

# THE TEXAS GULF HISTORICAL AND BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD

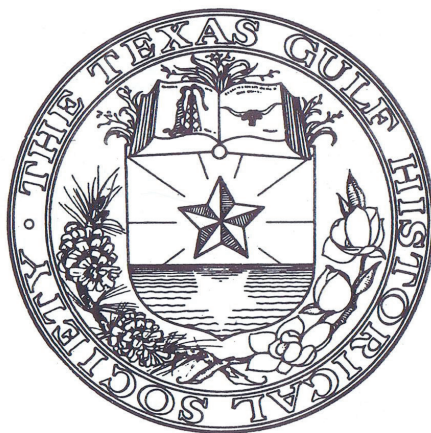


The Journal of the Texas Gulf Historical Society  
and the Lamar University History Department

Volume 55: 2020



# The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record



*Vox audita perdit, littera scripta manet.*

VOLUME 55

2020

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THE JOURNAL OF  
THE TEXAS GULF HISTORICAL SOCIETY &  
THE LAMAR UNIVERSITY HISTORY DEPARTMENT

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# *The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*

A JOURNAL DEVOTED TO  
THE HISTORY OF SOUTHEAST  
TEXAS AND THE GULF COAST

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*VOLUME 55: 2020*

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Jimmy L. Bryan Jr.

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Ellen Rienstra

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

JIMMY L. BRYAN JR.

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**D**uring the spring of 2020, the outbreak of COVID-19 disrupted the already delayed production of volume 55 of *The Record*. The authors who were working on their articles and I suspended our work so that we could focus on transitioning to self-isolation and the online workplace. As of this writing (December 2020) amid increasing numbers of infection and mortality, the arrival of two vaccines offers the promise of a return to normalcy in the coming year. In the meantime, the content on which we were working in the spring remains delayed, and we plan to include that scholarship in a later issue.

To preserve the continuity of *The Record*, we have decided to compile an “emergency” issue for volume 55 around the theme of epidemics that have impacted Southeast Texas. Instead of formal research articles, the content within includes a variety of source material arranged around specific—or “acute”—public health events ranging from the outbreaks that displaced native peoples of Southeast Texans to the present COVID-19 pandemic. Readers may notice several common themes connecting these episodes—such as how disease often followed trade,

or how civic and medical leaders struggled to balance public health against economic hardship, or how fear and rumors misinformed communities.

We are especially indebted to Dr. Margot Gage Witvliet for permitting us to reprint her essay about coping with the long-term symptoms of COVID-19. She originally shared her experiences with the online news journal *The Conversation*, alerting readers to the plight of “long-haulers,” an under-reported aspect of the disease that may become the story that defines this epidemic in the future.

During the process of assembling this volume, I relied upon the toil and support of our estimable vice president Judith Linsley who granted numerous favors. Cesar Delgado and Igor Romashets, student assistants in the Lamar University History Department, conducted research on yellow fever and the 1918 influenza outbreak. Eric J. Hartmann of the Eunice R. Benckenstein Library and Archive and the staff at the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center provided prompt and helpful service. I would like to thank Dr. Margot Gage Witvliet and Jeff Branick, Jefferson County Judge, for the use of their work.



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# SOUTHEAST TEXAS NATIVES CONFRONT EUROPEAN DISEASES

*THE RECORD STAFF*

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**A**t the end of the 15th century, North America flourished with millions of people who occupied the continent within hundreds of different culture groups. The most recent studies suggest that 60 to 70 million humans resided in the Western Hemisphere—equivalent to the population of Europe during that time. Perhaps 10 to 12 million Native Americans lived in the region that would become the United States, but by 1800, that population declined to about 1 million—a loss of about 90 percent. Although European empires and the United States enacted policies of violence and dispossession that severely diminished the first Americans, their demographic collapse occurred as a result of diseases imported from the across the Atlantic Ocean.

The European incursions into the Western Hemisphere that began in the early 1500s imported a range of different microscopic pathogens against which Native Americans had no immunities. Scholars continue to debate about how and when the first humans migrated to North and South America, and indigenous groups hold to their own origin stories, but

geologic, genetic, and linguistic evidence confirm that Native Americans became biologically isolated with the end of the last ice age 10 thousand years ago. Like their counterparts in Africa, Asia, and Europe, indigenous Americans developed agriculture and congregated in cities—two key components for the emergence of infectious organisms but with one, perhaps significant, difference. They did not domesticate livestock, which may have spared them from the animal-to-human viral mutations that led to diseases like smallpox, measles, and influenza, but it also prevented them from acquiring resistance to such infections.

Scant information hinders the effort to understand the impact of invasive diseases upon the indigenous people of Southeast Texas. Akokisas, Atakapas, and Bidais transmitted their past and traditions through oral history, but many of those stories have become lost with the diminishment and dispersal of these groups. To recover the Native past of Southeast Texas, modern scholars rely upon a few archeological investigations and even fewer, highly subjective European accounts.

During the first two centuries of the European colonization of North America, Southeast Texas Natives experienced few direct encounters with the intruders. In 1519, Spanish mariner Alonso Álvarez de Pineda charted the Gulf Coast and may have gone ashore at various points to trade for supplies. Nine years later, survivors of another Spanish expedition that included Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca landed on Follet's Island and remained in the area for four years living among groups he called Capoques and Hans—bands perhaps related to the historic-era Karankawas and Akokisas. The earliest recorded, direct encounter between indigenous Southeast

Texans and Europeans occurred 200 years later in 1719 when Akokisas captured French sailor François Simars de Bellisle after he became stranded in the Galveston Bay region. In 1754 inspired by Bellisle's account of the people and their desire for trade, the French erected a post at an Akokisa village on the Trinity River near present-day Wallisville, but two years later, the Spanish removed the interlopers and established El Orcoquisac (Akokisa). That small settlement consisted of a presidio and mission, but after the Akokisas resisted conversion to Christianity and after two hurricanes, the Spanish abandoned the site by 1771.

The archeological and ethnographic record provides a glimpse of the people who by 1700 lived within the coastal and upland terrains between the Sabine River and Galveston Bay. Atakapas extended their influence from south-central Louisiana across the Sabine, maintaining two villages on both sides of the Neches River in present-day Jefferson County. In addition to the Akokisas on the Trinity, related bands resided in villages along Spring Creek that divides modern Harris and Montgomery counties. Bidais occupied the woodland region adjacent to the north. Although they spoke different languages, Southeast Texas Natives shared similar hunting, fishing, and gathering lifeways. They were not a static people. They migrated with the movement of the seasons, and they engaged in a wide-ranging network of trade, often traveling to and hosting neighboring groups.

Using primarily European reports, archeologist Lawrence Aten estimated the populations of Native groups in Southeast Texas at about the year 1700. He suggested that the median figure of Atakapas residing west of the Sabine

River was about 1,700. Akokisas also numbered about 1,700. He counted Bidias at around 1,000 (see Table 1). Although he acknowledges that epidemics had impacted neighboring groups before 1700, Aten nevertheless offered these numbers as representing “maximum population levels” (p. 60) for indigenous Southeast Texans.

Compared to the experiences of other North Americans, however, Aten’s estimates may undercount the population of Southeast Texas at the beginning of the 16th century. These first peoples likely suffered significant population loss between 1500 and 1700. The isolation from direct contact did not safeguard Native groups from the dangers of European diseases. For decades before the 1620 arrival of the Pilgrims, New England Indians interacted with an unrecorded number of English fishers and sailors who frequently visited the region. When the Pilgrims arrived, they encountered Native communities already decimated by European-imported contagions. The New England example also demonstrates how epidemics spread along Native trade networks from one group who came into direct contact with an infected European to their neighbors and more distant communities. The indigenous people of Southeast Texas likely encountered European travelers lost to the historical record. Spanish missionary and chronicler Juan Agustín Morfi, for example, noted how often shipwrecks occurred along the upper Texas Coast. The Bidais and Akokisas also engaged in trade and ceremonial visitations—especially with the Caddos to the north who had by the 1690s permitted access to Spanish missionaries and who soon after suffered from a series of epidemics.

**Table 1: Population Estimates of Southeast Texas Natives**

	1700	1820
Alabama-Coushattas	-----	350
Atakapas (SETX)	1,333 - 2,000	150
Akokisas	1,333 - 2,000	300
Bidais	800 – 1,200	300

**Sources:** Jedidiah Morse, *A Report to the Secretary of War of the United States on Indian Affairs* (1822); Lawrence E. Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast* (1983).

Excavations at the Mitchell Ridge archeological site on Galveston Island reveal the chronology and impact of European diseases imported to the Texas Gulf Coast. In addition to occupation and midden deposits, the site includes a series of clustered burials—or cemeteries—that range 1,000 years from about A.D. 800-1800. The predominant ceramic style recovered at the site connects the people of Mitchell Ridge to the Akokisas. Their practice of communal burials spanned the centuries—from the era before contact, through two centuries of minimal contact, to the historic period of sustained contact. The persistent tradition of cluster burials over centuries permit archaeologists like Robert Ricklis and Steven Black to chart the physical devastation of European diseases upon the people who occupied Mitchell Ridge. In addition to the significant increase in mortality by the end of the 1700s, Ricklis and Black find “that the Native people of the upper Texas coast region were suffering the calamitous effects of European-introduced diseases even during the Protohistoric, a period during which there was minimal contact between Indians and Europeans” (March 2009).

Even with the increasing encounters that began with Bellisle in 1719 and continued with the founding of El Orcoquisac in 1756, the historical record only provides a glimpse into the vulnerability and reaction of Native groups to European diseases. After traveling through Texas, Juan Agustín Morfi recorded a 1777-1778 outbreak—probably of smallpox—that ravaged Indian communities from San Antonio to Natchitoches. According to the missionary, the Bidais lost half of their people during that one epidemic. Although scholars have yet to uncover any direct evidence, their neighbors likely suffered similar catastrophes.

By the beginning of the 19th century, the native population and cultures of Southeast Texas neared collapse. Drawing from several sources that varied in reliability, Lawrence Aten estimated the 1820 population of the Bidais and Akokisas at about 300 each. Only about 150 Atakapas remained in Texas, but some may have migrated over the Sabine River to seek support from their Louisiana relatives. In their ancestral lands in present-day Alabama, the Alabama-Coushattas had survived earlier epidemics, and as early as the 1780s, small groups moved into the Big Thicket establishing villages along the Neches and Trinity rivers. By 1820, they numbered about 300 people.

During this time, the Bidais and Akokisas may have banded together at a village on the Trinity near present-day Livingston. This “forting up” was a common survival strategy among other groups that suffered European diseases. The area that would become the states of Alabama and Mississippi, for example, thrived with numerous village-dwelling groups, but the 1542 expedition of Spaniard Hernando de Soto spread contagion throughout the region, reducing many groups by as much as 90 percent. Survivors from disparate communities would gather, contributing their distinctiveness to create new culture groups, leading to the emergence of the historic era Choctaws, Chickasaws, and others. For the Bidais and Akokisas, they did not enjoy the luxury of centuries to recuperate and rebuild.

By the 1830s, extensive incursions of Anglo-American settlement into Southeast Texas thwarted any chance of Native peoples of restoring their former lifeways. Their absence in the region reinforced the Anglo-American myth

that Providence had specially prepared this bountiful land for their benefit. In his important work *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast* (1983), Lawrence Aten observed that “the Akokisa had quietly passed into oblivion after 1830” (p. 36). This may have been no more than a passing remark, but it nevertheless seems odd coming from an archeologist who dedicated his career to the study of the material cultural of Southeast Texas Natives.

Although their traditional cultures and occupation no longer persist in Southeast Texas, the Akokisas, the Atakapas, and the Bidais did not give up their communities without a struggle. They may have dispersed, but they did not disappear. In the 1850s, remnants of the Bidais relocated to the Brazos River Indian Reservation in Young County. They moved to the Indian Territory when the State of Texas closed the reservation. As late as the 1920s, a few families of Bidais and Akokisas continued to live in their traditional huts on Cypress Creek in Harris County, exchanging fish for goods from the local landowner. As a result of intermarriage with other Native groups and African American slaves brought to Texas from the southern United States, the progeny of Southeast Texas Natives endure into the 21st century. In 2006, descendants in Texas and Louisiana gathered to reform the Atakapa Ishak Nation and inaugurated the process of gaining tribal recognition from the U.S. government. With as many as 4,500 potential members, Atakapa Ishak leader Edward Chretien Jr. declared in 2014, “We are not extinct.”



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# YELLOW FEVER

*THE RECORD STAFF*

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**D**uring the 19th century, few diseases created more alarm in the United States than yellow fever. Communities along the coast dreaded the late summer months when the “yellow jack” could arrive with ghastly symptoms that spread quickly and with devastating consequences. With little understanding of how individuals contracted the illness, health experts and the public assumed yellow fever was contagious between humans, and when it appeared, residents abandoned their towns except for a few who would remain behind to care for the afflicted. Neighboring cities established quarantines that barred refugees and isolated infected communities from supplies and trade.

The causes of yellow fever remained unknown until the end of the century. In 1900 and 1901 while stationed with the U.S. occupation in Cuba, army physician Walter Reed led a team of scientists who confirmed the theory held by Cuban doctor Juan Carlos Finlay that mosquitos transmitted yellow fever

Special thanks to Cesar Delgado for assisting in the research on yellow fever in Southeast Texas.

to humans. Later studies revealed *Aedes aegypti* as the carrier species and showed that it thrived in stagnant water that often collected in cities and towns. The disease acquired its name from the jaundice that resulted when severe infections attacked the liver. Hemorrhaging into the stomach often led to the “black vomit.” Reed estimated that 40 percent of those who contracted yellow fever in the United States died from the disease.

Texas suffered numerous outbreaks during the 19th century with the worst events occurring at Galveston where the fever became a near-annual event. In 1839, the disease killed about 250 residents there, 535 in 1853, and 1,150 in 1867. Despite the coastal setting, communities in the immediate Southeast Texas region largely escaped significant yellow fever episodes. In 1862 during the Civil War, however, about 150 soldiers and civilians died at Sabine Pass. During the 1867 statewide epidemic, the disease killed 8 residents at Liberty.

The mere rumor of yellow fever incited panics that severely impacted communities. In 1897, a lone diagnosis in Beaumont prompted mass evacuations and state-ordered isolation. Neighboring towns turned away refugees and implemented “shotgun” quarantines against freight and mail that originated or passed through Beaumont. These reactions underscored the difficult decisions that civic leaders faced when balancing public health against economic interests, but outbreaks also inspired charity. When yellow fever killed thousands during the 1878 Mississippi valley epidemic, communities like Orange responded by sponsoring fund-raising benefits.

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## Madison, ca. 1853

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### Yellow Fever on the Sabine River

*Henry B. Force was an early ship builder and merchant at Madison (later Orange), Texas.*

Mr. Henry Force, an intelligent gentleman who resides at the village of Madison, on the Sabine river, thirty-five miles above its mouth, informs me that several cases of yellow fever were brought from Galveston into his neighborhood last summer; and two of them died, without communicating the disease, although no precaution used to prevent infection. Says that a village called Sabine City, situated at the mouth of Sabine river, and containing about 200 inhabitants, had constant intercourse with Galveston through small sailing vessels. Some cases of yellow fever were introduced, but the disease did not spread. No case of yellow fever originated in either of these towns.

[E.D. Fenner, "Report on the Epidemics of Louisiana, Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas, in the Year 1853," *The Transactions of the American Medical Association*, 7 (1854): 528]

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## Sabine Pass, 1862

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*The worst recorded yellow fever event in the immediate Southeast Texas region occurred at Sabine Pass during the Civil War. In the late summer of 1862, the outbreak forced Confederate defenders to abandon the town, and the U.S. Navy opted not to occupy the strategic position because of their concerns about the disease. Historian W.T. Block estimated that 250 townspeople and soldiers contracted yellow fever at Sabine Pass with as many as 150 deaths.*

### Diary of H. N. Connor

*Sgt. H.N. Connor served in Ashley W. Spaight's Battalion, Confederate Army, at Sabine Pass, Texas, during the 1862 outbreak.*

July 1862: Yellow fever season set in.

August 1862: First case of yellow fever in our company. L.E. Kellogg of the commissary died.

September 1862: More cases of fever. Citizens and soldiers dying daily. The battalion has been disbanded for a short period. All left but some 18 of our company and 15 of Co. B [artillery], all of whom have been or are now confined. I have had it [yellow fever] myself. Soldiers are waiting on citizens [civilians] until at last there are not enough well ones to wait on the sick ones. It is with great difficulty that a grave can be dug. This place has been quarantined, no communication allowed with the upper country. Medicines and doctors have run out, and unless something takes place soon, we will all “go up the spout.”

September 24, 1862: One steamer Kennebec [U.S.S. *Kensington*], [Frederick] Crocker, cmdg.; one mortar boat No. 19 [*Henry Janes*], [Lewis W.] Pennington, cmdg.; one schooner Rachel Seaman, [Quincy A.] Hooper, cmdg.; off the bar and demand surrender of the place. Convalescents ordered to the fort [Sabine] under command of Maj. J[osephus] S. Irvine. Total number: 18 of Co. A and 10 of Co. B . . . .

September 25, 1862: It was decided to evacuate the works, which began in a heavy rainstorm, and by daylight nearly all, save the guns, were taken away, and by sunrise the enemy again opened fire on the fort, while the few men who were there left it. Yesterday a “dog soldier” who had long been with us was “upset” by a 13 inch shell. Today we evacuated our barracks, and with our sick started to run the quarantine blockade. Crossed Taylor’s Bayou in the evening and slept in Sparks’ corn crib on the banks of Sabine Lake.

September. 26, 1862: Reached Beaumont, which had been evacuated by nearly all the citizens for fear of yellow fever, upon hearing of our approach. Here we met Captain [Otis M.] Marsh, who had been in Houston on court martial cases, and we formed ourselves into a convalescent camp.

[W.T. Block (transcriber), H.N. Connor diary, H.N. Connor Collection, Acadiana Manuscripts Collection, University Libraries, University of Louisiana, Lafayette. Also available on W.T. Block website ([wtblock.com](http://wtblock.com))]

### **Memoirs of Kosciusko D. Keith**

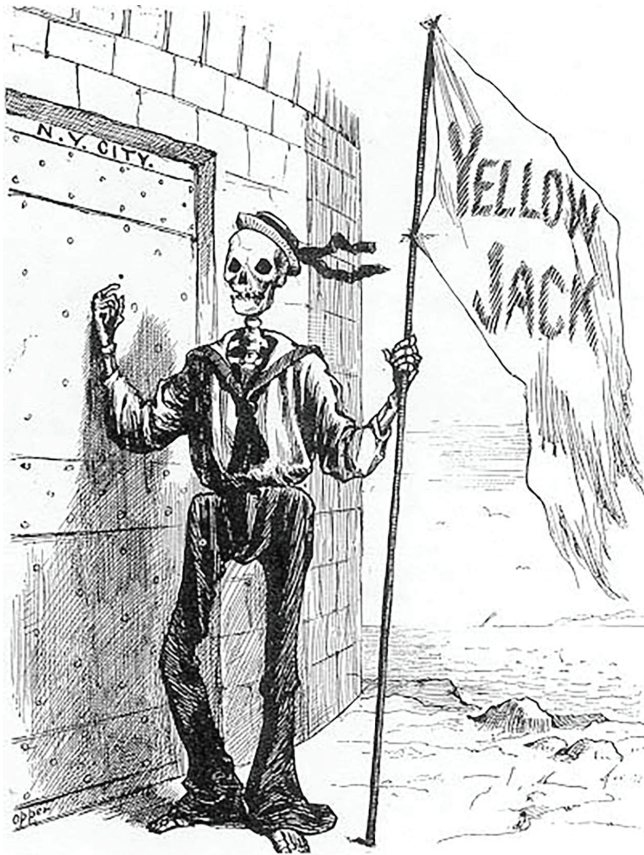
*Capt. Kosciusko D. Keith served in Ashley W. Spaight's Battalion, Confederate Army, at Sabine Pass, Texas, during the 1862 outbreak.*

In August, 1862, a steamer ran in with cargo consigned to Nelson, Clemms Company of Galveston. Her name was the Victoria, under Captain Lambret. The captain went to Galveston via Beaumont and Houston to report his ship. The next day, I heard at the fort that there was some sickness on board, and that two or three men had died on the ship since she left Havana. I inquired of Dr. [J.G.D.] Murry, our post surgeon, and he said yes, but it was not serious. A citizen by the name of William Vosburg came to me the next day after this and informed me that the ship had yellow fever on board. I immediately reported this to post headquarters and was informed that the doctors said it was not. I then got George Pomeroy, a member of my company, to find out. I had confidence in Pomeroy as well as Vosburg. That day, a lad named Hartsfield, who had been about the ship a good deal, died. Mrs. [Sarah] Vosburg waited on the lad while sick. She came to me and said she had nursed yellow fever in New Orleans, and said the boy died of yellow fever.

