



On the Pandemic and History

I write this while sitting alone at Cane Ridge during an unprecedented period in our history. We cannot recall a time when we did not open our buildings on April 1. While we've not experienced anything like this, especially on this remote ridge in Bourbon County, Kentucky, there are precedents. Modern medicine has meant that the causes of many of the earlier pandemics have been wiped out and treatments have been developed for those that persist. Modernity, however, also means that disease travels faster than ever before and that we can get live reports from around the world.

The news is full of comparisons to the Spanish Influenza Pandemic (notably the Spanish Flu probably originated in South Africa, but it may have had a precursor even to that) of 1917-1919 but there are earlier examples as well. (The Cane Ridge Meeting House does not seem to have been directly affected but in all cases the membership of the congregation had relatives and friends who were.)

In 1903, Typhoid Fever especially hit North Middletown, just 5 miles from the Meeting House. In 1902, Small pox hit Millersburg and Plum Lick, both just a few miles away in opposite directions.

In 1874, cerebral meningitis killed 12 in Paris (8 miles away) and 9 women who battled the epidemic died as well.

Yellow fever caused a mild panic in 1855.

In the 1800's, there were four cholera epidemics that affected Bourbon County. In 1873, it was reported that 54 negroes died and by September of that year over 100 in the county were dead, many in Paris. Many in Millersburg were killed as well. In 1852, 7 died in Paris and 30 in the county and the epidemic continued in waves until, in 1855, cholera hit Centerville, on the opposite side of Paris and 8 died in that small community alone. Mt. Sterling, a few miles from Cane Ridge, was the site of a severe outbreak. The *Mt. Sterling Whig* reported that, "All kinds of business is suspended, and nearly all of our citizens have fled, as from an invading foe. Lonely, indeed is the aspect presented by an occasional traveler, as he winds his way through town, looking in vain for a familiar nod or friendly salutation from the little knots of people gathered upon the corners. Gloom and sadness he plainly sees deposited upon every countenance, and with a few very short inquiries, he hastens from our limits." All but 17 of Mt. Sterling's 600 residents had fled from the city.

The worst of the cholera epidemics in Bourbon County was probably in 1833. 50 died in Paris alone with many more in the county. The epidemic continued until 1835 when a very cold winter broke the cycle.

Asiatic Cholera (one of many diseases lumped together under the name Cholera) probably originated in the Philippines, although there is a belief that it came from the Indian subcontinent, and is most often transmitted by drinking water contaminated by fecal matter from infected individuals.) struck communities which shared wells or streams in close quarters. Rural areas were less affected but not exempt. Kentucky was among the states that had the highest fatality rates. During the 1832-35 epidemic one-tenth of the population of Lexington and Russellville died, with similar losses elsewhere. Paris lost seven percent of its population and Cynthiana lost four percent.

There is an indication that it may have arrived in the region, first in Cincinnati (probably from a riverboat visitor from the east) and then across the Ohio River to Maysville and down the Lexington Road, which passes within 10 miles of Cane Ridge and right through Paris.

Various causes of the disease were argued by physicians and laypeople as well. Many believed that rotting vegetation and standing water created a miasma and cautioned against breathing the air around them. Many gave up eating raw fruits and vegetables. Some thought strong drink, strong

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One of the many spring visitors we welcome back every year on the Ridge.

Covid-19 Pandemic Affects Donations

Like most churches and charitable organizations, the Coronavirus Pandemic is affecting visitation and donations to Cane Ridge. We have been closed during April and May and have postponed or cancelled the annual Cane Ridge Day in June. We plan to open on June 8 on a modified visitation schedule and we will not be able to accommodate large groups for some time. Donations have been adversely affected yet utilities, insurance and maintenance remain necessary.

Donations are still welcomed at: Cane Ridge, P.O. Box 26, Paris, Kentucky, 40362. You may send checks or your credit card information by mail. If you prefer to make your donations online, you may go to www.Givelify.com and search for: Cane Ridge Meeting House. You may make a secure donation through the Givelify site.

As always, in addition to monetary donations we covet your prayers for the ministry of Cane Ridge in this trying time.

SPEAKER

The Curator is available to preach or speak to a fellowship group about Cane Ridge throughout the year. Please contact Cane Ridge to schedule a speaking engagement as early as possible. Honoraria or Donations for the ministry of Cane Ridge are expected, and, depending on the amount of travel required, mileage and housing may be necessary.

