prevalent.

noun

II. a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a specific community at a particular time.

- **The Free African Society**

noun

I. The Free African Society, founded in 1787, was a benevolent organization that held religious services and provided mutual aid for "free Africans and their descendants" in Philadelphia. The Society was founded by Richard Allen and Absalom Jones.

- **CoronaVirus**

noun

I. any of a group of RNA viruses that cause a variety of diseases in humans and other animals.

- **Virus**

noun

I. Viruses are small particles of genetic material (either DNA or RNA) that are surrounded by a protein coat. Some viruses also have a fatty "envelope" covering. They are incapable of reproducing on their own. Viruses depend on the organisms they infect (hosts) for their very survival. Viruses get a bad rap, but they also perform many important functions for humans, plants, animals, and the environment. For example, some viruses protect the host against other infections. Viruses also participate in the process of evolution by transferring genes among different species. In biomedical research, scientists use viruses to insert new genes into cells.

- **Pandemic**

adjective

I. (of a disease) prevalent throughout an entire country, continent, or the whole world; epidemic over a large area.

noun

II. a pandemic disease

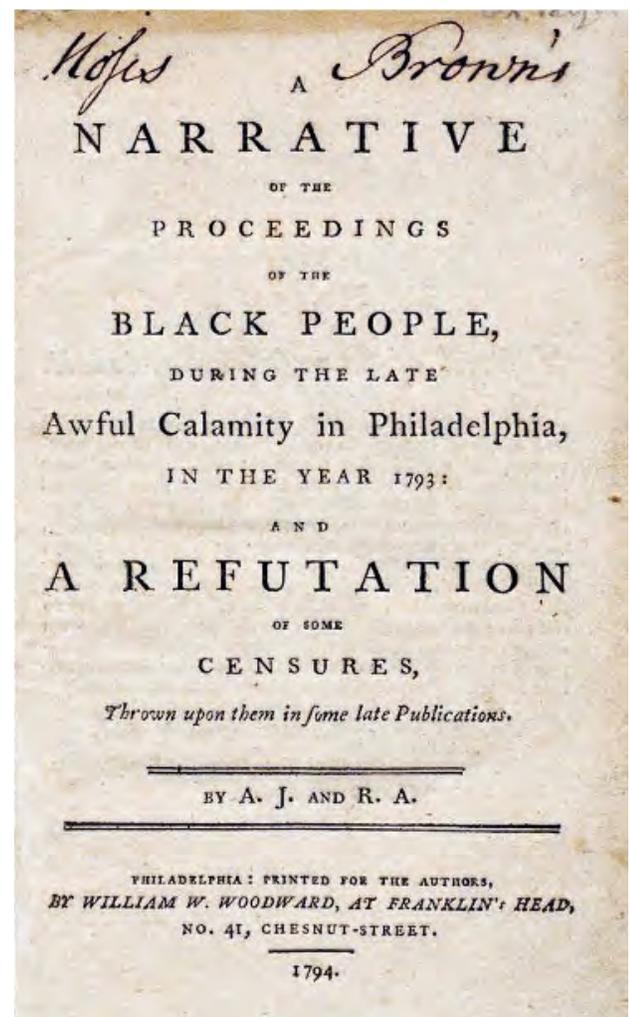
MAJOR FACTS

- During the 1793 yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia, 5,000 or more people were listed in the official register of deaths between August 1 and November 9. The vast majority of them died of yellow fever, making the epidemic in the city of 50,000 people one of the most severe in United States history.
- In Haiti, the revolution was also met with outbreaks of yellow fever. Since the viral infection is most accustomed to tropical environments, it was believed that refugees from Haiti had carried the disease to Philadelphia. This statement has only been considered partially true, for Philadelphia also had perfect conditions for virus-ridden mosquitoes to breed and infect Philadelphia residents with the Yellow Fever.
- Philadelphia was the nation's capital at the time. President George Washington, along with other wealthy politicians and businessmen left the inner-city to quarantine themselves and their families in Germantown. The responsibility of caring for the sick and dying was left primarily to medical and religious organizations like that of The Free African Society.
- Read pages A2, 15-20 from the required reading listed below and respond to the Essay prompt (see below).