I went to headquarters with Pomeroy and Vosburg and reported yellow fever. Still the doctors said it was not. I told them I was well acquainted with yellow fever, and [that] I had no doubts about it, and that I would officially report it, the doctors to the contrary notwithstanding.

The next day, about twenty cases of fever occurred, including the entire Hartsfield family of five, all of whom died. In three days, there were a hundred cases. The military authorities sent Dr. [Andrew J.] Hay from Houston. The first case he saw he diagnosed as yellow fever of the most malignant type. Orders were immediately issued for the troops to leave the post. Boats were sent down from Beaumont, and all left but the sick.

I was ordered to abandon the fort and get out. A good many of my company lived in [the] Sabine Pass vicinity. Some were sailors and had no home. I instructed Sergeant W[illiam] H. McKnight to remain at the fort as he did not wish to leave and all others who did not wish to



Frederick B. Opper, "Yellow Jack," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Magazine*, September 21, 1878.



go. So some twenty or thirty remained. Two lieutenants were among the sick and both died. The other lieutenant left. We had provisions to feed them for some time. The fever was very fatal. A large number of citizens did not get away in time. I received orders to assume command of the post, to take care of the sick, and exercise any authority I thought necessary. The troops at the fort continued to take the fever, so the number grew less every day. In case the Federals came in, I was directed to spike the guns destroy all other property. But no one thought they would come in.

Time passed—our principal business was to bury the dead. To our surprise one day, two large schooners, carrying the Federal flag at the foretop, approached the outer bar. I immediately went to the found Sergeant McKnight present and four men able to work. We talked the matter over, and all concluded to stay . . . .

Major [Josephus S.] Irvine ordered the guns spiked and all property removed to Beaumont. That night at two o'clock, the movement began, and [the] next morning, Lt. [James] Cassidy of my company spiked the guns. Cassidy had been elected lieutenant after the death of Lt. [John] Concannon, who had died of yellow fever. Lt. Goodnoe [John Goodhue] also died at the Pass of the fever. The sick all remained in the town. After a bombardment next morning, the Federals came in and burned the barracks at the fort, but did not come up to town.

[K.D. Keith [W.T. Block, ed.], "The Memoirs of Captain Kosciusko D. Keith," *The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*, 10 (November 1974): 57-59]

### **George Holland to Ashley W. Spaight**

Sir—Having, at your request, visited Sabine City, with a view to ascertain the true character of the disease which has been raging in that place for some lime past. I beg now to report as follows:

A careful examination of a number of cases in all the stages of the disease; and an inspection of the bodies of two individuals, who had died just before I arrived there, leaves no room for doubting that epidemic yellow fever exists in Sabine City.

From Dr. J.G.D. Murray, an intelligent practising [*sic*] physician, residing there, I have obtained the following information relative to the

history of the disease. A son of a fisherman, named Hartfield, was taken sick on the 10th of July last, and died a few after. Previous to his death he threw up a quantity of dark colored fluid. A few few [*sic*] days after, the father became sick and soon died in a similar way. From this time on there have been more or less cases of the disease on hand, until about the middle of August, when its epidemic character became fully established.

At the time of my visit, between fifty and sixty cases had occurred, of which twenty-five had terminated fatally. The majority of the latter class had black vomit before death finally closed the scene.

In the two hospitals appropriated to the use of the troops, I found eleven cases, of which seven were convalescent; one just taken and three in a doubtful state.

Of Capt. Keith's company B, there remained 16 men in the camp who had not yet taken the disease. Of Capt. Marsh's Co., A, there were fourteen of the same class.

In private practice, I heard of about ten cases while I was there.

All the cases I have personally examined present the usual well known symptoms of yellow fever, while its type, without being unusually malignant, is sufficiently severe to produce a dreadful percentage of mortality, in the absence of a complete medical staff, supported by skillful and attentive nurses. Dr. A.J. Hay, of the army, an experienced yellow fever practitioner, having now reached there, accompanied by two excellent nurses, and an ample supply of the proper medicines, I have every reason to hope that the average of mortality will soon show a marked improvement; and as the greater portion or the inhabitants have fled from the place, the epidemic is bound to stop shortly for the want of material to feed upon.

Some seven or eight cases had occurred in the neighboring town of Beaumont, among persons who had just left Sabine City, and who had, unquestionably, contracted the disease before their departure from there. All these, with one single exception, in which there were unfavorable attendant circumstances, independent of the disease, have readily yielded to medical treatment, and the patients are convalescent. At

Orange but one case has occurred during the season. A sailor, who had left a vessel that had arrived from Tampico at Sabine Pass, came there, was taken sick, and died soon after. It is remarkable that in both these places the disease did not spread among the inhabitants; although some of them were constantly in attendance upon the sick that came among them.

Coming to an infected district, a long time after the epidemic sets in, renders it always difficult for the inquirer to arrive at a correct conclusion as to its origin. In the present instance, from the conflicting and contradictory statements made to me by the various persons to whom I applied for information, I am quite at a loss to make up my mind whether the disease is of domestic or foreign origin. In front of the house of Hartfield, the fisherman, where the first case occurred there was such an accumulation of decaying fish and oysters that the stench, for a great distance, became almost intolerable. At another place, a similar deposit had been made, for the purpose of making a breakwater, and here, too, we find the disease breaking out early in the season, and seizing nearly all those who reside in the immediate vicinity or in the direction of the prevailing winds passing over these masses or putrefaction and decomposition.

On the other hand I am confidently assured that it was only after the arrival in the port of a vessel from Tampico, on which several cases of yellow fever had occurred that sickness first appeared in Sabine City.

Under these circumstances and in view of the well established fact that in several preceding seasons vessels have arrived at Sabine with much sickness on board, and that nevertheless the distemper did not spread among the inhabitants of the town, it seems to me a sound and rational conclusion that the present epidemic at Sabine City is the result of local and foreign causes combined, an opinion which I have always held in reference to several other places in our state occasionally visited by yellow fever.

To keep it confined to its present limits, I would suggest that strict non-intercourse should be observed and enforced between the town of Sabine and towns of Orange, Beaumont, and the line of the railroad generally.

In conclusion I beg to say that the safety of the soldiers of your command who are still near Sabine City requires their immediate removal beyond the infected district.

[George Holland to A.W. Spaight, Houston, September 8, 1862, *The Tri-Weekly Telegraph* (Houston), September 10, 1862]

### **Update from Sabine Pass**

We are indebted to a friend for the following clear account of the operations at the Pass:

On Wednesday, the 24th, two sail vessels and one steam propeller attacked the earth work battery at Sabine Pass . . . . Since it was clear the works could not hold out another day, at night all the public property was removed and the guns spiked. Two men attacked by yellow fever so recently that they could not be removed, were left in charge of two good nurses and a private physician . . . . The two sail vessels have anchored off the town, and say they must have beef by purchase or otherwise, and will shell the town if interferred [*sic*] with. Col. Spaight reached his command on Thursday, and will look well after the Yankees if they leave their boats. The steam propeller had not, at last accounts, got inside, and may not be able to do so. Wonder what Yellow Jack will say to this invasion of his domain?

On Saturday morning, we are told, the enemy had again disappeared.

[*The Tri-Weekly Telegraph* (Houston), September 29, 1862]

## Liberty, 1867

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*The 1867 epidemic reached over 20 communities in Texas, killing about 1,150 people in Galveston, 500 in Houston, 200 in La Grange, and 150 in Huntsville. Like most towns, the appearance of the disease at Liberty prompted an evacuation, but a few remained behind to nurse the sick. At Liberty, 31 people contracted yellow fever, 8 of whom died.*

### Notice

A private letter from Liberty, dated October 12, informs us that great alarm was felt at the approach of the fever. Everybody who could had left town. Mr. [F.G.] Ricca and his wife [not identified] had died.

[*Flake's Bulletin* (Galveston), October 17, 1867]

### Notice

A private letter from Liberty of the 25th inst., says: A. Rainer and Theophilus Garrard, (colored,) are dead. Paul Levat, Mrs. John Loving, and Geo. Loving are down with fever. Nearly every house in town is closed, a perfect stampede and gloomy times.

[*Flake's Bulletin* (Galveston), October 31, 1867]

### Cleveland's Treatment of Yellow Fever

*Although attributed to Jesse Alexander Hamilton Cleveland, the author of this article was his son Charles Lander Cleveland, a lawyer and state representative from Liberty. Here, he provides a detailed account of how he treated yellow fever victims using his father's remedies. Cleveland also described the Liberty outbreak in letters to his father-in-law Benjamin F. Hardin, excerpts of which appear in Camilla Davis Trammell's *Seven Pines* (1987).*

In 1867 the yellow fever broke out in Liberty, Texas, where I then lived. Feeling alarmed for the safety of my family, I dispatched at once to my father, in Galveston, whom I knew to have been an experienced and successful nurse in all the epidemics occurring in Galveston since 1844, to furnish me with his mode of treating the disease. He did so. My wife [Mary A. Hardin] was my first patient. I applied my father's treatment—with me an experiment—confidently, however, because I had his assurance that it would not fail. She recovered. In a few days our children, five, with the same disease, were nursed through to convalescence. With the assistance of my convalesced patients as nurses, I treated thirty six cases; of these, three died. Dr. James P. Cooke, a phy-

sician of acknowledged skill, then and still living in Liberty, observing the effects of the treatment, adopted it, and did not lose a single patient of those he treated. I do not now remember of the recovery of a single case treated otherwise than according to my father's method—in every instance dying with black vomit.

I need not say to your medical readers that my father was no doctor—made no pretensions whatever beyond an accurate diagnosis and proper treatment of this particular disease. But I may say to them that there are hundreds of living witnesses now in this city [Galveston] who can attest his unfailing success in its treatment, through the succession of epidemics occurring in this city from 1844 to the time of his death in 1875.

#### *Symptoms*

Flushed face, eyes inflamed, and sometimes bloodshot; skin dry and feverish; headache, with pain in the back and bones; chilly sensations, slight shivering, and sometimes sick stomach.

#### *Treatment*

When all or any of the above symptoms are felt, in time of an epidemic, the patient should prepare himself for treatment. First, take common cistern water, about milk-warm, add—to say half a gallon—castile soap, dissolved, of the size of a musket bullet, and with a good instrument inject into the bowels a sufficient quantity to produce an evacuation. Next, and secondly, prepare a mustard bath in a vessel sufficiently large to admit both feet and legs half way up to the knees; put in at least a quarter of a pound of good mustard—Kentucky the best—and about one pint of good ashes, and let the water be as hot as the patient can bear it . . . . Next, and thirdly, put into a washbowl about one quart of cistern water take one tablespoonful of spirits of camphor, one tablespoonful spirits of ammonia, and one tablespoonful common salt, and put into the washbowl, and put in two pounds of ice. This I call “sedative water.” . . . apply to the forehead us rapidly as you please . . . . I have never yet seen a case where I could not control and keep a patient well at himself, by applying these ice cloths rapidly to the forehead. Give the patient good lemonade, as cold as ice will make it, about one-third of a tumblerful as often as he wants it. It acts on the kidneys and assists

well the urinary organs, a great item in the cure of yellow fever; if he becomes tired of the lemonade, give ice water, about a tumbler one-third full at a drink, and ice to eat in small quantities . . . .

As soon as you have cooled down the fever take a good instrument and relieve the bowels; use only water from your cistern it cools the body . . . . But having cleared the bowels at the commencement, there is no getting up, no airing of the patient as when oil or pills are given, but the patient goes right along perspiring until you freeze out the fever with these ice cloths; and having your patient free from fever, and his bowels relieved by the second injection, if he asks for it, commence next the

*Feeding*

In about two hours after he has cooled off, give him a little rice water, chicken water, a half cup of black tea; in three hours after this give him half a cup of good coffee, quarter of an apple well baked, and a little toast with a small quantity of fresh butter on it . . . .

In twelve hours after the fever has left, the patient must be sponged off; take bay rum or brandy and water strong enough for grog; make it rather hotter than milk warm; take sponge and sponge his face and hands first; wipe dry; then sponge his legs, arms and body well, but do it under cover; wipe dry with a towel as you go on, and when done you can uncover and change his clothes so as not to fatigue nor tire him; put on clean, well dried clothes, and change the bed clothes and this done, I consider my patient safe . . . .

With married ladies, who are in a condition to require tender treatment, never use the foot bath, as that, in a majority of cases, brings on an abortion. Instead of foot bath, take lime juice and brandy, half and half; make it hot as she will bear it, and sponge from the knees down and over the feet for four or five minutes; then take dry mustard, and rub on with your hand, from the knees to and over the feet . . . . I never failed yet, and I have cured many cases in this condition. Once again, give no medicine, and watch, and take every care not to sicken the stomach, especially ladies in the condition last mentioned. I hate oil—it should never be used. My patients never relapse; nor out of three

hundred, at least, have I ever known one to have the disease the second time. I do not believe it possible.

[J. A. H. Cleveland [Charles L. Cleveland], "Nursing and Diet in Yellow Fever," *Medical and Surgical Reporter*, 39 (September 21, 1878), 243-245. A slightly different version first published over Charles L. Cleveland's name dated Galveston, August 31, in *The Galveston Daily News*, September 1, 1878]

### **Bob Short Reflects on the Liberty Outbreak**

[A]mong the calamities which have fallen upon this quiet village and its environs within the past few months was that well known fellow by the soubriquet of Yellow Jack, who been so extensive and conspicuous visitor throughout the coast region of Texas and Louisiana the present season. I have heard so much of this fellow as a scourge and destroyer of the human family that I am constrained to believe that his powers of evil are such that the panics so common upon his visits are quite natural.

About middle of October, some regularly developed cases of this disease—yellow fever—first made their appearance in this town, according to report, of persons who had had experience in nursing it formerly in Galveston, and therefore were considered competent to discriminate in it, two of which cases resulted fatally, and thereupon a panic sprung up among people of the town, followed by a removal to the country, immediate, of the most of them, to avoid contact with the fell destroyer—hence but little material was left here for him to prey upon. Notwithstanding, cases of the kind, pronounced by some of the M.D's. of the village, and those nurses, have been constantly occurring among the remnant of the people in town and in the vicinity, since the stampede, but of a very mild type, it is said, and, evidence, by the amount of mortality up to the entire disappearance of the disease from the village, a week or ten days ago—only two additional cases occurring to those already mentioned in the advent of the disease.

There has been some conflict or opinion among those professing capacity to discriminate in yellow fever, among our citizens, as to whether it was yellow fever with which the people were afflicted here recently, or some other febrile disease. When doctors disagree who can decide? Your correspondent has seen but one of the so called cases, and if it were a



real case of yellow fever, it is the only one he ever saw, hence he is an entire novice in the matter.

[Bob Short to Eds. News, Liberty, November 30, 1867, *Galveston Daily News*, December 4, 1867]

### **Yellow Fever Cases**

In Liberty, from the 25th of September, to the 2d of December:

Died.—Mrs. Ricca, F.G. Ricca, A. Reiner, George Loving, B.W. Durdin, (black vomit,), Mrs. Servat, Child of M. Jenatot, (black vomit,) The. Garrard, (freedman.)

Recovered.—John Loving, Mrs. Loving, Camilla Loving, Dr. P.L. Palmer, Miss Palmer, M. Breistley, Miss Palmer [listed twice], Mr. Woodsworth, Mrs. Woodsworth, Col. E.B. Pickett, Mrs. C.L. Cleveland, Mrs. J.W. Baldwin, Oliver Cleveland, Stewart Cleveland, Sidney Cleveland, Mrs. Deneke, Mrs. Bettie Cade, Paul Servat, Rev. Father Martinier, Ada Hiser, Sarah Hollimon, (freedwoman,) Jane and Harriet, (freedwomen.) [see Table 1]

[*The Liberty Gazette*, December 4, 1867]

Table 1: Yellow Fever Cases at Liberty, Texas, 1867

Name	Age	Born	R/G	Occupation	Notes
Jane			BF		
Harriett			BF		
Mrs. J. W. Baldwin			F		
Mathias Bristley	34	Württemberg Texas	WM	Merchant	
Mary E. "Betty" Cade	20	Texas	WF		
Mary A. Cleveland	38	Texas (Mexico)	WF		Wife of Charles L. Cleveland
Oliver Cleveland	7	Texas	WM		Son of Charles L. Cleveland
Sidney Cleveland	2	Texas	WM		Son of Charles L. Cleveland
Stewart Cleveland	12	Texas	WM		Son of Charles L. Cleveland
Caroline Deneke	42	Germany	WF		
B. W. Durdin			M		Deceased
Theophilus Garrard			BM		Deceased
Ada Hiser	13	Louisiana	WF		"Ida" (1870)
Sarah Hollimon			BF		
Child of Marcel Jeanator			W		Deceased; dau. Laura (13) or son Polite (12); "Janitor" (1860)
Camilla Loving			Dau. of Martha Loving		
George Loving	11	Liberty Co.	WF		
John Loving	8	Liberty Co.	WM		Deceased; son of Martha Loving
Martha Loving	23	Liberty Co.	WM		Son of Martha Loving
Jean Joseph Martiniere	44	Louisiana	WF		"Mrs. Loving" could be a wife of John Loving
Pinekey L. Palmer	26	France	WM	Catholic priest	
2 Miss Palmers	50	South Carolina	WM	Dentist	
Edward B. Pickett	44	Virginia	WF		Seven females in Palmer household (1860)
Alexia Reiner	40	France	WM	Lawyer	
Mrs. Ricca			F	Brick mason	Deceased; "Renier" (1860)
F. G. Ricca			M	Merchant	Deceased
Mrs. Servat			F		Deceased; Paul Servat listed as single (1860)
Paul Servat	34	France	WM	Grocer	
Annelise Woodsworth	33	Louisiana	WF	House keeping	
Sidney Woodsworth	35	South Carolina	WM	farmer	

Sources: *The Liberty Gazette*, December 4, 1867; 1860-1870 U.S. Federal Census; Camille Davis Trammell, *Seven Pines* (1987).

