

# At-Home History for Homeschoolers

*Preserving Vermont History*

September 2020

**Student Activity:**  
**Saving Pandemic History**



VERMONT  
**HISTORY**  
— MUSEUM —

In 2020, we are living through the COVID-19 pandemic. This disease has greatly impacted the lives of people in Vermont and around the world.

**To do:** Print out the [Life during a Pandemic worksheet](#) (or use a blank piece of paper). Create something that tells people in the future about living through the COVID-19 pandemic today. Be creative! Draw a picture, write a letter, song, story or poem, take a photograph... There are many ways to document your experience.

Here's a photograph that Catherine Cippola took on June 6, 2020 to show the impact of the pandemic:



Photo of the Dairy Creme in Montpelier. To maintain social distancing, customers stay in their cars and order their creemees at the drive-thru window. <https://covid-19.digitalvermont.org/items/show/363?collection=1>

How have businesses in your town adapted to the pandemic?

The picture of the Dairy Creme is part of the COVID-19 Archive where people can share photos, images, artwork, poems and other ways to provide information about today. An archive is a collection of documents that help tell about the past. This archive will help tell people in the future about what we are living through today.

Here is another item in the archive:



<https://covid-19.digitalvermont.org/items/show/421>

Look for clues in the image. How can you tell this image is about Vermont? How can you tell this picture is from 2020?

Information in the archive tells us that this image was used on Governor Phil Scott's Facebook page on July 24, 2020. The archive includes details that might be helpful to historians in the future.

The pandemic has impacted Vermonters in many ways. What are some sad things and good things that have happened because of the pandemic?



<https://covid-19.digitalvermont.org/items/show/165?collection=1>

<https://covid-19.digitalvermont.org/items/show/326?collection=1>

If you click on the link that goes with each photograph, you can read some extra information about the image. Historians call this “context.” Details like where, when, and why can help us understand what was happening at the time captured in the photograph.

**Explore more:** You can see other examples from the Vermont Historical Society’s COVID-19 archive. You can also share what you created with the archive. (Ask an adult to submit for you.) <https://covid-19.digitalvermont.org/items/browse?collection=1>

## Connecting Present with the Past:

Did you know there was another pandemic a little over 100 years ago? In 1918, the Spanish Influenza spread around the world. The disease killed over 2,000 people in Vermont and made many other people sick between 1918-1919. Like COVID-19, the disease spread quickly all over the world.

The Vermont Historical Society has a 1918 Influenza Pandemic Archive that includes documents about that event. <https://digitalvermont.org/1918>



This photograph is part of that archive.

What are some clues in the image that let you know this is an old photograph?

<https://digitalvermont.org/1918/F-HealthBurlingtonChurch?collection=30>

The black and white picture, and the old-fashioned beds and clothes might give some clues about what was happening. The woman on the right is wearing a hat that could be part of an old nurse's uniform. But without the