A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People during the late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia in the year 1793 and Refutation of the Censures

An Important Note: The font used in printed materials from 1793 Philadelphia was different from current documents. The letter "s" looks similar to the letter "f." Pace yourself as you read and/or read the text out loud to adjust to this difference in printed text. Practice makes perfect!



A NARRATIVE, &c.

IN consequence of a partial representation of the conduct of the people who were employed to nurse the sick, in the late calamitous state of the city of Philadelphia, we are solicited, by a number of those who feel themselves injured thereby, and by the advice of several respectable citizens, to step forward and declare facts as they really were; seeing that from our situation, on account of the charge we took upon us, we had it more fully and generally in our power, to know and observe the conduct and behavior of those that were so employed.

Early in September, a solicitation appeared in the public papers, to the people of colour to come forward and assist the distressed, perishing, and neglected sick; with a kind of assurance, that people of our colour were not liable to take the infection. Upon which we and a few others met and consulted how to act on so truly alarming and melancholy an occasion. After some conversation, we found a freedom to go forth, confiding in him who can preserve in the midst of a burning fiery furnace, sensible that it was our duty to do all the good we could to our suffering fellow mortals. We set out to see where we could be useful. The first we visited was a man in Emtley's alley, who was dying, and his wife lay dead at the time in the house, there were none to assist but two poor helpless children. We administered what relief we could, and applied to the overseers of the poor to have the woman buried. We visited upwards of twenty families that

and nursing in common cases, we have suffered equally with the whites, our distress hath been very great, but much unknown to the white people. Few have been the whites that paid attention to us while the black were engaged in the other's service. We can assure the public we have taken four and five black people in a day to be buried. In several instances when they have been seized with the sickness while nursing, they have been turned out of the house, and wandering and destitute until taking shelter wherever they could (as many of them would not be admitted to their former homes) they have languished alone and we know of one who even died in a stable. Others acted with more tenderness, when their nurses were taken sick they had proper care taken of them at their houses. We know of two instances of this.

It is even to this day a generally received opinion in this city, that our colour was not so liable to the sickness as the whites. We hope our friends will pardon us for setting this matter in its true state.

The public were informed that in the West-Indies and other places where this terrible malady had been, it was observed the blacks were not affected with it. Happy would it have been for you, and much more so for us, if this observation had been verified by our experience.

When the people of colour had the sickness and died, we were imposed upon and told it was not with the prevailing sickness, until it became too notorious to be denied, then we were told some few died but not many. Thus were our services extorted *at the peril of our lives*, yet you accuse us of extorting *a little money from you*.

The bill of mortality for the year 1793, published by Matthew Whitehead, and John Ormrod, clerks, and Joseph Dolby, sexton, will convince any reasonable man that will examine it, that as many coloured people died in proportion as others. In 1792, there

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... .. and this property ...

B 3

were 67 of our colour buried, and in 1793 it amounted to 305; thus the burials among us have increased more than fourfold, was not this in a great degree the effects of the services of the unjustly vilified black people?

Perhaps it may be acceptable to the reader to know how we found the sick affected by the sickness; our opportunities of hearing and seeing them have been very great. They were taken with a chill, a headache, a sick stomach, with pains in their limbs and back, this was the way the sickness in general began, but all were not affected alike, some appeared but slightly affected with some of these symptoms, what confirmed us in the opinion of a person being smitten was the colour of their eyes. In some it raged more furiously than in others—some have languished for seven and ten days, and appeared to get better the day, or some hours before they died, while others were cut off in one, two, or three days, but their complaints were similar. Some lost their reason and raged with all the fury madness could produce, and died in strong convulsions. Others retained their reason to the last, and seemed rather to fall asleep than die. We could not help remarking that the former were of strong passions, and the latter of a mild temper. Numbers died in a kind of dejection, they concluded they must go, (so the phrase for dying was) and therefore in a kind of fixed determined state of mind went off.