## Mississippi Valley Outbreak, 1878

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*The 1878 yellow fever epidemic killed over 5,000 residents of Memphis, 4,600 at New Orleans, and as many as 20,000 total along the lower Mississippi valley. The disease did not reach Texas that year, but in Southeast Texas, it inspired both anxiety and charity.*

### Zachary T. Fuller Response

*Concerned about reports of yellow fever in Lake Charles, the Galveston Board of Health sent health officer Robert Alexander to investigate. Travelling via railroad, he passed through Beaumont. In its issue of August 28, 1878, the Galveston Daily News published Alexander's conclusions that Lake Charles was clear of the disease, but paraphrased his description of Beaumont "as the point to be most watched, giving in his opinion that the fever was more probable there than anywhere else." In defense of Beaumont, Dr. Zachary Taylor Fuller, city health officer, wrote to Josiah F. Crosby, president of the Texas and New Orleans Railroad, and the Daily News printed his letter.*

[T]he report of Robert Alexander . . . in his representation of the sanitary condition and probability of yellow fever hear [Beaumont], does this place and myself rank injustice. We are at a loss to understand the motive that prompted Mr. Alexander to circulate broadcast through the columns of the News a statement, possibly injurious to the interests of this place as it was and unfounded in fact, unless it was willfully made for a consideration or based on outside prejudice or interested information; for only passing through on the railroad, going to and returning from Lake Charles, without leaving the railroad . . . could he have obtained information . . . Now upon my responsibility of health officer, I say that Mr. Alexander was most egregiously deceived or mistaken; that the sanitary condition of Beaumont is better than it has been for years, though for about five years it has been extraordinarily healthy, and that at the time Alexander passed through there was not a single case of sickness of any character under medical treatment in the town out of 1500 to 2000 souls. Moreover, that there is less cause to apprehend the introduction of yellow fever from the east at Beaumont than at either Lake Charles or Orange for the reason that here our commercial traffic of lumber is exclusively by rail to Galveston, Houston and interior points, while that of Lake Charles is wholly and that of Orange partially, by vessels with points on the gulf coast; that we are not only protected by our own local quarantine, coextensive with the county, but also by that

of Lake Charles, Orange and Sabine Pass, and that the atmosphere of our town is effectually fumigated night and day by the incessant burning of pine slabs and sawdust in our slab piles along the river.

[Z.M. [Zachary Taylor] Fuller health officer of Jefferson County to Judge Crosby of Houston, August 30, 1878, *Galveston Daily News*, August 31, 1878]

### **Stark to Lutcher, Orange, Texas, September 8**

*In two letters to his future wife Miriam M. Lutcher, the young businessman William H. Stark revealed the anxieties that the 1878 outbreak created in Orange, Texas, as well as recorded the community's effort to raise money for the benefit of fever victims.*

Esteemed Friend, having as yet no answer to my letter of the 25th and fearing that it might of got mislaid somewhere on the rout [*sic*]—I will start another. it has taken a flying around the moon I expect—or you are taking a terrible long time to answer it . . . . Doctors have plenty work now that weather is turning cooler and is bringing on plenty chills and fevers. Bently, Laranby [?], and Hathaway are going to start for Florida as soon as the yellow Fever dies down so they can travel . . . . Miss Lou is still in Orange expecting to leave every day. some of the boys, having nothing else to do, tried to give a Ball before she left but failed in the undertaking. there is too much excitement about yellow Fever to talk about dancing now. the Social Club meets tomorrow night to try and raise funds for the sufferers or to see what can be done. some are in favor of taking what we have in the treasury and begging the citizens, and others want to give a ball or concert and give the proceeds to the fever sufferers. cant say how it will go yet. I believe we would raise more by giving a dance than any other way because there are plenty here that would give a dollar to go to a dance that would not subscribe a cent. then, we can have a committee to go around and solicit donations from those that dont attend dances. Galveston has Quarantined against all vessels from this place and sent the Orange mail back once, but I believe she has thought better of it. at least, she lets the mail go through. there was considerable excitement in the two citys the other day, and it seems that Houston got ahead of Galveston. there was an understanding between Malory [Mallory] and Morgan line of steamers that Malory was to get all the Ocean Freights for Galveston, and Morgans was to carry all the Houston freights. Galveston allowed the Malory Steamer

to come in which had touched at Key West but quarantine the Morgan Steamer that had not touched at any Port after leaving New York. the result was Houston quarantined strictly against Galveston and would not allow Trains, mail nor nothing through, but I believe that they have affected a compromise and opened communication again.

**Stark to Lutcher, Orange, Texas, September 19**

[T]he Brass Band did not respond to Harris's call, but the Social Club did and gave the opening Ball of the season for the benefit of the yellow fever [*sic*] sufferers. we taken in one hundred and three dollars and twenty cents—fifty three twenty of which we sent to Memphis and fifty to Holly springs. it looked like a very small sum, but even that was better than nothing. we owe our success to the Ladies, or to some of them at least, for we had let Bunn [?] have the Hall for five dollars to sell refreshments, but Mrs Anderson and Miss Georgia Chapman would have us to take it from Bunn, and let them have it, so instead of five, we made twenty odd dollars. your Mother [Francis A. Robinson Lutcher] and Mrs. Anderson tended the stand, and Henry hardy my self and another negro [?] made icecream [*sic*] and lemonade or freeze the cream rather—yes, and Mr Meagher taken an active part in the freezing buisness [*sic*]. Mrs Carry presented the Club a large cake that was raffled off, and Miss Georgia one, Mrs Burton and Cousin Sue one each. then there were several smaller cakes. the four that was raffled brought thirty dollars or something near that. Mrs. Thompson brought a basket of boquets that Meagher auctioned off for five dollars, so when we come to sum up you can see that if the Ladies had not taken such an active part we would not of done much.

[Excerpted and punctuation added. W.H. Stark to Miriam Lutcher, Orange, Texas, September 8 and 19, 1878, Stark Eunice R. Benckenstein Library and Archive, Orange, Texas. For the Galveston-Houston quarantine controversy see, *Galveston Daily News*, September 5, 1878. See also, "A Fever Benefit Netting \$100," *Galveston Daily News*, September 18, 1878]

**Beaumont, 1897**


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*In September 1897, Beaumont newsboy Thomas Lovejoy, 13 years old, contracted yellow fever and died. Although his was the only case reported, the fear of contagion prompted evacuations, and neighboring towns established "shotgun" quarantines against Beaumont.*

**Frank C. Weber Recollection**

I remember before the turn of the century that a young boy came down with a fever which was pronounced the genuine "Yellow Jack" by attending physicians. Our town was quarantined and there wasn't a train in or out of Beaumont for two weeks. The stores ran out of groceries and there was general discomfort as well as deadly fear of catching the dread disease. There was no further cases, however, and the town recovered. The worst thing about this case was that the family of the boy wasn't permitted to attend the funeral. Two men with slickers took the body to the cemetery in a spring wagon.

[Michael F. Doran, "Early Beaumont: The Reminiscences of Frank C. Weber (1882-1965)," *The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*, 18 (November 1982): 60-61]

**Called in an Expert**

Beaumont. Tex., Sept. 21.—(Special.)—The Boy Tom Lovejoy is very low and the doctors say that he can not live. Dr. P[owhatan] Jordan, an expert, was telegraphed for and tonight he says positively it is not yellow fever.

[*Austin American-Statesman*, September 22, 1897]

**Confusion Conference**

Orange Tex., 21.—(Special.)—Upon an invitation from the Lake Charles board of health, Dr. J[ulian] D. Buttler went with them to Beaumont this morning for the purpose of conferring on the matter of reciprocal health certificates in order to remove as far as possible some of the inconveniences and confusion inflicted upon travel by the present unsystematic method, but owing to a failure to agree nothing resulted from the meeting.

[*Austin American-Statesman*, September 22, 1897]

### One Death at Beaumont

*Dr. Swearingen Said Yellow Fever, Others Called It Black Jaundice—Are no Other Suspicious Cases—A Strong Guard Placed about the House Where the Patient Died—All Trains Stopped*

Beaumont, Texas, September 22.—Beaumont has had a case of yellow fever. This is the verdict of Dr. R[ichard] M. Swearingen, State health officer. A majority of the local board of health differ with the State official, but his verdict is the accepted one and the Queen of the Neches is today virtually isolated and citizens are fleeing to the woods for refuge from the dreaded disease.

The illness pronounced yellow fever developed in Thomas Lovejoy, aged 13 years, son of Mr. and Mrs. A.J. Lovejoy [Andrew J. and Mary F. Gober], who run a private boarding house near the banks of the Neches river, three blocks from the business center. The little fellow was a newsboy and among other newspapers, he handled the New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Last Friday morning he was attacked by fever and Dr. [James M.] Gober, a local physician, was summoned. The illness was not regarded as more than a case of malaria and attracted no unusual attention. The boy continued to grow worse, however, and yesterday morning the attending physician became uneasy and called in Drs. [Jacob S.] Price and [Jacob A.] Gilder, city and county physicians. These doctors diagnosed the case as swamp fever, possibly black jaundice with malaria hoematuria [hematuria]. They were uncertain, put a cordon of guards around the premises and inaugurated a strict quarantine against inmates of the house. They also telegraphed for Dr. Swearingen, State health officer and Dr. P. Jordan of Kountze, an old army surgeon and a physician who has had considerable experience with yellow fever. Dr. Jordan arrived at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and after examining the patient pronounced him afflicted with malaria hoematuria or black jaundice, and said the boy could not live through the night.

Dr. Swearingen arrived at 10 o'clock last night and after examining the patient handed the following to newspaper correspondents for publication:

Beaumont, Texas, September 21.—I have tonight examined Thomas Lovejoy, a boy about 13 years of age, and pronounce his case very suspicious. I believe he will die soon and an autopsy will clear the diagnosis. I advise all towns and places to quarantine against this place until the fact is established that the case is not yellow fever. The boy has been out of this city. R.M. Swearingen. State Health Officer.

The boy died at an early hour this morning. Dr. Swearingen, who was still in the city, immediately proclaimed that the death was caused by yellow fever and ordered that no trains be permitted to leave Beaumont this morning and that none be allowed to enter the city.

This order caught the outgoing East Texas, Port Arthur and Kaysee [Kansas City Southern] trains, but the Gulf and Interstate sent a train out to Galveston and the Southern Pacific one to Houston.

#### *Created a Panic*

The board of health is keeping a strict guard around the Lovejoy premises and no one except physicians or nurses are permitted to leave or enter.

In pronouncing the illness of the now dead boy yellow fever Dr. Swearingen created a panic in this city and business is virtually suspended. Many people are trying to get away and the different depots were crowded this morning by those who hoped to catch outgoing trains before quarantine against the city was proclaimed and there was much disappointment when trains on several of the roads were not permitted to depart. Private conveyances have been pressed into service and all day long wagons loaded with people, provisions [*sic*] and camping outfits have been going to the country. Many have left without supplies and it is expected that these will be forced back by hunger in a very few days.

#### *Provisions May Run Short*

State Health Officer Swearingen this morning ordered that no train from any direction be permitted to stop in Beaumont until further notice. This includes freight as well as passenger trains, and if the order remains in force very long the supply of provisions in this entire section will be exhausted.



*No Other Cases*

At six o'clock this afternoon the board of health issued the following bulletin:

To the People of Beaumont.

The board of health was reorganized this morning and it is now composed as follows: Dr. B[enjamin] F. Calhoun, chairman; M[arshall] B. Saunders, secretary; W[illiam] W. Cunningham, C[yrus] Y. Thompson, J[ohn] W. Cruse. All trains have been order stopped by order of the State health officer. The house of the suspected case has been thoroughly disinfected and the occupants kept in strict quarantine. The house adjoining has also been put under quarantine. There is now no sickness in the city that is regarded suspicious. The board of health will make daily reports. B.F. Calhoun, Chairman. M.B. Saunders, Secretary.

*No Crowds Permitted*

The board of health has issued a proclamation asking citizens not to congregate in crowds on the streets and the mayor has proclaimed that any one found on the street after 7 o'clock will be arrested.

The city schools have been ordered closed by the city physician.

*No Autopsy Held.*

Dr. R.M. Swearingen departed this morning for the quarantine station on the Sabine river. The doctor last night announced that an autopsy would be necessary to decide whether or not the Lovejoy boy had yellow fever, but left this morning without holding an autopsy.

Dr. Jordan insists that the boy did not have yellow fever and volunteered to conduct the autopsy on the remains, but Dr. Swearingen stated that he would not be governed by any decision that might be derived from the technical examination. The autopsy was not held.

*The Body Buried*

The remains of the boy were buried this afternoon, Dr. Jordan and Mr. A[shley] B. Weaver, a citizen who went through the epidemic in Shreveport, being the only ones who attended the funeral.

*The Detention Camp*

When Jefferson county established quarantine against infected points east a detention station was built east of the Neches river in Orange county. Today Orange county quarantined against Beaumont and the Orange county authorities have taken charge of the Jefferson county detention station.

*The Governor Notified*

Austin, Texas, September 22—This morning Governor [Charles A.] Culberson received a telegram from State Health Officer Swearingen, who was at Beaumont, confirming the reported yellow fever . . . .

*At Orange*

Orange, Texas, September 22—.Orange has been in a fever excitement today on account of the reported case of yellow fever at Beaumont. County Judge [Stephen] Chenault this morning wired County Judge [Edgar P.] Gray at Beaumont as follows: "We have established strict quarantine against Beaumont and Jefferson county. Remove your guards from this county."

Jefferson county has had quarantine guards stationed in Orange county at the intersection of the Southern Pacific and the Pee-Gee [Kansas City, Pittsburg & Gulf] roads and these are the guards referred to in the message.

Orange county today placed guards at the Neches river bridge, Deolin's ferry, Bunn's Bluff, the Jasper road leading from Ford's Bluff, and every avenue of access from Jefferson county to this will be closely guarded.

The order from Houston this afternoon abandoning all trains between Houston and Lafayette caused considerable consternation among many, though majority express satisfaction with the stringent measures and feel that the occasion demands them.

Dr. Swearingen, State health officer, passed here at noon today going to the camp of detention at the Sabine river, where he held a consultation with the Lake Charles board of health this afternoon. He will spend the night there, thoroughly fumigated his car and return tomorrow morning.

The city board of health met this afternoon and organized by electing Dr. S[amuel] W. Sholars president and George Call secretary. They decided to let the quarantine stand as previously declared by the mayor.

The abandonment of trains on the Southern Pacific will force the mills at this place to shut down until the embargo is raised.

*Wouldn't Accept Messages*

Upon receipt last night of the special from Beaumont stating that Dr. Swearingen had, after seeing the boy Lovejoy last night, pronounced his case suspicious and ordered quarantine, The Post wired its representative at Beaumont as follows:

Why did you not send us Swearingen's statement as to Lovejoy's case last night? Wire specific explanation at once. Post."

In about an hour after the sending of the above the following was received from the Western Union office in this city:

Western Union office at Beaumont closed. Railroad operator refused to take message, stating that streets were quarantined with shotguns and he didn't want to be made a sieve."

[*The Houston Daily Post*, September 23, 1897]

**Back to Beaumont**

*Galveston Establishes a Rigid Quarantine—Boatload of Passengers from the Interstate Not Allowed to Land at the Galveston Wharf*

Galveston, Texas, September 22.—When the news of the death at Beaumont of the Lovejoy boy was received here this morning Acting Mayor [James D.] Skinner immediately called a meeting of the city and county health officials at the office of, Scott, Levi & Smith, where the situation was discussed at length. A rigid quarantine was at once ordered against Beaumont. No freight, baggage or persons from that city will be admitted into Galveston, and extra guards will be put on to inspect everything that comes by way of the Gulf and Interstate road.

The ferryboat Charlotte M. Allen was at the time at Bolivar getting aboard the passengers that arrived from Beaumont and other points on the Interstate road by the early train. There is no telegraphic communication with Beaumont and there was no way of stopping the Allen

from leaving Bolivar. Police Sergeant [Paul] Delaya went out in a boat and met the ferry some distance down the channel. He ordered it back. There were between twenty and thirty passengers aboard.

The ferry boat was first moored at the old quarantine wharf, just across the channel toward Bolivar, but later was sent back to Bolivar.

There the people were given the option of going back to Beaumont or being put in quarantine. There is no camp of detention at Bolivar and no accommodations for person who are detained. Most of them are understood to have gone back to Beaumont . . . .

The Gulf and Interstate railway people do not know whether they will be able to run trains or not. It all depends upon the action of the local board of health and the citizens who reside at various points along the line. This Afternoon at 2:30 o'clock General Manager Fox Winnie left for Bolivar on the tug New Brunswick. If trains are not permitted to run the road will issue an order refusing to receive freight for Beaumont and intermediate points. Mr. Winnie said before his departure that there was some freight in the local warehouse destined for Beaumont and he was anxious to get it out if possible.

The probabilities are that the road will shut down.

It was rumored on the streets this afternoon that the citizens of Bolivar were greatly exercised because the passengers from Beaumont were allowed to land there this morning and later were sent back from Galveston. It is said they will establish a shotgun quarantine if necessary.

[*The Houston Daily Post*, September 23, 1897]

### **Malicious Fever Liars**

#### *More False Reports Sent out of Houston to Neighboring Towns*

The Post received information from Richmond last night that some one in this city during the day telephoned to friends in that town that yellow fever had been discovered here and that the Southern Pacific train had this morning brought in the corpse of the boy who died at Beaumont. The first story is bad enough, but should the author of the latter be found he should be dealt with most severely. The Post requested its informant to learn who it was that sent the telephone message referred

to and the authors thereof be traced as registers are kept of long distance talk, and if the names are furnished they will be given publicity. There is absolutely no truth in either story, the one about the bringing of the Lovejoy corpse being especially malicious. There has been too much this specie of lying indulged in already, and it is time that it be brought to a sudden stop.

[*The Houston Daily Post*, September 23, 1897]

### **Yellow Fever at Beaumont**

#### *The City and County [Liberty] Declare a Strict Quarantine*

Wednesday when a dispatch was received from Beaumont stating that Dr. Swaringen [*sic*], state health officer, had declared a death in Beaumont from yellow fever, gloom was to be seen on every countenance, and in an hour afterward Liberty no longer looked like a railroad town, for every train had been stopped between Houston and Beaumont. County judge [William J.] Swilley immediately got a quorum of the commissioners court together, and after free discussion quarantine was declared against Beaumont and Jefferson county, as appears by the following minutes of the court:

Called meeting of the commissioners court, Sept. 22d. Present, W.J. Swilley, judge; W[illiam] B. Green and Frank Abshier, commissioners.

Whereas, yellow fever has been declared to be prevalent at Beaumont, in Jefferson County, by State Health Officer Swaringen [*sic*], it is ordered by the court that Dr. J.W. Bailey be and is hereby appointed county physician of Liberty county, to be allowed \$5 per day during the quarantine, and he is directed to maintain quarantine at Devers and at other points on the east line of Liberty county, wherever in his opinion said fever be liable to be introduced into said Liberty county.

[*The Liberty Vindicator*, September 24, 1897]

### **The Supposed Case**

#### *At Most Places It Is the "Suspicious" Case*

Beaumont, Tex., Sept. 22.—(Special.)—The board of health issued the following bulletin at 6 p.m.:

“The board of health was reorganized this morning. All trains have been stopped by order of Dr. Swearingen. The house where the supposed yellow fever patient died has been thoroughly disinfected and the occupants are under strict quarantine. The house adjoining is also under quarantine. There is no sickness in the city which can be regarded as suspicious. Reports from the board of health will be given to the people daily. Sabine Pass, Port Arthur and Orange have quarantined against Beaumont. (Signed) B.F. Calhoun, Chairman. M.B. Sanders [Saunders], Secretary.”

### *Stopping the Trains*

Colmesneil, Tex., Sept. 22.—(Special.)—Absolute quarantine has been established by Tyler county against all outside points. The health officers have notified the railroads that no trains will be allowed to enter the county until further notice. Sabine and East Texas trains were turned back at Woodville today . . . .

### *Shotgun Quarantine*

Trinity Tex., Sept. 22.—(Special.)—At a mass meeting held here tonight a citizen shotgun quarantine was established against all infected yellow fever districts. Guards were appointed to meet all trains going in and out of the city both day and night. Groveton public roads are guarded.