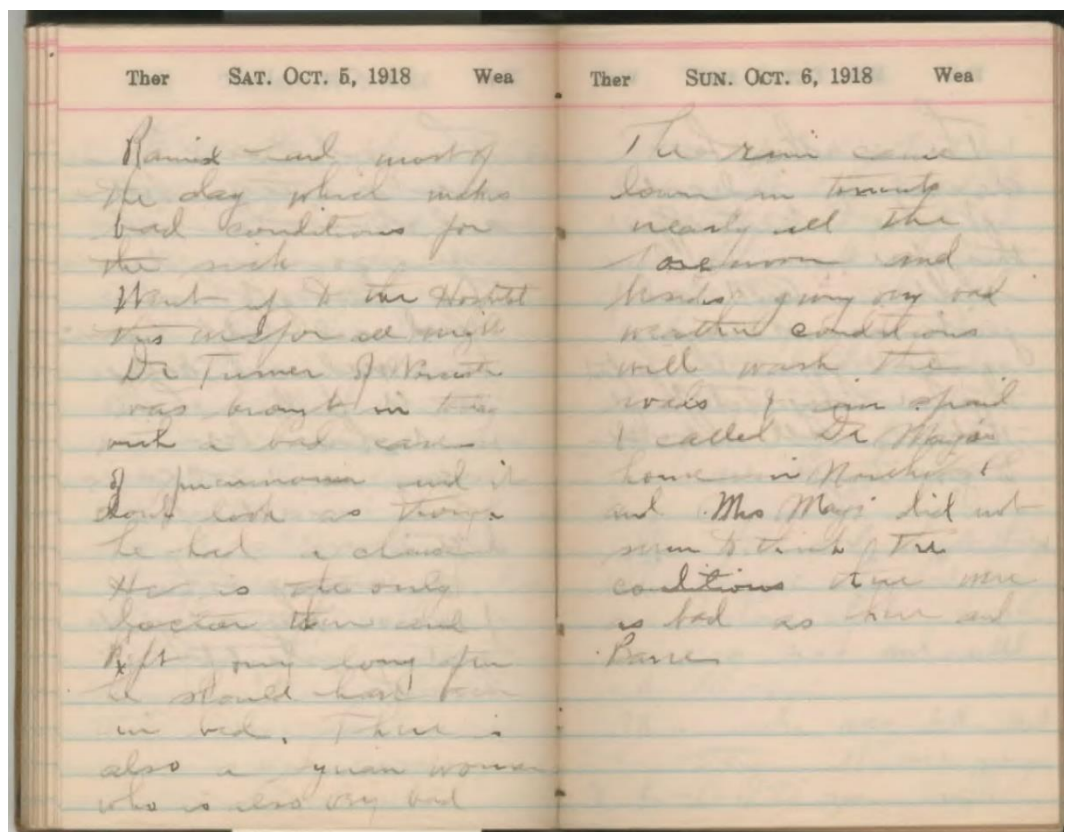
information in the archive, it might be difficult to know this image is from the 1918 pandemic. Fortunately, someone included these details with the photo:

*Photograph of an infirmary set up in 1918 at the First Congregational Church in Burlington, Vermont. It shows children, whose parents have been stricken with influenza, being taken care of at the church.*

This photograph is a primary source. It gives us first-hand (or primary) information about the time when it was taken. A photograph from 1918 can help us learn about life in 1918. Historians use primary sources to understand the past. What might be other primary sources of information about history?

Diaries or journals can also be primary sources.

During the 1918 pandemic, Phil Howes of Montpelier kept a diary. This is a scan of one of the pages.



<https://digitalvermont.org/1918/MSA133.2HowesInfluenzaDiary1918?collection=30&page=3>

Many old documents are written in cursive. Can you read the cursive writing? Historians like to “transcribe” or type the information so it is easier to read. Here is the transcription of the page in the picture:

Sat. Oct. 5, 1918

Rained hard most of the day which makes bad conditions for the sick.

Went up to the Hospital this eve. for all night. Dr. Turner of Worcester was brought in today with a bad case of pneumonia and it don't look as though he had a chance. He is the only doctor there and kept going long after he should have been in bed.

From information in the archive, we can learn that Phil Howes was not a doctor. But so many people in Montpelier were sick that volunteers helped at the hospital. The diary entry says that Dr. Turner had pneumonia, an infection caused by the Spanish Influenza. What might have happened next?

Wed. Oct. 9, 1918

We were at the Hospital again tonight. Dr. Turner died at about 11:00. It was a very hard case as he was the only doctor in his community and will be much missed.

Primary sources can help historians understand stories about individual people in history. Historians also like to ask questions about history. What might have happened to other sick people in the town when the only doctor in Worcester died from the flu?

Skipping ahead a few days, here is another entry:

Fri. Oct. 11, 1918

Another fine day. We are not going to the Hospital tonight but they want us tomorrow night. Conditions are much improved about here.

The War news is very good for some time. The allied forces are making big drives all along the front which the Huns can't hold up and are being driven back with heavy losses.

The "War" mentioned is now called World War I. The Spanish Influenza was spread, in part, by soldiers during the war. World War I ended on November 11, 1918, when the Germans signed a peace agreement. This happened a month after this diary entry was written. Sometimes the 1918 pandemic is overlooked because World War I is a bigger story in history.