It struck our minds with awe, to have application made by those in health, to take charge of them in their sickness, and of their funeral. Such applications have been made to us; many appeared as though they thought they must die, and not live; some have lain on the floor, to be measured for their coffin and grave. A gentleman called one evening, to request a good nurse might be got for him, when he was sick, and to superintend his funeral, and gave particular directions

how he would have it conducted, it seemed a surprising circumstance, for the man appeared at the time, to be in perfect health, but calling two or three days after to see him, found a woman dead in the house, and the man so far gone, that to administer any thing for his recovery, was needless—he died that evening. We mention this, as an instance of the dejection and despondence, that took hold on the minds of thousands, and are of opinion, it aggravated the case of many, while others who bore up cheerfully, got up again, that probably would otherwise have died.

When the mortality came to its greatest stage; it was impossible to procure sufficient assistance, therefore many whose friends, and relations had left them, died unseen, and unassisted. We have found them in various situations, some laying on the floor, as bloody as if they had been dipt in it, without any appearance of their having had, even a drink of water for their relief; others laying on a bed with their clothes on, as if they had came in fatigued, and lain down to rest; some appeared, as if they had fallen dead on the floor, from the position we found them in.

Truly our task was hard, yet through mercy, we were enabled to go on.

One thing we observed in several instances—when we were called, on the first appearance of the disorder to bleed, the person frequently, on the opening a vein before the operation was near over, felt a change for the better, and expressed a relief in their chief complaints; and we made it a practice to take more blood from them, than is usual in other cases; these in a general way recovered; those who did omit bleeding any considerable time, after being taken by the sickness, rarely expressed any change they felt in the operation.

We feel a great satisfaction in believing, that we have been useful to the sick, and thus publicly thank

Doctor Rush, for enabling us to be so. We have bled upwards of eight hundred people, and do declare, we have not received to the value of a dollar and a half, therefor : we were willing to imitate the Doctor's benevolence, who sick or well, kept his house open day and night, to give what assistance he could in this time of trouble.

Several affecting instances occurred, when we were engaged in burying the dead. We have been called to bury some, who when we came, we found alive ; at other places we found a parent dead, and none but little innocent babes to be seen, whose ignorance led them to think their parent was asleep ; on account of their situation, and their little prattle, we have been so wounded and our feelings so hurt, that we almost concluded to withdraw from our undertaking, but seeing others so backward, we still went on.

An affecting instance.—A woman died, we were sent for to bury her, on our going into the house and taking the coffin in, a dear little innocent accosted us, with, mamma is asleep, don't wake her ; but when she saw us put her in the coffin, the distress of the child was so great, that it almost overcame us ; when she demanded why we put her mamma in the box ? We did not know how to answer her, but committed her to the care of a neighbour, and left her with heavy hearts. In other places where we have been to take the corpse of a parent, and have found a group of little ones alone, some of them in a measure capable of knowing their situation, their cries and the innocent confusion of the little ones, seemed almost too much for human nature to bear. We have picked up little children that were wandering they knew not where, whose (parents were cut off) and taken them to the orphan house, for at this time the dread that prevailed over people's minds was so general, that it was a rare instance to see one neighbour visit another, and

even friends when they met in the streets were afraid of each other, much less would they admit into their houses the distressed orphan that had been where the sickness was; this extreme seemed in some instances to have the appearance of barbarity; with reluctance we call to mind the many opportunities there were in the power of individuals to be useful to their fellow-men, yet through the terror of the times was omitted. A black man riding through the street, saw a man push a woman out of the house, the woman staggered and fell on her face in the gutter, and was not able to turn herself, the black man thought she was drunk, but observing she was in danger of suffocation alighted, and taking the woman up found her perfectly sober, but so far gone with the disorder that she was not able to help herself; the hard hearted man that threw her down, shut the door and left her—in such a situation, she might have perished in a few minutes: we heard of it, and took her to Bush-hill. Many of the white people, that ought to be patterns for us to follow after, have acted in a manner that would make humanity shudder. We remember an instance of cruelty, which we trust, no black man would be guilty of: two sisters orderly, decent, white women were sick with the fever, one of them recovered so as to come to the door; a neighbouring white man saw her, and in an angry tone asked her if her sister was dead or not? She answered no, upon which he replied, damn her, if she don't die before morning, I will make her die. The poor woman shocked at such an expression, from this monster of a man, made a modest reply, upon which he snatched up a tub of water, and would have dashed it over her, if he had not been prevented by a black man; he then went and took a couple of fowls out of a coop, (which had been given them for nourishment) and threw them into an open alley; he had his wish, the poor woman that he would make die,

died that night. A white man threatened to shoot us, if we passed by his house with a corpse: we buried him three days after.