[*Austin American-Statesman*, September 23, 1897]

### **With a Rush**

#### *State Health Officer Swearingen Went through the Town of Orange*

Orange, Tex., Sept. 23.—(Special.)—Dr. R.M. Swearingen passed here going from the Sabine river quarantine station to Houston this afternoon at 4 o'clock at breakneck speed. The engineer blew his whistle at crossings, but no halt was made. The local board of health had asked for a conference, but the doctor was in a hurry. All of the yard crew and the office men of the Southern Pacific with two exceptions, were dispensed with today until further notice. George Livingston and John Weaver came over the Neches river from Beaumont last night, heading this way, but were overhauled by the Orange county quarantine guards, and put

in the house of detention, four miles west of this place, where they will be required to remain ten days. The last passenger that was in detention at the state line quarantine station having been discharged and permitted to go about his business. No trains are running through, and until they start up again it is not expected that any one will be taken there. There is no serious sickness of any kind here. It has been several years since a case of dengue appeared at this place.

*At Beaumont*

*No More Cases and Weather Is Favorable to Health*

Beaumont, Tex., Sept. 23.—(Special.)—The situation here is somewhat improved. Of the fifteen inmates of the Lovejoy house everyone is in the best of health. There is no sickness in town that could be considered as suspicious. Dr. B.F. Calhoun, chairman of the board of health, says that as long as there are warm, clear days and cool nights, people need fear no danger as to yellow fever. The weather for the past few days is the preventive. The general opinion of the people of this city is that there is no yellow fever here nor has there been. Chambers county today quarantined against Jefferson county. Over fifty families have left there since yesterday and more will leave tomorrow and tonight. They are unanimous in saying the case was not yellow fever, but insist taking their families out of town.

Dr. Swearingen passed through Beaumont this afternoon at 4 o'clock. He was met at the stock yards half a mile west of here, by one or two leading citizens. He said he would lay over at Sour Lake tomorrow and go into Houston tomorrow night and would consult with Dr. [Robert] McElroy and Mayor [H. Baldwin] Rice as to sending in the letter mail. He still insists that Lovejoy died of yellow fever.

If Houston agrees, trains will come from Houston to the stock yards and deposit matter, where it will be picked up by the guards and brought to Beaumont. The same will apply to the Gulf and Interstate. The rule will go into effect possibly Saturday morning.

A[ristide] Hamelin of the Blum Hardware company is among the Galvestonians quarantined here.

[*Austin American-Statesman*, September 24, 1897]

**Beaumont Is Lonely***Dr. McElroy's Advice Was Not Appreciated**Citizens Who Fled Are Returning—Dr. Swearingen Expected to Raise Quarantine Monday*

Beaumont, Texas, September 25.—The board of health yesterday wired the authorities at Houston and Galveston with the view of resuming mail communication between those cities and Beaumont. Neither city would consent to the proposition, but Dr. McElroy of Houston kindly suggested that Beaumont could get supplies from St. Louis via Corrigan and Colmesneil over a railroad on which a train has not been run since the recent visit of the State health officer.

Fearing that the people throughout Texas might think that the local board health of health and newspaper correspondents were not giving reliable reports of the health condition in Beaumont, the board of health this afternoon wired the following to Dr. Swearingen:

Dr. R. M. Swearingen, Houston,

Beaumont, Texas, September 25.—The health of our city is excellent; no suspicious cases and all inmates of the Lovejoy house are in good health. On account of great excitement throughout the alleged yellow fever belt and as Beaumont is the only place in Texas by you declared infected, we deem it advisable if possible for you to come here and issue bulletins in regard to our condition in order that the excitement be allayed. Please answer. B.F. Colhoun [Calhoun], Chairman. M.B. Saunders, Secretary.

Dr. Swearingen replied that it would be useless for him to come, but he hoped everything would be all right in a few days. The reply of the health officer was a disappointment to the people of Beaumont. There is longer any yellow fever excitement in the city and no sickness to create excitement, and it is generally believed that, Dr. Swearingen could render a great service not only to Beaumont but to the entire State by coming here and announcing prevailing conditions over his official signature.

Quite a number of the citizens who fled from Beaumont Wednesday, when Dr. Swearingen announced that Thomas Lovejoy had died with



yellow fever, have returned to the city, and it is expected that all will be back by Monday.

When here Dr. Swearingen promised to raise the quarantine Monday noon if no more suspicious sickness developed in the Lovejoy house or elsewhere in the city. He is therefore expected to arrive here not later than Monday.

Sabine Pass this afternoon wired that citizens at the seaport had become convinced that Beaumont was not infected with yellow fever and will permit trains to turn from Beaumont just as soon as the railroad officials get ready.

### **In Camp at Bolivar**

*Refugees from Beaumont "Settle" on a Bolivar Pier*

Galveston, Texas, September 25.—The Bolivar camp of detention is situated on a spur that runs out into the bay near the county wharf at Bolivar. County Physician [Clarence] Warfield chose the site yesterday as the most available for the camp of detention on the peninsular [*sic*]. The ties on the track of the spur are being floored over and platforms built and tents put up so that the refugees from Beaumont will be reasonably comfortable and at the time be within easy communication for the reception of supplies.

Inspector [Tom] Duffy has information that two or three parties are en route from Beaumont to Bolivar. Some of them are in buggies and some are afoot. There are about ten persons all told, so he is advised. He is keeping a close watch for their appearance.

Jim Sweeney took a trip over to Bolivar yesterday afternoon and had a long distance conversation with Mr. Duffy, who reported that he and his subjects were as happy as people in jail. They had plenty to eat and they didn't have to work. It bothered them a little to know that the people of Bolivar didn't extend to them the right hand of fellowship, but they let it go at that. Mr. Duffy kicked because the newspapers had not been sent to him, and he asked Mr. Sweeney to send such reading matter as he could get hold of.

Mrs. [Margaret] Neis, so Mr. Duffy said, was quiet comfortable and every one in the camp was enjoying good health.

[*Houston Post*, September 26, 1897]

### **In Quarantine at Duffyville**

*Mrs. Neis Relates Her Trying Experience at Bolivar Point—The Mosquitos Frightful—Inspector Duffy's Heroism and Unfailing Good Humor through Six Awful Days*

The population of Duffyville has been reduced several hundred per cent at one fell swoop. Yesterday the duke of Duffyville was ruler of the people, while today he is a ruler without a people. Solitary and alone he treads his banquet halls deserted.

His erstwhile subjects have nothing but words of praise and commendation for the duke. But in spite of this they were the happiest people on earth to escape from his domain. They bade adieu to Duffyville with tears. But they were tears of joy. They left the duke with many fond pressings of his hand, but there was joy in every press. He had reigned loyally and lovingly over them. But they threw away his paternal care for the less loving rule of a heartless municipality.

There was joy in Duffville yesterday when the tug Charlotte M. Allen steamed into the harbor with the tidings that the population was to move. The boat brought the unfortunates to Galveston and this morning Mrs. J. Neis told the Tribune about it.

Mrs. Neis was in her millinery store on Postoffice [*sic*] street early this morning. Every few minutes some of her friends would drop in to congratulate her upon her escape from the toils. She was glad to see them and her friends were glad to see her. Mrs. Neis has a good motherly face, in which strong character is depicted. She was sunburned and looked weary. But withal she was cheerful and so delighted to escape from the detention camp at Bolivar Point that to her all the world took on a rosy hue.

"It was awful," said she, "simply awful," and she passed her hand rapidly across her face as if in the act fanning away mosquitoes. "I have fought those pests until I don't believe I shall ever get over the habit of fighting them.

“So you want to know something of my experience? Well I’ll tell you all about it. I was in Beaumont last Tuesday [September 21]. At 12 o’clock my milliner went home to dinner. She saw Dr. Price coming out of the Lovejoy house. He said, ‘If it’s yellow fever I am going.’ He was as pale as death and very much excited. I had a carpenter at work in the store putting up some shelves. He lived in the same house where the Lovejoy boy was sick and when he got home they quarantined him and would not let him out again. I could not get another carpenter and we held a council of war to decide on what we should do.

“Everybody was terribly excited and nobody wanted to go near the boy. I had been through yellow fever epidemics and at once offered my services. I am not afraid of the disease. But my services were not wanted.

“In the evening I sent my son [John J. Neis ?] to a mass meeting. He came home and told me there would be no trouble. I also met Father [William J.] Lee. He also told me not to worry but to stay at Beaumont. We left the store at 11 o’clock at night and went home, having made up our minds to leave for Galveston next morning. The train was to have left at 6.30 [*sic*]. We got there before that time but the train did not start from Beaumont until 9 o’clock. It was held there in order to give those who had left Beaumont in buggies time to get to Winnie ahead of the train. Dr. Swearingen had not gotten to Beaumont when we left there. When we got to Winnie we found the people who had left Beaumont in buggies. They got on the train and we were all in the same car. When they got to Bolivar they told that they had not been in the same car with us. This was not true. There were two cars and in one of them there were two negroes. All the white people were in the other car.

“At High Island a quarantine officer met us. He swore us and asked where we were from. We told him and that settled it. We were quarantined.

“Our first night at Bolivar was something terrible. It was bitterly cold and the mosquitoes were frightful. They nearly carried us away. We were put out on the end of the pier and had no beds to sleep on. There was nothing there but boards and we suffered frightfully. Mr. Duffy, I believe, saved my life by his kindness. He did everything in his power. No man could have done more and not many have done as much under

the circumstances. Late in the evening he gave me a key to a little house there told me my son and I could occupy it. We went in there, but there was nothing but boards to sleep on.

“A Mr. Moss, who works for the Interstate, tried his best to put us off the bridge. He swore he would arrest Duffy and put us off. But Mr. Duffy stood his ground declared he should do nothing of the kind. He wanted Duffy to take us all down into a swamp. The mosquitoes were nearly eating us up where we were and Mr. Duffy declared he would not go; that we could not live there. Three petitions were sent over here by the people of Bolivar to get us away and we were repeatedly insulted and threatened.

“That first night was something horrible. We had no mosquito bars and had to fight the pests all night to keep them from carrying us away. In the morning our faces were sore and swollen and we were in a frightful condition. We had nothing to eat from the time we got to Bolivar. Next morning we got some coffee, but it seemed to have been made of salt water and I could not drink it.

“The day Dr. Warfield came over. The people wanted him to move us down to Mosquitoville. He started down there, but pretty soon he came back. The mosquitoes whipped him out before he got there and he said we could stay where we were. Dr. Warfield did everything he could for us, but that was not much in such a place as that.

“We were then moved over to the county bridge. Mosquito bars and mattresses were sent us and we had plenty to eat. But there was no such thing as sleep. The mosquitoes would go through the bars just like they had not been there. We had to fight them night and day. We would put the bars down at night, but in the morning they would be black with the pests. I think they must have worn boots to kick holes in the bars. Why, I only slept one night out of the six we were there. That was the second night and I was so worn out and exhausted that I did not care whether the mosquitoes ran away with me or not. Mr. Duffy lent me his big overcoat. That saved my life and kept me from freezing to death.

“The night before we left we thought our time had come. The wind came up and it blew terribly. The bridge would rock and sway, the wa-

ter under it lashed the pier and dashed spray everywhere, and it surely seemed that our time had come, but Mr. Duffy was as brave as a lion and his courage reassured us. But I tell you, we all thought we were going to be blown into the bay. There was one thing about it, though. The mosquitoes had made life such a burden to us that we did not care whether we were drowned or not. The fact that the mosquitoes would drown too if they tried to follow us under the water reconciled us to our fate, if that fate was to be death in the deep blue sea.

“All the time the people of Bolivar were as afraid of us as they could be and would [not] let us come near them and they would [not] come near us. Our only friends were the mosquitoes. They staid [*sic*] with us. They were the most persistent collectors I have ever seen. Night day they stuck their bills into us. They were everywhere. The air was literally alive with them. I have always longed for camp life. But I tell you I have enough to last me a life time.

“We had to stand many insults. But Duffy stood his ground like a major and they could not bluff him. I tell you Duffy is just grand.

“But with all our troubles and the battles with the mosquitoes we managed to amuse ourselves. Crabbing was our principal diversion. We would catch a barrel of crabs. Then we would throw them back into the bay and catch them all over again. But after a while this got to be poor fun. We got papers every day and had plenty to read. But the mosquitoes took away the pleasure of reading. Sunday we had a fine crab gumbo. It was splendid and all of us enjoyed it.

“I do not lie as general thing. I am opposed to lying. But I tell you now if it came to a case of a week at Duffyville or tell a lie, I would do like the rest of them did get through.”

Mrs. Neis does not think the case of the Lovejoy boy was yellow fever. She says she is sure it was not. But the result to her was just the same and next time she will make it her particular business not to get caught in quarantine.

[*Galveston Tribune*, September 28, 1897]

### **Two Editorials**

The yellow fever scare has forcibly demonstrated that the quarantine law of Texas needs amending. Quarantine is too serious a thing to be left in the hands of irresponsible and badly frightened communities. The interruption of commerce and interference with travel and the mails is too important to be left to the caprice of terror-stricken individuals or panic-struck communities. All quarantine regulations should be left absolutely in the hands of the state authorities.

When the suspicious ease of yellow fever was in Beaumont the Houston people, in reply to an inquiry as to whether or not they would furnish Beaumont with some necessary groceries and the like, replied that Beaumont had better get their goods from New Orleans. The tables are now turned. It would stand Beaumont people well in hand to either offer to sell Houston goods or wire them that they can get their goods from New Orleans.

[*The Austin Weekly Statesman*, September 30, 1897]

### **Chambers County**

Wallisville, Texas. October 1.—Pursuant to an appeal from the people of the town of Winnie for protection against refugees from Beaumont, which the State health officer had declared to be an infected city, W.B. Gordon, county judge, appointed Dr. A.W. Shearer county officer and guards were at once stationed at all points on the eastern border of Chambers county. In the meantime the commissioners court convened and after due consideration decided by a majority vote that they did not consider the fever scare at Beaumont sufficient to justify this county in declaring quarantine against any point and all guards were withdrawn.

[*Houston Daily Post*, October 2, 1897]

## *Houston Post* Cartoons, 1897

*The reports of the single case of yellow fever at Beaumont and unfounded claims of the disease at Galveston generated anxieties along the Texas Gulf Coast. The Houston Post published a series of satirical cartoons to express their disapproval against spreading rumors and establishing overly harsh quarantines.*

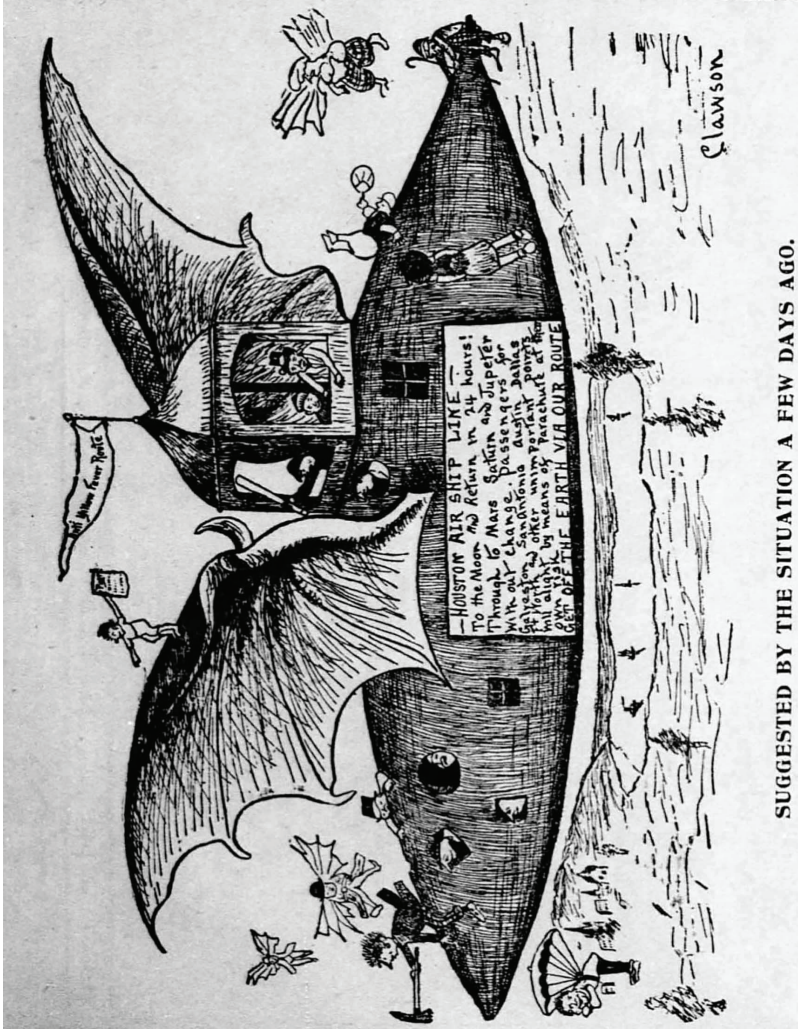


Fearing that yellow fever could spread with the mail, local post offices implemented a variety of disinfecting procedures. Apparently in Houston, stiff-bristled brushes left a distinctive and annoying perforation on the mail. Larned [?], "Disinfecting the Mails," *Houston Daily Post*, September 26, 1897.



As a 19th-century version of “fake news,” rumors could generate unnecessary anxiety and harsh treatment. Here, the cartoonist depicts the “Yellow Fever Liar” as an ass who spreads panic among his neighbors. Ole J. May, “Where Most of the Trouble Is,” *Houston Daily Post*, September 29, 1897.





SUGGESTED BY THE SITUATION A FEW DAYS AGO.

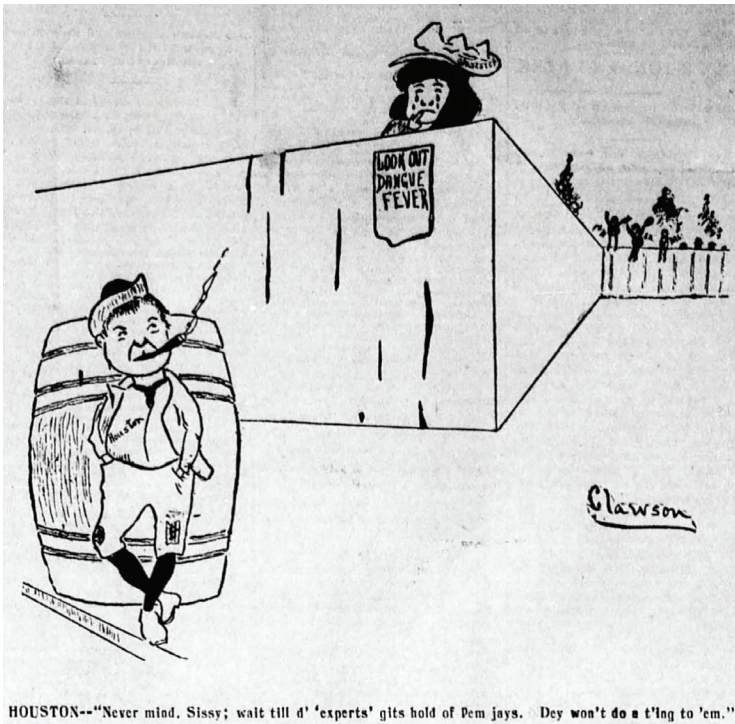
The cartoonist equated the futility of enforcing a quarantine against Galveston to the fantasy of space travel. "The Yellow Fever Route." "Houston Air Ship Line. To the Moon and Return in 24 Hours! Through to Mars Saturn and Jupiter with out change. Passengers for Galveston San Antonio Austin Dallas Fort Worth and other unimportant points will alight by means of parachute at their own risk. Get off the Earth via our route." Charles W. Clawson, "Suggested by the Situation a Few Days Ago," *Houston Daily Post*, October 1, 1897.