Posters are another type of primary source. (Archivists, the people who organize archives, call posters "broadsides" because they were hung on the broadside – or wide side – of a building or wall.) This is a broadside about the 1918 pandemic. Can you find where and when it is from?

**"Spanish" Influenza!**

**Some Facts About it and How To Prevent its Spread**

"SPANISH" INFLUENZA is a serious matter, and something of a mystery. It probably originated in the ranks of the German Army and in prison camps. It no doubt spread from there southward through Spain and northward into Holland, France England and the Scandinavian countries. America was free from it until August 12th, when a Norwegian steamer arrived at an Atlantic port, having had over 200 cases on the voyage. Whether this marks the entry of the epidemic or not, the fact remains that "Spanish" Influenza is here and is a serious menace, much like the familiar Grippe.

The disease is not alarming in itself if proper precautions are taken: But without care, the high fever and the likelihood of pneumonia to follow make it extremely dangerous. The Surgeon-General of the Army recently issued the following rules by which the public may guard against the spread of this subtle enemy.

**Rules to Avoid Respiratory Diseases**  
(By the Surgeon General of the United States Army)

1. Avoid needless crowding—influenza is a crowding disease.
2. Smother your cough and sneezes—others do not want the germs which you would throw away.
3. Your nose, not your mouth, was made to breathe through—get the habit.
4. Remember the three C's—*clean mouth, clean skin and clean clothes.*
5. Try to keep cool when you walk and warm when you ride and sleep.
6. Open the windows—always at home at night; at the office when practicable.
7. Food will win the war if you give it a chance—help by choosing and chewing your food well.
8. Your fate may be in your own hands—wash your hands before eating.
9. Don't let the waste products of digestion accumulate—drink a glass or two of water on getting up.
10. Don't use a napkin, towel, spoon, fork, glass, or cup which has been used by another person and not washed.
11. Avoid tight clothes, tight shoes, tight gloves—seek to make nature your ally not your prisoner.
12. When the air is pure breathe all of it you can—breathe deeply.

**Remember the Three C's**

This information is printed and placed in your home by the Brandon Business Men's Association under the advice of your local Board of health.  
Brandon will without doubt develop many cases of this "Spanish" Influenza. Let us, each one, do our part by observing the above rules of prevention and thereby protect not only ourselves, but others.

**Brandon's Quarantine goes into effect Saturday Morning, Oct. 5 for nine days, to Monday, Oct. 14.**

<https://digitalvermont.org/1918/344.043 B734 BroadsideD?collection=30>



Like today, towns published information about the pandemic. Read this detail (or section) of the poster about ways people could avoid the Spanish Influenza:

## Rules to Avoid Respiratory Diseases

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## Remember the Three C's

Which of these rules still make sense as a way to avoid spreading diseases? Which of these rules show a different understanding about diseases in 1918?

What stories do you think people will tell about the COVID-19 pandemic 100 years from now? Without time travel, we can't know for sure what historians will understand in 2120. But information we create today can be used by historians in the future.

Have you kept a diary during the COVID-19 pandemic? Or written emails or texts? The types of primary sources we create today might be different than those created in 1918, before computers or televisions or cell phones existed. As you live through a significant current event, think about how you can document your experience and preserve this moment in history.

**Bonus to do:** Investigate more primary sources. Use the [Primary Source Analysis Photographs worksheet](#) to compare a photograph from 1918 with a photograph from 2020. Or use the [Primary Source Analysis Letters worksheet](#) to read and analyze a letter from a Vermont soldier in 1918. What more can you learn from the photographs and the letters?

**Learn more:**

- Read an article about the 1918 pandemic:  
<https://digitalvermont.org/1918/974.3H629rApril1998>
- Watch a short video about the 1918 pandemic:  
<https://vermonthistory.org/1918-flu-pandemic>
- Listen to an audio program and read oral histories about the 1918 pandemic:  
<https://vermonthistory.org/flu-epidemic-1918>
- Read a 1918 primary source newspaper article about the Spanish Influenza:  
<https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84022871/1918-10-16/ed-1/seq-3/>
- Watch a short documentary about World War I and the Spanish Influenza:  
<https://www.theworldwar.org/learn/pandemic-video>