We have been pained to see the widows come to us, crying and wringing their hands, and in very great distress, on account of their husbands' death; having nobody to help them, they were obliged to come to get their husbands buried, their neighbours were afraid to go to their help or to condole with them; we ascribe such unfriendly conduct to the frailty of human nature, and not to wilful unkindness, or hardness of heart.

Notwithstanding the compliment Mr. Carey hath paid us, we have found reports spread, of our taking between one, and two hundred beds, from houses where people died; such slanderers as these, who propagate such wilful lies are dangerous, although unworthy notice. We wish if any person hath the least suspicion of us, they would endeavour to bring us to the punishment which such atrocious conduct must deserve; and by this means, the innocent will be cleared from reproach, and the guilty known.

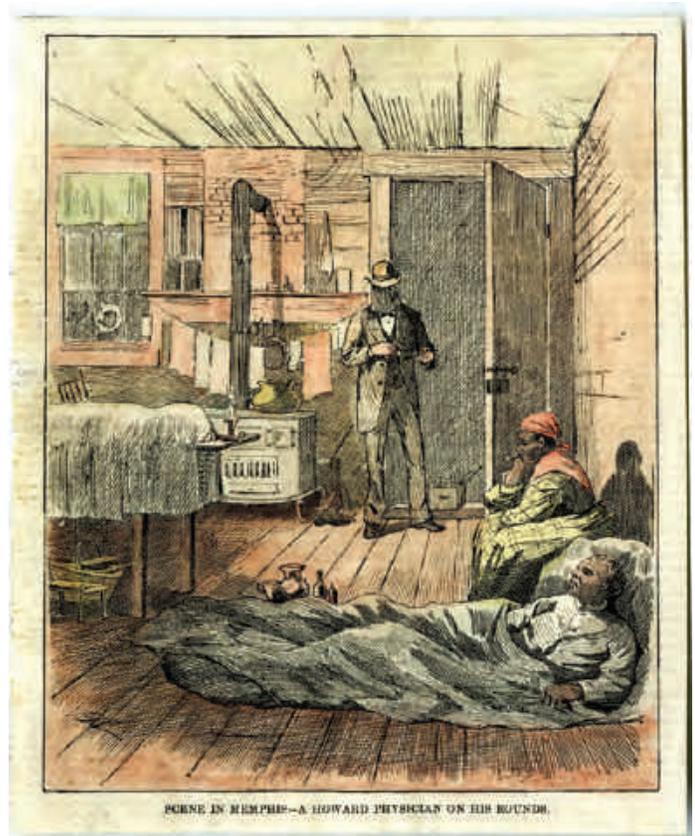
We shall now conclude with the following old proverb, which we think applicable to those of our colour who exposed their lives in the late afflicting dispensation:—

God and a soldier, all men do adore,
 In time of war, and not before;
 When the war is over, and all things righted,
 God is forgotten, and the soldier slighted.

ESSAY PROMPT

What assumption (listed on page A2 of the reading) led to the solicitation of the Free African Society for the assistance of the sick and dying in 1793? Was this assumption true? (Answer found on page 15.) How has this assumption both persisted and changed in American society in lieu of COVID19? The essay should be a minimum of 500 words.

- *Be sure to cite current events to provide evidence for your response.*
- *Be observant of any nuanced statements that arose during initial awareness of the CoronaVirus. Further, consider the possibilities that face those who are physically and economically at risk during the pandemic.*