Perhaps in a show of reassurance, the *Post* depicts “Texas” keeping the “Yellow Jack” demon under its thumb. [artist not determined], “We Have Him Faded,” *Houston Daily Post*, October 2, 1897.



A commentary on the silliness of “shotgun” quarantines. “Texas” holds a vial of “dengue fever”—viewed as a less dangerous infection than yellow fever—and stands guard at a barbed-wire quarantine fence. [artist not determined], “My, but what a scare,” *Houston Daily Post*, October 7, 1897.



HOUSTON--"Never mind, Sissy; wait till d' 'experts' gits hold of Pem jays. Dey won't do a t'ing to 'em."

The cartoonist depicts "Houston" as a tough teasing little sister "Galveston," who tearfully peers over the quarantine fence. Charles W. Clawson, "Houston—'Never mind, Sissy,'" *Houston Daily Post*, October 7, 1897.

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# INFLUENZA, 1918

*THE RECORD STAFF*

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In the fall of 1918 as the Great War neared an armistice, U.S. soldiers returning from Europe carried a virulent influenza strain that spread throughout the nation. The erroneously labeled “Spanish flu” infected 500 million people—one-third of the world’s population—and killed 50 million. In the United States, influenza led to the deaths of 650 thousand. Apparently, Texas officials did not compile an accounting of the disease, but a widely reported and unsubstantiated number places the statewide toll at 2,100. That total likely reflects newspaper reports which drastically undercounted influenza-related deaths.

Like other U.S. communities, the 1918 outbreak struck Southeast Texas swiftly. By October 31, the *Beaumont Enterprise* reported 4,168 cases in the city. Although the newspaper declared the epidemic over by the end of the year, influenza mortalities continued through the spring of 1919. An unscientific review of death certificates submitted to the

Special thanks to Igor Romashets for assisting in the research on the 1918 influenza epidemic in Southeast Texas.

state health department between October 1918 and March 1919 suggests that influenza contributed to the deaths of 355 residents of Jefferson County and 562 within the ten-county region. Even these figures likely underrepresent the actual totals as physicians may have misidentified causes of mortality, and some deaths did not receive documentation.

Regardless of the statistics, once influenza arrived, civic and health leaders of Southeast Texas took action. Without the benefits of antibiotics or other pharmaceutical mitigations, they resorted to non-medical procedures. For example, they prohibited public gatherings and launched public-awareness campaigns about wearing masks and washing hands.

In the midst of the influenza crisis, Beaumont also experienced an outbreak of smallpox. In the same October 31 article, the *Enterprise* reported 47 cases and a citywide effort that vaccinated 1,900 citizens. The disease impacted the African-American community the hardest, whose members represented 22 of the 27 Jefferson County deaths. In its reporting on the 1918 emergency, the *Enterprise* provided reminders that Beaumont was a deeply segregated community and that many white residents harbored unfounded and hurtful misconceptions about ethnic difference.



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## *Newspaper Accounts*

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### **Frederick H. Farwell Corrects a Rumor**

Orange, Texas, Sept. 29, 1918.

[Lieutenant] Governor [Willard A.] Johnson,  
Austin, Texas.

Today's papers run a story under Austin date saying that martial law has been declared here on account of influenza. This is absolutely false, as no such step has been or is going to be taken. Conditions here are no worse than other places in this section. Please use your best efforts to correct report and have papers deny this morning's story.

Orange Chamber of Commerce, F[rederick] H. Farwell, president.

[*Orange Daily Leader*, September 30, 1918]

### **Proclamation of Mayor Closing Public Places**

Following the recommendations of the board of health, Mayor [Ernest J.] Diffenbacher issued the following proclamation Monday evening for the purpose of coping with the present health conditions of the city:

“Proclamation by the Mayor, City of Beaumont, Texas—October 7, 1918:

“Whereas, at a meeting of the board of health of the city of Beaumont, called by me, and held on this day, to consider the present state of public health, the said board of health adopted by unanimous vote the following resolution. to-wit:

“Whereas, by the report of the city health officer, the county health officer and by the doctor members of the board of health of the City of Beaumont, a situation of sufficient gravity exists in the city with particular reference to Spanish influenza and smallpox, in view especially of the scarcity of physicians and nurses, warrant and require drastic action on the part of the public authority and the people at large:

“Therefore, be it resolved, by the board of health of the city of Beaumont that all public places of amusement and public gatherings of every sort and kind, including churches of every denomination, schools, both public and fraternal, theatres, moving picture shows, Red Cross work rooms throughout the city, billiard halls, pool rooms and bowling alleys, and every playhouse of every description, be closed on and after 8 o’clock a.m., Tuesday, October 8, 1918, until further notice, and that the mayor of the city of Beaumont be and he is hereby requested and urged to forthwith issue a proclamation carrying this resolution into effect, and that he use every available resource at the city to enforce it.

“Be it further resolved that the action of the mayor prohibiting the circuses from performing here be and it is hereby ratified and endorsed without qualification, and that the mayor be and he is hereby requested and urged to use every resource of the city to prevent such performances.

“Be it further resolved, that the mayor be and is hereby respectfully urged to request and counsel the citizenship of Beaumont at large, of all classes, to co-operate whole-heartedly with this effort of the public authorities to meet the situation confronting them, and that he especially urge upon them the vital importance of remaining at home and off the streets as much possible for the next few weeks, and of the vital necessity of every man, woman child in the city being vaccinated at once.

“Therefore, I, E.J. Diffenbacher, mayor of the city of Beaumont, acting upon and in pursuance of the said above resolution of the city board of health, and by legal authority in me vested, do hereby proclaim it to be in full force and effect, in all its terms and provisions, within the city of Beaumont, from and after 8 o’clock of the morning of Tuesday, October 8, 1918, and I further request on the part of the citizenship of Beaumont the fullest co-operation in the observance not only of the terms of this resolution and proclamation but in the further doing of whatever may be possible to be done in safe-guarding the health of the community at large and of every individual citizen. Among the preventive measures which I hereby urge upon the public is that of immediate vaccination against smallpox now existent in a malignant form in our city, and I ask for the city and county health officers and for of the

physicians of the city engaged in the work of stamping out what has already become a serious menace to our health, Spanish influenza, the fullest sympathy and co-operation of the people, to the end that the unpleasant and nevertheless necessary prohibition herein contained may be removed at the earliest possible moment.

Given under my hand and seal of office this day of October, A.D. 1918.

E.J. Diffenbacher, Mayor.”

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 8, 1918]

### **Don't Be Scared Stay at Home Says Mayor**

Mayor [Orrin R.] Sholars this morning expressed his satisfaction in the fact that Orange is possessing herself every day of better facilities for caring for her sick. It is hoped that by the latter part of the week the pneumonia scourge will be so nearly checked that it can be considered to be under control.

“I wish you'd tell the people,” said Mayor Sholars, “that they must take care of themselves. Tell them not to fear the influenza but if they do contract it, that the first and most important thing is not run the risk of pneumonia by needless exposure. Stay home, in bed, if possible, but by all means stay home until you are well.”

“There is no need of alarm. The type of influenza prevalent is not virulent. Hundreds of cases have already recovered. Serious consequences have appeared only in such cases as have developed pneumonia or other dangerous complications, and considering the large number of influenza cases the ratio of pneumonia cases in Orange has not been nearly so large as in other cities of equal population.

“The thing to do under the circumstances is to follow the precautions prescribed by the family physician and avoid large gatherings until the epidemic is gotten under control. Help the health authorities all that is possible by observing such measures as are suggested, and be patient. The safeguarding of the health of the community is the most important thing of all.

“And people living elsewhere may come to Orange with even less danger of contagion than has existed for a month past since now drastic measures are being invoked to control the influenza epidemic, whereas no unusual precautions were taken during the weeks in which thousands of cases occurred and convalesced. If visitors will observe when they come to Orange such precautions as they are accustomed to at home, they will be as safe here as they could possibly be anywhere else.

“[And] above all things do not be frightened at absurd rumors and do not be a party to their circulation. Accurate information with respect to the situation will be given each day.

“So let us all be patient and cheerful, and cooperate in every possible way to stamp out the epidemic. In that way normal conditions will soon be reached.”

[*Orange Daily Leader*, October 10, 1918]

### **Spanish ‘Influ’ Hits Beaumont**

*Many Cases Reported by Physicians—Rest Is Best Cure—Beats Medicine*

Two hundred and fifty cases of Spanish influenza are in Beaumont. This statement is official and comes from Dr. E[dward] C. Ferguson, head of the city health department. He bases the estimate of cases on reports made by physicians, and those of his own knowledge. There have been no deaths.

It has been believed by the city health department, prior to the announcement Thursday afternoon, that Spanish influenza was prevalent in this city, but the department did not care to make a positive statement until lists at the city laboratory of sputum from patients suffering with a severe type of grippe [influenza] gave confirmation.

The epidemic is not confined to any one section of Beaumont nor to any particular class of citizens. Every one is interested in the method of overcoming an attack of influenza, and Dr. Ferguson declares that, after the following symptoms, go to bed and stay there until relieved:

Chilly sensation, backache, headache, aching bones, slight soreness in chest, coughing and sneezing. A high temperature follows these symptoms and the afflicted one generally is in an utter state of collapse.

Rest is the only cure. Dr. Ferguson declares, and is better than all the medicine a doctor can give a patient. Of course, call a doctor, and do this immediately. From five to seven days of absolute rest, in bed, will generally find the patient well, but for several days is in a weakened and exhausted condition.

Spanish influenza, in itself, is not dangerous, if the patient will follow the rest cure. Fatal complications may follow, though, if the patient attempts to resume activity before completion of the cure. Carelessness in this manner invariably leads to the spitting of blood and an attack of pneumonia.

Here are some ways to dodge influenza:

Keep feet and clothing dry.

Avoid crowds.

Protect your nose and mouth in the presence of sneezers.

Gargle your throat three times a day with a mild antiseptic, if only salt and water.

Don't neglect a cold.

Keep as much as possible in the sunshine.

Don't get "scared."

Also, here are some useful influenza "don'ts":

Don't indulge in promiscuous coughing or sneezing.

Don't cough or sneeze in crowded places, if possible to prevent it. If you must do so, cover or smother your cough or sneeze.

Don't use common drinking glasses.

Don't visit any person who is suffering from or who is suspected to be suffering from "grippe."

Don't neglect a "cold," but seek the proper medical advice.

Don't visit places of crowded assemblage.

Don't sleep in overcrowded or unventilated rooms.

Don't indulge in excesses of any kind.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 4, 1918]

### **Few Deaths Here from Influenza**

#### *Out of Several Thousand Cases Only Nine Die—Two Deaths Yesterday*

Epidemic influenza is peculiar in the more victims in Beaumont Tuesday and one death is reported from Sour Lake. Smallpox also claimed another victim in the city. Deaths in the city from influenza yesterday are H.T. [Hubert J.] Tinsley, 21 years, and Miss Evelin Hargraves, 8 years, and at Sour Lake Mrs. W.C. Norman [Cedelia Walls] succumbed. The smallpox victim is Miss Mary Barnes, 17 years.

Few new cases of smallpox developed, but the city health department is encouraged over the fact that the additional cases did not spring from a new source, but from homes under quarantine. Influenza continues its spread, and if severe cold weather follows the rain of yesterday extra precaution is necessary to prevent a spread of pneumonia.

It is probable that there are fully 5000 cases of influenza in Beaumont now, and it is estimated that already 2000 have recovered. This is a total of 7000 cases, and the figures are conservative. Out of this number there have been only nine deaths, a remarkably light toll.

Epidemic influenza is peculiar in the rapidity [*sic*] with which the germ spreads, and the manner in which the population is attacked. Of the hundreds and hundreds of cases in Beaumont, the negro population of the city has almost escaped contagion. [inaccurate, see Table 1] Statistics have for years shown that the negro is susceptible in a greater degree to diseases that affect the lungs than the white man, but the present epidemic, at least in Beaumont, has reversed the figures.

Smallpox, however, is almost wholly confined to the city's black population. [see Table 2]

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 16, 1918]

### Few Responses to Call for Nurses

#### *Many Port Arthur Families Unable to Take Care of Their Own Sick*

Port Arthur, Tex., Oct. 15.—An appeal was made here yesterday for 400 volunteer nurses, women without professional nursing experience, simply women who were willing to do what they could to help in nursing influenza cases. The appeal brought five responses.

This situation was absolutely unexpected by the nursing service committee of the, local Red Cross chapter which sent out the appeal. It was thought that there would be at least several hundred women respond this morning and if this had been true it would have resulted in a check soon being put on the disease, but the committee, the physicians and the professional nurses in the city are absolutely powerless unless they get more cooperation than this.

Tonight there was a family of ten appealed to Miss [Louzetta E.] Cornish, superintendent of the Mary Gates hospital, and chairman of the nursing service committee, for someone to come and attend them during the night. Every member of the family was sick and the baby was not expected to live. Miss Cornish, spent hours at the telephone today pleading with women to help her, but she was unable to get anyone to go the aid of this family and she sent one of the professional, nurses from the hospital who had been on duty for the last 48 hours, to visit the family and do what she could for them. The nurse could not stay all night because it was imperative that she get a little rest so she could continue to be a real help in this crisis.

There was another family of four, all of whom were down with the influenza who appealed for aid and there was no one to send. One of the members of this family, a girl about 16 years old, was not expected to live through the night.

The checking of this epidemic depends absolutely upon the nurses. Physicians cannot possibly be constantly in attendance upon each case. They have to make short visits and handle the more complex features of the cases, but it is up to the nurses, the ones who are constantly with the patients, whether or not they have a chance. The norther today accompanied by a drizzling rain was ideal weather for the development

of pneumonia cases. There is nothing that puts the system in such a receptive state for pneumonia as does Spanish influenza.

The call issued this morning for automobiles to transport the professional nurses from house to house and the calls for women to make soup were fairly well answered, but it is going to take something more than soup and automobiles to check the influenza, one member of the committee pointed out. What the committee must have is women volunteers and these must be available soon or the situation will get out of control.

The message that the nursing service committee wants to impress upon the women of Port Arthur is that there is going to be people dying in Port Arthur, probably in large numbers, for lack of attention, unless same volunteers come forward very promptly.

Women who are unable to donate their time for this service will be paid by the Red Cross.

The professional nurses are working night and day. One of the nurses today made 38 calls. These calls were not merely what might be termed pop calls, but at each place where this nurse called she bathed and dressed one or more persons, took their temperatures, gave them medicine, instructed the person who was attending them how to handle the case and in some instances served food to the patient or patients.

Another of the nurses made 32 calls and another 28 calls.

Two of the professional nurses have been called out of the city to their homes on account of sickness in their families. This is going to further deplete the scant supply of professional nurses and make it all the more necessary that the lay women volunteer their services.

This work is just as important as that which the Red Cross is doing in France. This is saving lives and that is what the Red Cross tries to do in France. When the newspapers were full of for professional nurses to go to France the local committee had scores of calls from young women who were just brimming over with patriotism and wanted to go to France on the next ship to nurse those "perfectly dear" soldier boys. The Red Cross was, of course, at that time, not sending any except graduate nurses overseas and these young women had to be told that they could



not go. In this situation, however, they have just as great an opportunity to prove just patriotism. They can do a real service now and they are urgently asked to help.

Every woman in the city who can possibly spare a little time from her home duties is asked to assist. The committee will appreciate only a few hours service a day.

Those desiring to help are asked to call Miss Cornish at telephone No. 420.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 16, 1918]

### **Mayor Diffenbacher Is Ill of Influenza**

No meeting of the city council was held yesterday morning for the reason that a majority of the councilmen are down with attacks of Spanish influenza. Mayor Diffenbacher is confined to his home with a serious case of Spanish flu. At the appointed hour for the meeting yesterday morning the only aldermen present were S[tephen] W. Pipkin and J[eremiah] J. Hogan.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 16, 1918]

### **Proclamation**

Now that the epidemic of influenza has passed and things are beginning to assume their normal condition, I as mayor of the City of Orange, declare the restrictions heretofore placed on the picture shows, the churches and other public gatherings, be and the same is now removed. It is with sorrow that we have to state that some of the homes in our little city were made sad, and to these we offer our deep sympathy. It is true that "in the midst of life we are in death," and we know not which homes nor when the grim messenger will call and take us from our loved ones, but let us prepare for that which we know must come, for the call may come at any time. Let us realize that it is best to be ready to meet the call with faith in God and a happy resurrection. I desire, through your paper, to thank Majors [William D.] Cope, [Douglas] Largen, [Dudley] Rountree, [Nelson O.] Brenizer, Lieut [Harry A.] Giles and the faithful corps of nurses who stood by us so ably during our days of affliction, nor would I forget the Boy Scouts, who

so uncomplainingly staid [*sic*] on duty day in and day out with their kind and lovable [*sic*] director, Father [Sidney] Dixon. Surely God has been good to us as a people. There are many others to whom we owe gratitude for their faithful services including our city and county health officers, the good ladies of our city, and others, and in behalf of the people of Orange, I most earnestly tender you our thanks. We expect a few more cases of influenza will come, possibly for some days yet and others of our citizens may be taken away, but with proper precautions, we may, confidently anticipate that we are safely through with it, except for isolated cases. Permit me to say to those who had the influenza, take care of yourselves. I hope the people will take warning about the small pox proposition and keep away from places where they have small pox. I do not want to quarantine against Beaumont and Port Arthur, but you must not bring it in here, we cannot afford to have it. Please report all suspicious cases at once to Dr. [Joseph C.] Seastrunk or Dr. [John E.] Reeves. Help us keep small pox out of our city. There is another way you can help us along. We are still determined to clean up Orange. Help us to do it. I thank you for the cheerful way in which you have started, and I feel sure you will keep the good work going. It will take time and lots of money to clean up good, but let's do it. We are neglecting the streets until we get things cleaned up, so help us to clean up and we will get back to the streets much sooner. Capt. [William E.] Lea and his men have rendered us valuably services and I hope you will be nice to them, for they deserve it. They stuck to us and some of them are still with us at the hospital, cheerfully helping us with the sick.

Respectfully,

O.B. Sholars, Mayor.

[*Orange Daily Leader*, October 23, 1918]

### **Texas Soldiers Will Work in the Local Yards**

There will be about eight hundred Texas soldiers brought to Orange from various points in Texas in work at the shipyards here. Wednesday 13 boys of Troop I, 3rd Cavalry arrived here from Lampasas, Texas, and yesterday twenty four more soldiers from Troop II, 3rd Cavalry arrived

from San Saba, Texas. They are coming in small contingents on account of the influenza epidemic.

Captain Lee [Lea] has made arrangements to have the newcomers quartered. At present they are staying at the Industrial home but plans are being made to take over the Liberty Hut and put it in condition to accommodate these soldiers.

The majority of these men will be employed at the National Shipyards but the other shipyards will also use some of them. Wages will be the same to the soldiers as to the other employees. There has been a considerable shortage of laborers for some time and these reinforcements will greatly lessen this hindrance to the shipbuilding industry, which, of all industries should be kept in operation to the fullest capacity possible.

[*Orange Daily Leader*, October 25, 1918]

### **Influ Situation Is Improving**

*But 295 Cases on Hand Now Compared with 461 on October 18.*

Special to the Enterprise

Port Arthur, Texas, Oct. 28.—The reports from various physicians of the city in regard to the number of influenza cases on hand received by the city commissioners this morning were more encouraging than any that have been received lately. These reports showd [*sic*] a total of 295 cases on hand as compared to 461 on hand October 18. The report today showed 82 new cases and 89 discharged.