GIFTS TO CANE RIDGE

Gifts to continue the mission and ministry of Cane Ridge should be sent to:

Cane Ridge, P.O. Box 26, Paris, KY 40362-0026

Much of the information in the article on this page taken from Henry Everman's History of Bourbon County 1785-1865; J. Winston Coleman's The Springs of Kentucky; and The Filson Club History Quarterly, Vol. 48, No. 3, July 1974, "Asiatic Cholera's First Visit to Kentucky: A Study in Panic and Fear" by Nancy D. Baird.



Notes from the Ridge

By James H. Trader, II

On the Pandemic and History (continued from page 1)

emotions and sinful ways were the cause. (Proponents of the drink and sin theory were perplexed when known drunks did not succumb since their consumption of water was relatively low.) It was even put forward that those who abused "the pleasures of Venus" were stricken.

Many believed that the disease was a punishment from God and that the wicked, the non-believers, and those who defied God's word would suffer. It was assumed that when the well-to-do and affluent were afflicted, they had some secret vice or their condition was mis-diagnosed.

Treatments ranged from draining diseased fluids from the body (blood included) to significant doses of narcotics and sedatives which sometimes relieved symptoms but hastened death. Medical quackery abounded. Some believed that gluttony hastened death and flannel shirts and drawers were recommended, with yarn stockings. It wasn't until the 1870's that the link between sanitation and contaminated water was identified and in 1882, the bacillus in water was finally identified.

The outbreaks tended to be worse in the summer. The well-to-do often tried to escape the cities and outbreak centers by spending weeks at the numerous springs of Kentucky. Dozens of resorts had sprung up around these natural, picturesque sites. Although there were examples of disease following the people to these sites, many were left untouched.

A Philadelphia newspaper wrote of the 1833 epidemic in Kentucky, that "Many have gone to their beds well, and have been in their graves before the next noon. Stores have been shut, hotels and taverns shut, public houses, printing offices all closed; and in short,

Thanks to All Who Donated in 2019

The Trustees of Cane Ridge thank all who gave in 2019 to preserve the Shrine, Museum, House and Grounds and to help provide for the future. Those who write checks or gave identified cash are listed below. There are many others who gave cash when visiting Cane Ridge. We would like to thank those persons, too. In addition, many gave freely of time and talent through mission groups and when called upon for assistance. Work groups came with skills and dedication, spending many dollars of their own to be here. Others assisted in planning and executing programs. Thanks to all who helped.

Churches Illinois

First Christian Church, Lawrenceville

nothing open but graveyards and their premonitors, apothecary shops. Our physicians are either dead or broken down; graves could not be dug or coffins made as fast as they are wanted. The panic has been dreadful, and the more so, as it was wholly unexpected..."

In Maysville, "supplies became difficult to secure, for shops were closed and riverboat crews refused to land at Maysville....By mid-June 60 persons, including the mayor and the last survivor of Mason County's first settlement, had become victims of the scourge."

A Lexington resident wrote, "I leave you to imagine the picture of dispare [sic]. But I must still add that the markets are suspended and the bakers' shops shut, with one exception. Not a pound of beef is to be got—and very little else. Not even a cracker for sale."

Cassius Clay provided several of his buildings at Whitehall for his friends fleeing Lexington and the Shakers of South Union provided succor to the citizens of Russellville and surrounding areas.

A cholera hospital in Lexington was attempted but a lack of nurses and doctors thwarted all efforts. The Sisters of Charity of Nazareth (KY) provided professional nursing care in Louisville, Bardstown and Danville. Theology students from Transylvania University helped to minister to the sick and even bury the dead.

Despite the deprivations caused by the Coronavirus, we have reason to hope. The Pandemics of the past are just that, in the past. In the midst of them, they were overwhelming and it was hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. However, with the perspective of history, we see that there is light and hope. We will also learn how to better prepare for future challenges and, more than likely, we will see new medical advances in the following months.

Indiana

Community Christian Ch., New Palestine
Little Flatrock Christian Ch., Rushville
The River, Shoals

Kentucky

First Christian Church, Ashland
First Christian Church, Benton
First Christian Church, Bowling Green
Bullittsville Christian Church, Burlington
Butler Christian Church, Butler
Cadiz Christian Church, Cadiz
Church of Christ Disciples, Covington
First Christian Church, Covington
Cynthiana Christian Church, Cynthiana
Indian Creek Christian Church, Cynthiana

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Doe Run Christian Church, Rocky Mount

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