ESSAY STYLES

• Narrative Essays

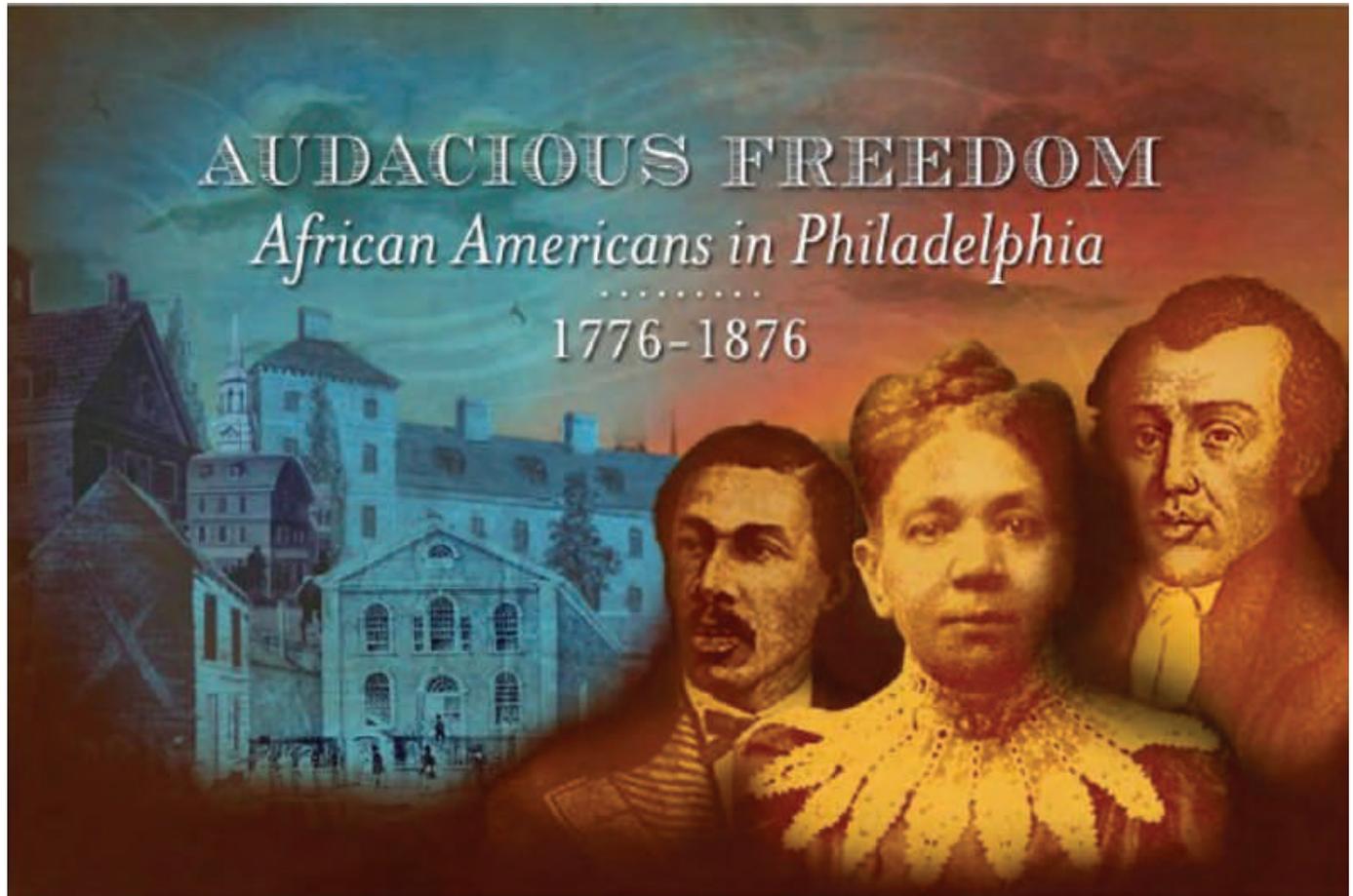
If you like creative writing, these will be among your favorite essay formats. In a narrative essay, you tell a story. Remember, it has a beginning followed by a number of events that lead up to an ending. Cliffhanger endings would be especially appropriate given the current state of affairs! Plan carefully!

• Compare and Contrast Essays

You have been given two similar-seeming yet different events to compare. To write this essay, I suggest that you prepare carefully. Which elements are similar? Which ones are different? Once you are sure you know what information you want to include, you're ready to go.

• Critical Essays

You don't have to criticize the thing you're writing about unless you think there is a reason for it, but you'll be evaluating it critically. You'll provide reasons why you think something was well done or badly done. If your subject is worthy of criticism or praise, why do you think so? What are the faults that bothered you? Why do they bother you? What evidence can you present to support your opinion?



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Contest closes September 12th, 2020

Essays can be submitted via email to seusebio@aampmuseum.org

Thank you for your participation!