A number of local business men were present at the meeting of the commission this morning to learn if possible when the quarantine would be lifted. Mayor [John W.] Tryon told them that he could not set any date, but that if conditions continued to improve he would be able to do so within the next few days. He explained that great difficulty in getting complete reports from physicians had been encountered and that this was one reason that he had not been able to tell any more about the real situation. The reports today were the first complete reports received in several days.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 29, 1918]

### **Influ Epidemic Runs Its Course**

#### *Big Reduction in Number of New Cases—May Lift Lid Sunday*

Sacrament seems to have passed definitely the crest of its epidemic influenza, yesterday's report of new cases being—smaller than that of any day since the system of daily reports of physicians was put into effect. Forty-six new cases were reported yesterday, four of these being of pneumonia, with six deaths. This is a marked decline over the preceding day's total of 62 deaths. City Health Officer Ferguson last night expressed the opinion that the situation was better than at any time since the disease became epidemic.

Since October 7, when the board of health closed schools, theatres and other public gathering places, at which time there were already probably several thousand cases in the city, physicians have reported to the health board offices a total of 4168 cases of influenza. From these deaths have totaled 79. These figures include all cases up to last night.

It considered probable, in view of the decided improvement, that at its meeting Friday afternoon, the board of health will order the closing edict rescinded, probably to become effective on Sunday and Monday. This was the opinion of a member of the board who discussed the matter yesterday.

Smallpox cases for the month have totaled 47, with seven deaths. Thirteen patients have been released as cured, and the remainder are in detention now. Three of the new cases were reported yesterday, with one death. More than 1900 persons have been vaccinated free by the city at the clinic established at the city hall. This will be open for the remainder of the week, and everyone is urged to take advantage of it at once.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 31, 1918]

### **Ban on Meeting to Be Lifted Sunday**

#### Mayor's Proclamation

Mayor Diffenbacher has issued the following proclamation to the people of the city, notifying them that the closing order, in effect October 8, has been suspended beginning Sunday morning at 8 o'clock:

Whereas, at a meeting held in the city hall Friday, November 1, at 2:30 p.m., the board of health after careful consideration of the influenza situation, and of every phase of it, by resolution introduced, duly seconded, and unanimously adopted, decided to lift the ban heretofore existing and have requested me, as mayor of this city to issue due proclamation of such action; and,

Whereas, the board of health according to the charter provision, is the duly constituted commission created for the purpose of passing wisdom and judgment on all matters pertaining to the public health of our city; and,

Whereas, they believe, as shown by their action unanimously expressed, after a careful consideration of the present influenza epidemic, that it is safe to lift the ban heretofore existing without jeopardizing the health of our citizenship; provided the precautions, instructions and regulations are carried out, as directed by the board of health.

Now, therefore, I, E.J. Diffenbacher, mayor of the city of Beaumont, do hereby release from restrictions heretofore existing by lifting the ban on all places of public gathering; same to take effect Sunday, November 3. at 8 o'clock a.m.

In testimony whereof, I have hereto signed my name officially, and caused the seal of the city of Beaumont to be herein impressed, this the 1st day of November, A.D., 1918.

E.J. Diffenbacher, Mayor City of Beaumont.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, November 2, 1918]

### **Spanish Influenza More Deadly than War**

[Advertisement]

*Said That Epidemic Cost More Lives than American Loss in Battle—Danger Not Over—Great Care Necessary to Prevent Further Outbreak*

The appalling ravages of Spanish Influenza in this country are perhaps best realized by the statement recently made, that more deaths have resulted in little more than a month from this disease than through our

whole eighteen months participation in the battles of the European war.

Our greatest danger now, declare authorities, is the great American tendency to forget easily and to believe the peril is over. Competent authorities claim the coming of cold weather is very apt to bring a return of this disease and there should be no let-up throughout the winter months of the following easily observed precautions, remembering that Influenza is far easier to prevent than cure.

Influenza is a crowd disease. Avoid crowds as much as possible. Influenza germs spread when ignorant or careless persons sneeze or cough without using a handkerchief. Cover up each cough or sneeze. Do not spit on the floor, sidewalk, in street cars or public places. Avoid the use of common drinking cups and roller towels in public places. Breathe some reliable germicidal and antiseptic air to destroy the germs that do find lodgment in your nose and throat.

Remember, no safer precaution against influenza could be employed in this manner than to get from the nearest drug store a complete Hyomei Outfit consisting of a bottle of the Pure Oil of Hyomei and a little vest-pocket hard rubber inhaling device, into which a few drops of the oil are poured. You should carry this inhaler about with you during the day and each half hour or so put it in your mouth and draw deep breaths of its pure, healing germ killing air into the passages of your nose, throat and lungs.

By destroying germs before they actually begin work in your blood, you may make yourself practically immune to infection.

All these suggestions about Spanish Influenza are equally true in the prevention of colds, catarrh [mucus build-up] of nose and throat, bronchitis and even pneumonia. Don't become careless. Do your part. Keep the germs away. You may save yourself a serious illness and the loss of several weeks work.

Sold in Beaumont by Keith Drug Co.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, December 20, 1918]

### **Need for Nurses**

*Volunteers Will Be in Demand Throughout the Year, Is the Opinion of Mrs. Eastham*

Just because the flu epidemic has now passed, don't lean to the impression that nurses won't be sadly in need throughout the year. This is the warning of Mrs. Charles [Byrdie P.] Eastham of the Red Cross home nursing department, in announcing that nursing classes will be resumed at the Y.W.C.A. Monday morning. Mrs. Eastham says trained nurses will be kept busy at the large hospitals throughout the country for many months and every woman should take advantage of the classes in instruction, which are being conducted by Miss Martha Lawless. More than 700 Beaumont women have already taken the course. During the recent influenza epidemic many woman adopted nursing as a profession, earning from \$4 to \$5 per day. Doctors have been loud in their praise of the skill of the volunteer nurses. Classes will be held three times each week: Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The morning classes will receive instruction from 9:30 to 11 o'clock; afternoon classes 3 to 4:30 o'clock.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, January 5, 1919]

### **Ferguson Resigns as Health Officer**

Dr. Edward C. Ferguson's resignation as City health officer was filed with the city council on Tuesday. In handing in his resignation, Dr. Ferguson stated that he could not afford, in justice to himself, to hold the position with its arduous and increasing demands upon his time for the salary of \$75 a month which is paid. During his term of office the work has made unusual demands upon the health officer as the epidemic of influenza and small pox have required constant work.

His resignation was first filed with the mayor on December 25th, but on account of the second wave of the influenza which came at that time, Dr. Ferguson felt that it was his duty to remain in office until the epidemic abated.

In presenting the resignation, Mayor Diffenbacher told the council that the inadequate salary paid would make it difficult to fill the vacancy. No change in salary paid for this work has been made in Beaumont since the city was a small town. The mayor stated that he considered the public health as the city's most valuable asset, and that in comparison with other cities, the salaries paid the Beaumont health department are ridiculous.

After discussion the council deferred action on Dr. Ferguson's resignation which is to become effective January 31st. Then it will be taken up again with the question of salaries in the health department.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, January 8, 1919]

### **Elementary Lessons on How to Keep Well Provided for Beaumont Women at Y.W.C.A.**

*Ending of War with Militarists Has Not Ended Fight on Disease Declares Experienced Nurse Who Will Give Instruction.—Women Who Took Course God-Send to City during "Flu" Epidemic that Proved More Deadly Than Enemy's Gas, Shot and Flame.*

By Aline Michaelis

If you are a wife and mother, do you want to keep your home free from contagious diseases?

In case such disease is contracted by one member of your family, do you want to be able prevent its spreading to other members?

Do you want to know just what to do for your baby if it should have convulsions?

If you are a young girl over 16, do you want to know something of general hygiene, of proper foods and clothing, of the care of the body, of how many hours of the twenty-four you should give to rest and recreation, of how to prevent fatigue, of the most beneficial exercises and sports?

If you have no particular responsibilities save that each one owes to society in general, do you want to do your part in the conservation and



promotion of health, in making the world a brighter place for future generations?

*Red Cross Course.*

Any or all of these wants may be supplied, partly or in whole, by a course in elementary hygiene and home care of the sick. This is a Red Cross course of fifteen lessons, and for the benefit of Beaumont women and girls who may not be informed on the history of the work here it may be well to say that past courses, given last winter and from last July to the outbreak or the influenza epidemic in September were well attended and aroused much interest among women from homes of the poor, the middle classes and the wealthy. The last class of the year, having its concluding lesson the end of December, was equally popular, showing that interest in the work continues unflagging . . . .

*An Able Instructor*

The Instructor, Miss Lawless, has been a resident of Beaumont for six years, and is a graduate nurse from Hotel Dieu. She is a young woman of much personal charm and possesses the happy faculty of presenting her subject in a way that cannot fail to interest her hearers . . . .

*Volunteer Nurses.*

Apropos of the recent epidemic Miss Lawless said [*sic*]:

“One of the most gratifying experiences in connection with my home nursing work has been in the phase connected with the influenza epidemic. The Red Cross made an appeal here as elsewhere to all women who had taken the home nursing course to help the trained nurses in meeting the needs of the people during the plague. Sixty-five women were present at a call meeting where the situation was outlined, and almost all of these responded to the call and worked as volunteer nurses. They did the nursing in day and night shifts, without any compensation, and in addition many carried food and bedding to the families they were nursing. In one instance, four nurses, two for day and two for night, cared for eleven persons in five rooms. A graduate nurse from Chicago, who examined their charts said that their work would have done credit to any trained nurse.

“This work during the ‘flu,’ when everyone was more or less afraid of the disease, was one of the most remarkable and most beautiful services I have ever seen rendered. It was enough to make anyone take a new lease on faith in the goodness of humanity.”

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, January 26, 1919]

**Preacher Overworked also during Flu Epidemic,  
but No One Seemed to Think of It**

*One Minister Tells of Conducting Fifty-four Funerals and Made Seventy Visits to Flu-Stricken Homes.*

The flu is over, has vanished, or is gone—the flu-kerchoo has flown. Flu people are busy paying the doctor and the druggist flu bills, but that is an incident. While the flu was raging and while the flu was leaving, people talked of doctors and druggists acquiring insomnia from the sleep lost waiting on the public. Nobody said much about it, but even the undertaker was thought to be having a hard time getting a nap. People laughed the flu away—and forgot the preacher! The flu didn’t rob anybody of more sleep than the man in the pulpit. The flu cut down the number of marriages, but it added other loads to the preacher’s shoulder that made the going heavy. The Rev. E[nglish] P. Kennedy of the First Christian church, says so, and he has figures, too.

The strain of the flu epidemic told on the preacher. “Now that the flu supposed to have vanished, I don’t mind saying that during the time it was with us I conducted 54 funerals, made probably 70 visits to the homes of people who were ill with the flu, and in addition to these two items made trips to Sour Lake, Saratoga and Houston. And now I believe I have almost got the flu myself.”

“Were the 70 calls at homes made to members of your congregation?” was asked Mr. Kennedy.

“Strange to say, very few of the calls were to members of the church. Only a few of my congregation called on me for home service.”

“How do you account that?”

“Well,” the preacher replied, “when people get sick they want a preacher as well as a doctor. They don’t align themselves with the church,

and they rather look upon a preacher as an ornament. The preacher is a handy man, but he does not mind the service rendered, and really is glad to answer all calls made upon him, whether by members the church or not.”

During the flu epidemic, not only were the preachers taxed very severely in Beaumont, but many trips were made out in to the country districts. Another flu fact developed the talk with the Rev. Mr. Kennedy. Marriages decreased to a great extent. Evidently people were mighty sick. They were too sick to get married! Marriages haven't been frequent since the signing of the armistice, either declare the preachers.

“The girls don't care much for the soldiers as they did when the war was on. That is the best reason I can give for the decrease in the number of marriages in the last few months,” says Mr. Kennedy. His statement that marriages have decreased is borne out by the records at the office of the county clerk. Before the armistice was signed and when the uniform of the doughboy was a magnet to the girls, frequently the newspapers carried a long list of marriage licenses. Even the clerk at the courthouse was complaining of the rush of business. The list in the newspapers has dwindled to a few lines, and at the court house the clerk's pen is almost getting rusty. A recent song is labelled “They're Wearing the Same Clothes Now!” They all look alike to the blonde and the brunette! Doughboy's glamor has faded, and once more he has to compete with the ribbon clerks.

The preacher was overworked, along with the doctor and the druggist and the florist, but probably he got less money from his labor than anyone else. The doctor, and druggist and the florist are still collecting. What the preacher received came quickly. He has probably spent it, and the doctor, the druggist and the florist have it on him again. They are still getting theirs! The flu has flown. Everybody forgot the preacher. Forgot him while the flu was here, while the flu was flying, and after the flu had flown!

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, January 26, 1919]

**Table 1. Jefferson County Influenza Deaths**  
**October 1918-March 1919**

Residence	Black	White	Mexican	Italian	Other	Total
Beaumont	90	98	11	8	9	216
Port Arthur	20	53	1	3	2	79
Aldridge		1				1
Amelia		4				4
Blanchette	1					1
Chaison		1				1
China	2	6				8
Fannett		5	1			6
Guffey		2	2			4
Helbig	1					1
Nederland		1				1
Pine Island		3				3
Port Neches		5				5
Rosedale		1				1
Sabine Pass		1				1
Spindletop		2				2
Voth	1	2				3
rural	1	2	3			6
non-res.	5	3	1		3	12
<b>totals</b>	121	190	19	11	14	355

Influenza as cause or contributing factor.

Does not include pneumonia cases where influenza not cited (see Table 2).

Ethnicity or nationality based on parents' places of birth.

**Sources:** Death certificates, Texas Department of Health; *Beaumont Enterprise*.

**Note:** In compiling these tables, The Record staff consulted the death certificates submitted to the Texas Department of Health available at Ancestry.com. This method is not scientific nor is the data independently verified—Editor.

*Table 2. Jefferson County Infectious Disease Deaths*  
**October 1918-March 1919**

Disease	Black	White	Mexican	Italian	Other		Total
influenza	121	190	19	11	14		355
pneumonia	19	35	2	1	2		59
smallpox	22	5					27
tuberculosis	8	6	1		1		16
typhoid	3	5					8
cholera		2					2
diphtheria		1					1
meningitis		1					1
scarlet fever		1					1
<b>totals</b>	173	246	22	12	17		470

Does not include non-infectious diseases or symptomatic diagnoses.

Ethnicity or nationality based on parents' places of birth.

**Source:** Death certificates, Texas Department of Health.

**Table 3. Southeast Texas Influenza Deaths  
October 1918-March 1919**

County	Deaths*	Black	White	Mexican	Italian	Other	Total	%†
Chambers	17	9				1	10	58.8
Hardin	50		26				26	52.0
Jasper	45	11	10	5	1		27	60.0
Jefferson	514	85	147	15	10	9	266	51.8
Liberty	18	2	7	1			10	55.6
Newton	27	7	9			1	17	63.0
Orange	81	3	32				35	43.2
Polk	28	10	5				15	53.6
San Jacinto	1	1					1	100.0
Tyler	20		2				2	10.0
<b>totals</b>	801	128	238	21	11	11	409	51.1

\* Total number of death certificates submitted to the Texas Department of Health.

† Percentage of influenza deaths relative to number of certificates submitted.

**Source:** Death certificates, Texas Department of Health.

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**“Dead or Alive” is Slogan in Battle Against Rats**

Joseph H. Boulet worked for the U.S. Public Health Service in New Orleans and in Beaumont. George B. Waters of the Newspaper Enterprise Association crowned him “champion rat catcher of the world.” Waters’s article and this image circulated widely in the United States. The *Beaumont Enterprise* reprinted the image in its August 15, 1920, story on Boulet. The *West Palm Beach Post* (Florida), July 19, 1920.



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# BUBONIC PLAGUE, 1920

*THE RECORD STAFF*

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Few diseases inhabit human memory like the bubonic plague. In 542 A.D., it struck Justinian's Roman empire killing perhaps 25 million people worldwide. The 14th-century Black Death took one-third of Europe's population. Perhaps 100 thousand died during London's Great Plague of 1665-1666. In the popular imagination, these epidemics occurred only in the distant past as the consequence of a vindictive god or medieval hygienic practices, but the bubonic plague, although rare, survives into the 21st century. In June 1920, the appearance of this ancient disease jolted the citizens of Beaumont, Texas, into action.

The Beaumont case was part of a global event that originated during the 1850s in China with major 1894 outbreaks in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. In the latter city, French-Swiss physician Alexandre Yersin successfully isolated the bacterium responsible for the disease. He confirmed that rodents—and particularly rats—carried the disease and transmitted it to humans by infected fleas.

In the late spring of 1920, reports arrived in Beaumont about plague appearing in ports along the Gulf Coast. Civic and

health leaders proactively ordered rat-proofing measures at the local docks and the fumigation of ships in-bound from known outbreaks. Infected rats, however, had already reached the city. In mid-June after an absence of several weeks, Mary Praeger returned to her home on College Street to find several dead rats. She and her daughter collected and buried them in the back yard. A few days later, Praeger developed a high fever and chills, and by the time the family called Dr. John Ellison to examine her, the disease had progressed too far. Mary Praeger died the next day, June 26. An autopsy conducted later that day confirmed what Ellison and other local health official feared. Praeger had died of bubonic plague.

The immediate and vigorous response illustrated well the kinds of community action that characterized Progressive reforms of this era. Local and county governments coordinated with the state health officer Dr. Charles W. Goddard and sanitation engineer Victor M. Ehler. The U.S. Public Health Service, led by Dr. Charles L. Williams, arrived from New Orleans. Together with Beaumont citizens, these groups set up a rapid testing and treatment program, initiated a rigorous rat-extermination campaign, organized a mass garbage removal effort, and implemented a city-wide rat-proofing ordinance. By the end of the year, the effort contained the disease to 14 human cases with 6 deaths. As with other Southeast Texas epidemics, some citizens expressed concerns about the economic impact. Others downplayed the danger of the plague or denied its existence.

## *A Timeline from Newspaper Accounts*

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**Thursday, May 13, 1920:**

*Case of bubonic plague at New Orleans reported.*

**Tuesday, May 18:**

*McCormick & Co. placed in advertisement in the Beaumont Enterprise for its Bee Brand Insect Powder, reprinting a U.S. Department of Agriculture claim that fleas carry the "dread Bubonic Plague." The copy further declared, "Fleas are a sign of uncleanliness and are dangerous, disgusting, and disagreeable."*

**Tuesday, June 1:**

*Bubonic plague outbreak in Vera Cruz, Mexico, reported.*

**Saturday, June 5:**

*U.S. Surgeon General Hugh S. Cumming orders the fumigation of all ships entering U.S. ports from Vera Cruz.*

**Tuesday, June 8:**

*Gulf Export & Transportation Co. suspends its Bowie Lines between Beaumont and Vera Cruz.*

**Monday, June 14:**

*Bubonic plague in Pensacola, Florida, reported.*

**Wednesday, June 16:**

### **The Bubonic Plague**

One death has been reported at Pensacola, Florida, as attributed to bubonic now prevalent at some Mexican ports. This of itself affords no cause for alarm, but merits the greatest care on the part of the health authorities at all American gulf ports.

The rat is the source of infection and dissemination of the plague. As rats are exterminated and buildings rat-proofed the plague is checked wherever it has broken out.

It would behoove the city health department to make laboratory tests to determine whether these animals have the plague bacillus. In the interim it is assumed that all precautions are being taken to make rat-guards effective at the city docks.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, June 16]

### **Friday, June 18:**

*First fatality in Galveston reported.*

#### **Port Is Guarded against Plague**

*Extra Precautions Taken at Port Arthur—War Starts on Rats—Special to the Enterprise.*

Port Arthur, Texas, June 18.—Local health authorities are not apprehensive of an invasion of bubonic at this port, despite its supposed appearance at Tampico and Galveston, with which ports much business is done here.

Following instructions from Washington, Dr. P[hilip] H. Chilton, quarantine officer at Sabine, is not permitting a vessel to enter from any of the infected points until it has been thoroughly fumigated. Renewed attention also is given to the rules governing the moving of vessels, including the use of rat-proof hawsers, along which rats cannot escape from ship to dock, and the moorings of vessels six feet from the edge of the dock.

The first vessel to come in from Mexican points since the plague appeared there will be a Texas company tanker, which is expected within a few days.

Neither Dr. F[rancis] A. Winter, connected with the U.S. health department, nor Dr. T. S. Reed, city health officer, express any fear over the situation, and feel that modern precautions will keep the disease out of this city.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, June 19]

## To War on Rats

*Mayor of Orange Issues Proclamation of Warning.*

Orange, Texas, June 18.—Mayor O[rrin] R. Sholars has issued a proclamation to the citizens of the port of Orange to make a special effort to exterminate rats and mice on their premises and elsewhere in view of the fact that bubonic plague has developed in Mexican ports and at ports along the Gulf of Mexico. He has instructed Harbormaster John Ferguson, to take special precaution in the protection of the port by properly placing rat guards on all ships.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, June 19]

### Tuesday, June 22:

#### Guard against Plague Cases

*City Takes Precautions at Local Docks—Put Ban on Rats—Vessels Must Keep Six Feet from the Wharves.*

As a defense against any possible spread of the bubonic plague to this city, Harbor Master O[rin] S. Hunter Tuesday ordered rafts to be placed between ships and the piers, so that no ship can come closer than six feet to the wharves. Rat guards are placed on all lines leading from the dock to ships, and gangplanks must be lifted between the hours of 7 p.m and 8 a.m.

County Health officer [Dr. Henry S.] Capps and City Health officer [Dr. Dru McMickin] have been watching the situation and feel satisfied that ample precautions are being taken in Beaumont. Capps was at Sabine Monday, where he inspected the system of fumigation in use by the federal officials there, and stated that the quarantine measures being taken were sufficient. Tuesday he went to Port Arthur on another trip of investigation. Federal health officials have also made an inspection of the local water front.

[*Beaumont Journal*, June 22]

### Thursday, June 25:

*Mary Praeger, age 44, housekeeper at 376 College, diagnosed with bubonic plague.*

**Friday, June 26:**

*Mary Praeger died.*

**Saturday, June 26:****Plague Case Suspect Here**

*Praeger Home Quarantined by Health Officers—Dead Rat Is the Cause—  
Federal Official on Way to Aid Local Authorities*

From all symptoms, the death of Mrs. Mary Praeger, 44, 376 College Street, which occurred Saturday morning at 4 o'clock, was caused by the bubonic plague, according to Dr. J[ohn] I. Ellison, physician in the case.

City Health Officer D. McMickin would make no statement concerning the matter Saturday afternoon [*sic*], but said that he would have something to say about it Saturday night.

Health Inspector [Daniel B.] Clark at once put a guard in front of the residence, with instructions to permit no one to enter without proper authority from city officials.

*Rats Died under House*

Clark stated Saturday afternoon that he had been called to the Praeger residence several days ago, Mrs. Praeger complaining at the time that rats poisoned at a neighboring place, had crawled under her dwelling and died there.

Dr. Ellison stated that another dead rat had been removed from the house just a day or two ago. Health officers inoculated a guinea pig with the dead woman's blood Saturday, and were also making a blood test. An autopsy was to be held late Saturday afternoon. The results of the guinea pig and blood tests will not be known until Sunday morning, it was stated.

*State Health Man Here*

V[ictor] M. Ehlers of the state board of health arrived in the city Saturday morning to assist local authorities in a campaign against rats.

He will make a survey of the situation and start a campaign against the rodents at once.

It is not believed that any rats carrying the disease have come to Beaumont from ships, as every precaution, including the thorough fumigation of vessels coming from infected ports, has been taken. It is possible for the rats to have come overland from an infected spot, however.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. [Charles L.] Williams, of Galveston, a federal authority on the bubonic plague, was also expected to arrive in Beaumont late Saturday afternoon. He will aid local physicians in making a thorough diagnosis of the case, and in aiding in the fight against it in case that it is established that Mrs. Praeger died from the bubonic plague.

#### *Take Precautions*

No one else at the Praeger residence is ill, it was stated Saturday.

“Every precaution is being taken” said City Manager [George J.] Roark, when asked about the situation.

The bubonic plague is a glandular disease, carried by rats, and transferred from them through fleas as carriers, to the human body. The disease has occurred at various ports, but can be localized and stamped out if the proper precautions are taken. The remedy used is a serum developed within recent years.

[*Beaumont Journal*, June 26]

#### *Autopsy Proves Victim Here Died of Disease . . . .*

With the autopsy over the body of Mrs. Mary Praeger, who died Saturday morning, proving her death to be the result bubonic plague, the attention of federal, state, and city officials was directed to Beaumont, to stamp out the bubonic plague in this region . . . .

V.M. Ehlers, director of the state bureau of sanitary engineering, arrived in Beaumont Saturday morning. He went over the local situation with

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1. Since its earliest record, bubonic plague always began in ports after rats jumped from in-bound ships. The 1920 incident did not contradict this trend. Perhaps infected rats arrived in Beaumont before authorities implemented their measures—Editor.

Beaumont officials, and is laying plans to start a campaign against rats here. These plans he outlined at the meeting Saturday night . . . .

“Mrs. Prager [Praeger],” he [Dr. John I. Ellison] stated, “had been away from Beaumont six or eight weeks. She returned eight or nine days before she received the initial chill.”

Dr. Ellison was called to her home late Friday night. The patient could hold nothing on her stomach for the first 48 hours, and her fever went to 107. It fell to 102 after she had been given quinine, but the next day it was between 105 and 106 . . . .

“I am satisfied that she handled some dead rats,” the doctor said, “her daughter spoke of having taken five out to bury them in one morning. She also spoke of finding one in the cupboard, and said that the place under the rats was filled with fleas . . . .

“She showed ten or twelve flea bites on her arm. I noticed that a gland under her arm was swollen but attributed it to a bruise on her elbow having never handled any bubonic plague cases before.

“She was weak, as many of the patients were in flu cases. The fifth and sixth nights she was nervous, but spent the day in a comatose state.”

[*Beaumont Journal*, June 27]

### **Sunday, June 27:**

*John Pollock, age 27, press operator at the Enterprise, diagnosed.*

## **Suspected Plague Case Serves to Intensify War on Rats and Fleas Here**

*Order for Serum Sent to Galveston with Instructions to Forward It Here by Airplane if Necessary—People Called to Lend Assistance in Work of Rat Extermination*

Another typical case of bubonic plague in this city was disclosed yesterday in report to the city health department of the illness of John Pollock, 27 years old, 1216 Long avenue, who has been ill and under the care of Dr. J[ames] M. Gober since Friday morning. Pollock, an employee of the Enterprise, was compelled to abandon work late Thursday evening, since which time he has been confined to his bed at home.



Immediately after the case was reported Dr. Charles W. Goddard, state health officer and collaborating epidemiologist, who was in the city yesterday afternoon, Dr. D. McMicken and several other physicians proceeded to the Pollock home and after a rigid examination of the patient's condition a blood test was taken and after biological and microscopic examinations at the clinical laboratories of Dr. W[ilbur] F. Thompson [Thomson] in Perlstein building, belief was expressed that the case was nothing less than bubonic plague.

*Guard Placed Around Home*

The house was immediately placed under quarantine and a guard was stationed there to prevent any persons from entering or leaving the premises. Seventy-five rat traps were placed on the property and every precaution is being made.

An order for a quantity of vaccine and bubonic plague serum was immediately forwarded to Houston by Dr. C.W. Goddard, and orders were given to make the delivery to this city by airplane if there was one available. The medicine, if not delivered by airplane, will arrive here on the first train and administration will be done immediately regardless of the time of the day or night.

With the arrival of Dr. C.W. Goddard . . . a vigorous campaign to exterminate the rat, the conveyor of bubonic plague, was launched here yesterday. Orders were given by the city for 2,360 rat traps yesterday, in addition to traps already placed in the service in the infected block of College and Orleans streets Saturday night.

*Declare War on Plague Carriers*

Dr. Goddard arrived in Beaumont at noon yesterday and immediately went into discussion of the local situation with city, county and federal authorities. It was decided to work from a precautionary standpoint and literally it was decided to wage war on the rat. Immediately an order for fifteen gross of rat traps was given a local company while another order for 200 more traps was sent to Austin.

A special meeting had been arranged by local physicians and city, county and federal authorities for a discussion with Dr. Goddard at the city hall

at 9 o'clock yesterday morning Dr. Goddard was delayed and did not reach the city until noon. Immediately upon his arrival he acquainted himself with the local situation and took steps to prevent spread of the disease in cooperation with city officials and local physicians.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, June 28]

### **Monday, June 28:**

*Bubonic plague serum arrives in Beaumont from Galveston and administered to John Pollock.*

#### **Beaumont's Immediate Duty Is to Work, Not Fear, and Kill Rats**

In view of the Bubonic plague discovered in Beaumont, the immediate need of the community is for work not fear.

Federal plague experts have announced the disease is not contagious. There is but one way to get the disease and that is from a flea that has left an infected rat.

There will be hundreds of wild rumors concerning the spread of the disease and this advice is reprinted merely in an effort to direct the minds of the community from fear to that of work.

#### *The Immediate Work Is to Kill Rats*

Kill them wherever you can, whenever you can and with what ever means are at your disposal.

You may trap them, shoot them or poison them but the one best plan and the one advocated by experts for the government is to trap them. Trapped rats should be burned after a liberal portion of kerosene is poured upon the carcass. The kerosene will kill the fleas, the only carrier of the disease so far known.

The rat is the basis of the plague. Only by killing rats can the city be entirely rid of the plague.

Actual quarantine of homes is silly. You may enter the sick room of a bubonic plague patient without fear of catching the disease. It is not contagious in any sense.

Business in Beaumont should go on as usual. There is no reason for any other course.

But it is important that the entire community should work and not fear.

[*Beaumont Journal*, June 28]

### **Bat the Rat and Get 25 Cents**

A bounty of 25 cents for every rat caught in Beaumont and delivered to city health officials is offered by The Beaumont Journal, with the co-operation and approval of city officials and public-spirited citizens.

The Journal has started a fund to pay these bounties with \$25. It is believed that citizens, realizing the seriousness of the present situation, will willingly co-operate, those in a position to do so by contributing to the fund, and others in catching rats.

The bounty plan has the backing of state, county and city officials. City Manager Roark said Monday "The plan has my unqualified approval."

Acting Mayor H[ugh] A. McDonald said, "I think it is a very good idea, and that all citizens should help." The rats should be dipped in kerosene or gasoline, and taken to City Bacteriologist Joe D. Walker. He will receipt for them, giving the catcher a voucher to be cashed at The Journal office.

It is highly necessary that as many rats as possible be caught, both for examination and to check possible spread of the bubonic plague. Rats can be delivered to Walker any time between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Vouchers will be cashed by The Journal cashier at the same hours.

Send in your contribution to The Journal Rat Extermination Fund. And trap, shoot or poison at least one rat.

[*Beaumont Journal*, June 28]

### **Tuesday, June 29:**

*Charles C. Linn, age 45, engineer at the Beaumont Shipbuilding and Drydock Company, diagnosed.*

### **City Should Take Quick Action on Plague**

Bubonic plague is a disease that cannot be trifled with.

Its occurrence in Beaumont calls for the most rigid and drastic law enforcement on the part city authorities.

With possibilities that the disease will spread it becomes the immediate duty of City Manager Roark to put before members of the council such emergency ordinances as will protect every householder and business establishment from infected plague carriers.

The Journal believes this should be done at once. Delay may mean further spread of the disease and death stalks in the wake of the plague.

The Journal suggests a city garbage ordinance which provides for rat proof containers in every house and in the rear of every business establishment where garbage or refuse of any kind is permitted to collect.

Garbage should be collected every other day. The city's present plans call for the collection of garbage once a week. The latter plan, in the opinion of The Journal, will prove futile.

The time to stop the-spread of the disease is now, not next week or two months from now.

Garbage permitted to stand a week in any container is dangerous, a menace to health and lives. There are few garbage cans in Beaumont that will hold a week's accumulation and the slop over feeds the rat. Starve the rat and the plague disappears.

The city should also pass an ordinance that provides for a baited rat trap in every dwelling and business house within the corporate limits of Beaumont.

After passing the ordinances immediate plans should be made to enforce them rigidly and without fear or favor.

[*Beaumont Journal*, June 29]

**Friday, July 2:**

*Violette Moliere, age 6, diagnosed.*

*Ferdinand Delatte, age 11, diagnosed.*

*Dr. Hall in Charge*

Dr. Goddard stated that Dr. H[orace] C. Hall, of Laredo, will be placed in charge of this infected district for the state . . . . Speaking before the Round Table Club Friday afternoon, Dr. Williams, the federal expert in charge of the Beaumont situation, said: "Beaumont is the most badly infected district I have yet seen. I believe this is due to the fact that for many years there has been no regular system of garbage collection here."

[*Beaumont Journal*, July 2]

**Monday, July 5:**

*Agostino Sundano, age 8, diagnosed.*

*Horace Fournette, age 26, shipyard worker, diagnosed and died later in the day.*

**500 Tons Trash Moved in a Day by Volunteers**

*Steady Line of Trucks Filled with Rubbish Visit Dump—Clean-up Results Highly Gratifying—Two New Cases of Plague Develop—One of Victims, a Negro, Dies*

The first day of the clean-up campaign inaugurated here yesterday, saw more than 500 tons of garbage rubbish and general trash moved from all parts of the city to the public dumping ground. A steady line of trucks and wagons from all four corners of the city could be seen at all times of the day. More rubbish was placed on the city dumping ground yesterday, it is estimated, than during the past two years.

The response, the results and the general outcome of the first day's drive could not have been more gratifying. The business could not have been handled more effectively or with more dispatch and there is little doubt today will see a repetition of yesterday's efforts. There were 96 trucks and wagons in the clean-up service yesterday each making an average of three or four trips to the dumping ground during the day. A total of

256 loads of refuse and garbage was delivered to the city dump.

*Two New Cases of Plague Develop*

Two new cases of plague in which one of the patients died before his case had been definitely diagnosed as plague and less than three hours after a physician was called in the case, and the other, a small boy, was well infected with the plague germs, when the discovery was made, were reported to health authorities yesterday.

Horace Sernell [Fournette?], negro, 759 Trinity alley, died shortly before noon yesterday about three hours after Dr. Bruns P. Holland was summoned. Dr. Holland, after a rigid examination of the patient, notified city and federal health authorities, but before serum could be administered the patient expired. The case was diagnosed as bubonic plague.

The other case developing yesterday was that of Augustine Sudino [Agostino Sundano], eight years old, 1124 Washington street. This case was reported a short while after the negro's death and immediate attention was given by health authorities. The boy was given Yersin serum<sup>2</sup> and a blood test made, which, after microscopical examination by Dr. Moise D. Levy of the state department, showed positive plague infection.

*Garbage Clean-up Is Big Success*

No drive of any character has ever received so much attention on part of business interests and the public in general than did the clean-up yesterday. Exactly at 7:30 o'clock yesterday morning, every truck and vehicle promised to the city for volunteer service had reported at the city hall and by 8:15 o'clock all had been assigned to the various sections of the city and by 8:30 o'clock the loads of trash and refuse began moving towards the city dump.

This continuous procession continued until noon when two hours were

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2. A treatment based on the findings of Alexandre Yersin that often proved ineffective. Typically, physicians use antibiotics to treat successfully bubonic plague. David P. Steensma, "Alexandre Yersin: Discoverer of the Plague Bacillus," *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*, 95 (January 2020): 7-8; "Plague," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov/plague](http://www.cdc.gov/plague)).

taken off for lunch and at 2 o'clock the work was re-begun. At 5 o'clock every ward, every street and every house had been canvassed . . . Today the dump will be soaked with kerosene and a torch applied by the time the wagons begin arriving [at] the ground, it is believed, will be in even better condition than it was yesterday.

While there was 100 per cent response on the part of persons pledging their services and the service of their trucks and wagons for the clean-up campaign, it was likewise found that co-operation on the part of a few certain residents was not wholly forthcoming. City Manager Roark stated that inspectors had reported certain citizens neglecting to clean their entire premises while others who made thorough clean-up would not permit the garbage to move through the front portion of their property but insisted that the drivers go to the rear of the houses.

"This was strictly impossible," declared Mr. Roark, "as it was necessary for all wagons and trucks to move with as much dispatch as possible in order that the entire city might have been covered. We asked only that the citizens collect their own garbage and place it in containers on the sidewalks in front of their homes."

Of the total number of helpers loaned to the city yesterday by business houses the greatest responses was received from the Eastern Texas Electric company, which loaned 18 men, and L[ee] J. Black, who furnished seven men. The salaries of these men are being paid by the volunteers and not by the city . . . Every available man in the employ of the city of Beaumont was pressed into service as were all wagons and trucks . . . volunteers of the chamber of commerce and Young Men's Business league, whose work throughout the day was to examine premises after the garbage had been removed and to make notations of any and all lack of co-operation on the part of citizens. Very few of these reports were made . . .

*Sum Up Situation at General Meeting . . .*

After calling the meeting to order Chairman John L. Keith, called upon Mr. Roark . . . "We've got to build into our citizenship the one idea

that ‘it pays to be clean’ . . . . I am sure that it will be only a short while before our city will be just as clean as any if a similar spirit is shown in the coming few days as was present yesterday.”

Mayor B[ismark] A. Steinhagen, upon request of Chairman Keith, gave a short talk . . . . Dr. Hall<sup>3</sup> explained that a number of neighboring towns and cities had become greatly alarmed over the situation in Beaumont and that in some cases many had become frightened to such points that they were afraid to buy Beaumont goods. There is absolutely no occasion for such alarm. Dr. Hall said he warned them, as long as the goods out of Beaumont contained the state health department’s seal of inspection.

Dr. Hall also stated that all freight and freight cars moving out of this city would be thoroughly inspected before they are loaded and all freight would be inspected as it is loaded aboard the cars. He requested that all merchants shipping goods out of this city notify the state health department of their intention to load a car and that an inspector would make the regular inspection of both the car and freight before it leaves the city and would tack a sign on the car, bearing the state’s seal, and indicating that the car had been inspected and contained no rats.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, July 6]

### **Tuesday, July 6:**

*Agostino Sundano died.*

*Charles Mitchell of Port Arthur died. He contracted the disease while working in Galveston.*

### **Wednesday, July 7:**

*The Beaumont Enterprise inaugurated a column “Plagueology” to answer questions about the bubonic plague. It continued until the July 14 issue.*

### **Thursday, July 8:**

*Roy Lombardo, age 15, Union Macaroni Company, diagnosed.*

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3. An earlier reference in the article identified this individual as “Dr. D. M. Hall” but Dr. Horace C. Hall worked for the state health department.



### **Full Publicity Will Be Given on Plague**

It has been brought to my notice that the idea prevails and rumors are continually being circulated that the full and accurate information of plague developments in Beaumont from day to day is not being given publicity.

This is to say to date there have been eight human cases with three deaths [not counting Mitchell] from the plague. There is at the present time a 15 per cent rodent infection—that is to say out of approximately 500 rats, 75 have been found infected.

The citizenship of Beaumont and all others interested are hereby positively assured that they shall be accurately informed in official bulletins issued from day to day of the actual situation.

While the situation is unusual, it is not alarming, and is well in hand. [Henry F.] White, P.A. Surgeon.”

[*Beaumont Journal*, July 8]

#### **Tuesday, July 13:**

*City of Beaumont passed an ordinance requiring rat-proofing of buildings.*

#### **What it Provides**

Where the cement floors are used, an outer rim must extend into the ground two feet and extend one foot above the floor level.

All residences, outhouses, etc., must be raised not less than 18 inches.

All buildings of this class must have at least three sides open to admit air and light.

All buildings where foodstuff is stored, manufactured, offered for sale or served, must have concrete floors.

All stables and stalls for horses and cows must have concrete floors with sustaining walls reaching two feet in the ground.

All mangers must be covered with zinc or tin.

Lattice work will not be allowed around residences.

Wooden sidewalks will not be allowed.

Lumber, wood, boxes, barrels, etc., must be placed on supports at least two feet from the ground.

Property owners will be given 30 days after a notice has been deposited in the mails in which to make changes ordered by the inspector.

Violation of the ordinance carries a penalty of from \$10 to \$200, each day constituting a separate offense.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, July 14]

### **Wednesday, July 14:**

#### *Car Is Coming*

The laboratory car "Hamilton," one of the federal health service's most complete and handiest pieces of equipment, is expected to arrive here Saturday, according to information received at the office of Dr. White yesterday. The car left Pensacola, Fla., yesterday morning.

The laboratory car, upon its arrival here, will be placed at the disposal of Dr. H.C. Hall, personal representative of Dr. C.W. Goddard, state health officer, and will likely be used in the survey of all towns along the Texas gulf coast for investigation and instruction purposes. The car is in charge of Attendant Peterson and Inspector Hellwig.

#### *County Organized*

Practically every section of Jefferson county has been organized. The finishing touches to this work will be added tonight when plans for active campaigns and general prevention work will be perfected at Nome and China. Meetings of citizens have been called at both places and it is likely that representatives of the county health department will be appointed to take charge locally. These meetings will be attended and headed by Dr. H.S. Capps, county health officer, and Dr. J[ohn] H. Reagan, county field worker.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, July 14]

### **Friday, July 17:**

*Lora Robertson (sometimes Lola), age 25, diagnosed.*

**Monday, July 26:**

*Edna Parrish, age 15, diagnosed.*

**Thursday, July 29:**

*Lora Robertson died.*

**Friday, July 30:**

*Fred Buchan, age 19, worker at Magnolia refinery, diagnosed.*

**Saturday, August 7:****Give up Plague Search as a Bad Job**

The traveling bubonic plague laboratory which has been here a fortnight examining rats has given up trying to find plague in Orange.

It is leaving tonight without having discovered a trace of the disease.

During the stay of the laboratory car here there were 1019 rodents examined by Dr. R[andolph] M. Grimm of the public health service and Dr. M.D. Levy of the state board of health, and were found to be free from the bubonic plague.

The survey was under the supervision of Dr. C.W. Goddard, state health officer. It was carried on jointly by the U.S.P.H.S. [United States Public Health Service] and the state board of health of Texas. The survey merely indicates that among the rodents examined here there was not infection found.

It is especially urged by the doctors in charge of the car that the citizens co-operate with the city and county officials in the rat campaign which will be continued after the car leaves. The rats that are caught will be sent to Beaumont for examination. Cleaning up all rubbish and trash around the residences and placing all garbage in tightly covered receptacles will assist in increasing the size of the rat catch made by the trappers.

The laboratory car will leave tonight for Freeport to institute a survey there. While it is there it will also examine the rats from Velasco.

[*Orange Daily Leader*, August 7]

**Sunday, August 15:**

*Samuel C. Facundus, age 41, rice mill employee, first showed symptoms while traveling to Crowley, Louisiana.*

**Nearly 20,000 Rats Have Paid the Penalty for Being Rodents;  
“Dead or Alive” Is Slogan**

*Small Army Employed Here Fighting Bubonic Plague and Fight Has Just Now Begun*

The bubonic plague has brought on a slogan of “dead or alive” for all rats, and Beaumont and other gulf port cities have entered, with a spirit, in the battle to exterminate the disease-carrying pests.

In Beaumont alone 17,482 rats have been trapped in the past two months and it is estimated that there are still 100,000 in the city . . . .

Of the 17,482 caught in this city about 5000 have been examined at the city laboratory, of which there have been 107 positive cases of plague infection and two suspicious cases are now pending development. There have been eleven human cases of plague infection and three suspicious cases with five deaths in this city during the past three months, according to estimates of the United States health service.

*School for Trapping*

Dr. H.F. White, past assistant surgeon of the United States public health service, in charge of the local rat-extermination campaign, has started a school to train rat-catchers in the hope that the remaining number of rodents may be trapped and destroyed faster than they breed.

In this city alone there are 59 men who do nothing but catch rats, dead or alive, and they have worked their way into the rattiest quarters of the port.

With a price placed on the pests’ head—10 cents dead or alive in addition to regular monthly sustenance of \$80—the new occupation has already brought forth the man who claims to be the champion rat catcher of the world. He is Joe Boulet, of New Orleans, and as a reward for valiant service, has been made chief rat trapper of all forces in this

city on a salary of \$200 a month, to aid in ridding this section of the state of rats.

*Makes Good Salary*

Boulet made \$178 in bounties in June for the high record. Besides this he received \$89 from the government. Another of the local rat catchers who is acquiring unlimited wealth by the unusual occupation is W.C. Ahrens, also of New Orleans, who cleared up \$110.20 during the month of July in bounties for rats he caught. In addition to the \$80 Ahrens made a total of \$198.20 during the month of July . . . .

*Hope to Stamp It Out*

“We hope to stamp out the plague in time,” said Dr. White, “but it is going to cost a great deal of money and take considerable time. The millions of rats in all ports will have to be killed and their breeding places destroyed.”

Hundreds of buildings will have to undergo what is known as rat-proofing, and Beaumont is to be thoroughly cleaned, the garbage problem properly solved, in order that rodents will not return after they are once routed.

In order to accomplish this many thousands of dollars are being spent in Beaumont outside of the actual cost of rat-proofing. During the month July the payroll of the public health service alone in this city totaled \$15,500. The forces are gradually increasing, and the payroll, by the time this work has reached its peak, will probably be more than \$25,000 a month. Acids and other expensive supplies being used here in fumigation work also help considerably to swell the total sum of money spent here in the fight on the rat.

*Army in the Work.*

There are now 31 inspectors employed by the public health service, four assistant inspectors, 32 fumigators, 61 trappers, one chief trapper, one chief fumigator, two assistant chief fumigators, one foreman fumigator, seven foreman trappers, one spraying squad of three men, including a foreman, two assistant fumigators and four laboratory laborers.

There were 1493 buildings inspected during July, of which 28 buildings were made to be rat-proof. One class A building and 26 sheds were demolished. There were 5362 square feet of planking removed. In addition to the building inspection there were 333 vessels and 3002 railroad freight cars inspected in this port.

There were twelve buildings fumigated last week, in which 120 pounds of cyanide and 163 pints of sulphuric [*sic*] acid were used. These building covered a total space of 394,908 cubic feet and 991 square yards of space were sprayed with disinfectant. There were 56 gallons of disinfectant used during the week.

The first abatement certificate was issued the past week, a total of 110 notices were issued by the public health service.

The work is going ahead in good fashion and unless some serious obstacle develops Beaumont will be free of the rat in about one year, it is estimated by those in charge.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, August 15]

**Thursday, August 19:**

*Samuel C. Facundus died at a Houston hospital.*

**Saturday, August 21:**

*W.J. Patterson, 36, rat catcher, diagnosed.*

**Tuesday, October 12:**

**Three Rats with Plague Are Found**

*Authorities Resume the War against Bubonic Disease in Jefferson County*

The finding of one plague infected rat in the business section of Port Arthur, and two about six miles from Beaumont, has started a resumption in the activities of the United States public health service in Jefferson county. An increase in the appropriation allotted to this section of the state has been asked with which to fight the disease.

The infected rats were trapped at the McFaddin pumping station, about six miles below Beaumont, and the single plague infected rodent was caught at 617 Houston avenue, Port Arthur, October 12.

As the result of the discovery in Port Arthur. Dr. H.F. White, in charge of all plague work in Texas, will meet with the Port Arthur city commission at 11 o'clock this morning for the purpose of outlining an active campaign against the disease much on the order as the one recently started in Beaumont.

In Beaumont the campaign has been extended 20 miles in all directions and trapping of rodents in immediate localities of where the infected rat was caught yesterday has been started on an extensive scale. At the McFaddin pumping station all buildings have been fumigated and rat harborages have been eliminated.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, October 27]

### **Wednesday, November 17:**

#### **Reject Plans to Chase out Rats**

##### *Port Arthur Citizens Say Cost More to be Feared than Plague*

Special to The Enterprise. Port Arthur, Texas, Nov. 17.—The city commission of Port Arthur is not disposed to follow the suggestions of officials of the federal health department that a ratproofing ordinance be enacted at once. This statement was made by Mayor [John W.] Tryon last night in the course of a mass meeting in Franklin auditorium, which had been called to discuss the proposition.

On the other hand, Dr. White, in charge of the work of exterminating plague-carrying rats at this port [Beaumont], broadly intimated, at least, that a contingency might arise in which the government quarantine service would refuse to grant clean bills of health to vessels or railway cars leaving Port Arthur until the city agreed to proper measures for combating the plague.

Several hundred interested property owners were present at the meeting, and if they enjoyed fervid oratory which at times bordered on acrimonious debate, the auditors never suffered a dull moment. Jesse Peek and Rev. T. Alvis Davis were the principal speakers upon whom fell the task of presenting the views of the property owners, while Dr. White stood alone against the verbal assaults of the opposition. The chief grounds upon which the opposition was based were the cost and the

apparent lack of necessity for the expensive ratproofing process at this time. This conclusion rests upon the fact that up to this time, though probably more than 20,000 rats have been tested, only one positive case of plague infection has been found. Speakers stressed the hardship of such an outlay upon the thousand small home owners whose entire savings go into the installments on their homes, and who would find it impossible to meet this additional expense without jeopardizing their interest in their property.

Considerable attention also was given the alleged arbitrary methods of wrecking crews which have been operating here for the past several weeks. It was charged that these crews have gone onto premises and greatly damaged property without notice to the owners that the work should be done, and it was pretty clearly established that to this extent the men have exceeded both their authority and their instructions. Dr. White disposed of this point by agreeing to permit Rev. Davis to select a civilian who shall act as director of the operations of the wreckers.

Dr. White spoke of the issue dispassionately [*sic*], but earnestly, apparently seeking to convince the audience that the opposition to the proposal is founded in a want of proper knowledge of the facts. He did not recede from the position that the port is now recognized as plague infected and will continue to be so recognized until the measures approved by the health department are carried out.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, November 18]

### **Friday, December 1:**

#### **Trap 50,250 Rats Here in 5 Months Dr. White Reports**

About 80 per cent of all property in Beaumont has been ratproofed at the end of the fifth month of the United States public health service's [*sic*] in this city. During the five months 50,250 were caught in Beaumont, Dr. White declared last night. Of this number 123 were found infected with bubonic plague.

A total of 75,000 rats have been examined for plague infection the Beaumont laboratories. These were from all parts of the city and among which two plague [*sic*] cases developed, one of the rats with the disease being caught in Port Arthur and another in Port Arthur road.



During the five months of campaigning in this city 14 human cases of bubonic plague developed, of which five deaths occurred. Only two human cases out of the 14 which the public health service had an opportunity to treat died in this city. The last human case to develop here was that of a rat-catcher on September 4, and the last plague-infected rat caught here was on August 24.

The ending of the fifth month of activity against plague in this city was marked with the issuance of 35 abatement certificates to property owners having passed the final examination of ratproofing work. Many more of these certificates would be issued if it were not for minor details in connection with the work, which property owners in many cases have overlooked.

During the five months the public health service in this city has spent over \$100,000 . . . .

At the beginning of the campaign 190 persons were employed by the public health service at one time. There are about 100 employees at the present time. In order to retain only the most experienced talent more than 600 men were hired and fired by the public health service during its campaign in this city.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, December 1]

**Tuesday, December 14:**

### **Howth Fights Bond Issue**

*Says No Bubonic in Beaumont*

Attorney C[larence] W. Howth one of the leaders in the fight against the proposed bond issues and present city administration, addressed a crowd of Beaumont citizens between Pearl and Main streets on Tuesday night.

A large portion of the audience was made up of pro-bonders. Howth received their undivided attention, but little applause for the arguments advanced.

He asserted that there had been no bubonic plague in Beaumont, and that the few cases of so-called plague had been disposed of before the rat proofing work began.

He asserted that the present city administration had been extravagant, and decried the issuance of bonds at this time.

[*Beaumont Enterprise*, December 15]

### *Frank C. Weber Recalls the Plague Scare*

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Besides the yellow fever scares, smallpox, and other near-epidemics, Beaumont had its full-scale bubonic plague scare. It was about 1916 [1920]. Some unfortunate woman [Mary Praeger] who lived close in on College Street was bitten by a rat and later showed all the symptoms of this dreaded Asiatic plague. This was about the worst scare our city ever had and threw our government into emergency action. New laws were quickly enacted to get rid of the rats and keep them out. A big rat-killing operation (began) and crews were working all over town with poison, and gas was extensively used. There were many bungalows in Beaumont then and property owners were called upon to cut the skirts off the feet to allow light under the houses. Garages were raised for the same purpose, and all grocery stores were ordered to put chain walls of concrete around their outside walls (two feet deep, as it was said that rats would burrow no deeper than that). Thus it was that all the pretty bungalows that had been erected here prior to that date, including my own, had their architectural lines ruined from that point. The laws enacted then are still enforced [ca. 1964], I am told, but there are no more bungalows being built. I might add that the poor woman in the case died and no more cases showed up [inaccurate, see Table 3].

[Excerpt. Michael F. Doran, ed., "Early Beaumont: The Reminiscences of Frank C. Weber (1882-1865)," *The Texas Gulf Historical and Biographical Record*, 18 (November 1982): 62]

**Table 1. 1920 Beaumont Deaths**

Disease	Fatalities
Pneumonia	43
Tuberculosis	41
Malaria	14
Influenza	12
Bubonic plague	5
Diphtheria	3
Typhoid fever	2
Others	365
<b>Total</b>	<b>485</b>

**Source:** *The Beaumont Daily Journal*, December 26, 1920

**Table 2. U.S. Plague Outbreaks, 1900-1930**

City	Years	Cases	Deaths
San Francisco	1900-1904	120	114
Seattle	1907-1908	186	92
New Orleans	1914-1915	31	10
New Orleans	1919-1921	25	11
Pensacola	1920	10	4
Galveston	1920	18	12
Beaumont	1920	14	6
Los Angeles	1924	41	34
<b>Total</b>		<b>448</b>	<b>286</b>

**Source:** Pollitzer, "Plague Studies" (1951): 512

Table 3. Beaumont Cases

Name	Age	R/G	Location	Occupation	Reported	Deceased
Mary Praeger	44	WF	376 College	Housekeeping	June 26	June 26
John C. Pollock	27	WM	1216 Long	Press Operator <i>Enterprise</i>	June 27	
Charles C. Linn	38	WM	375 Wall	Beaumont Shipbuilding & Drydock Company	June 29	
Violette Moliere	6	WF	190 Walnut		July 2	
Ferdinand Delatte	11	WM	1157 Laurel		July 2	
Horace Fournette	26	BM	759 Trinity Alley	Shipyard	July 5	July 5
Agostino Sundano	8	WM	1124 Washington		July 5	July 6
Charles Mitchell <sup>1</sup>	20	BM	Galveston	Longshoreman	July 5	July 6
Roy Lombardo	15	WM	650 Park	Union Macaroni Company	July 8	
Lora Robertson	25	BF	597 College	None given	July 17	July 29
Edna Parrish	15	WF	653 College		July 26	
Fred Buchan	19	WM	1383 Orleans	Magnolia Refinery	July 30	
Samuel C. Facundus <sup>2</sup>	41	WM	1726 Liberty	Atlantic Rice Mills	August 15	August 19
W. J. Patterson	36	M	1148 Pearl	Rat Catcher	August 21	



***The Response Team*****U.S. Public Health Service**

Dr. Charles L. Williams	Executive in charge
Dr. Moise D. Levy	Laboratory and treatment
James E. Fitzmorris	Chief clerk
L. Courtland	Chief inspector
R. Scruntine	Chief rat trapper
T. Trainer	Fumigator

**State of Texas**

Dr. Horace C. Hall	For the state health officer
Victor M. Ehlers	Chief sanitation engineer

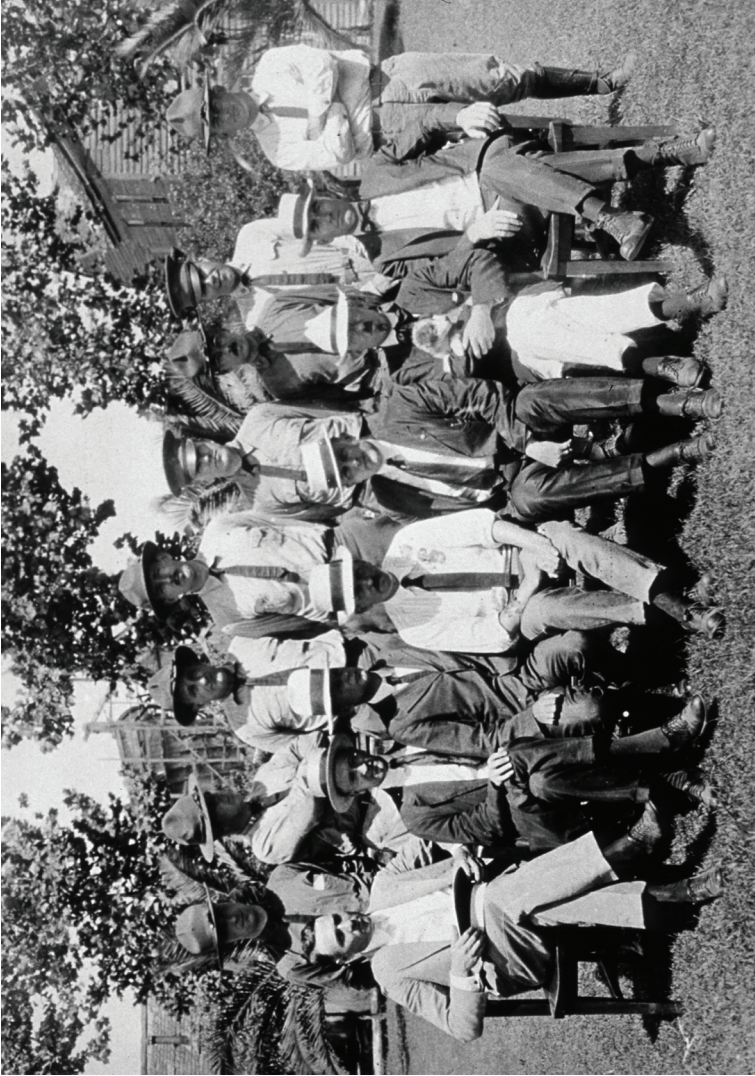
**Jefferson County**

Dr. Henry S. Capps	Health officer
Dr. John H. Reagan	Field work (volunteer)

**City of Beaumont**

George J. Roark	City manager
Dr. Dru McMickin	Health officer
Dr. Joseph D. Walker	Bacteriologist
Dr. Wilbur F. Thomson	Bacteriologist (consulting)
Daniel B. Clark	Inspector

**Source:** *Beaumont Enterprise*, July 7, 1920.



Individuals not identified. "Plague Control Work in Beaumont Texas" (1920). U.S. National Library of Medicine, Bethesda, Maryland.

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# I'M A COVID-19 LONG-HAULER AND AN EPIDEMIOLOGIST

MARGOT GAGE WITVLIET

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**I'm a COVID-19 long-hauler and an epidemiologist—here's how it feels when symptoms last for months.**

**I**magine being young and healthy, a nonsmoker with no preexisting health conditions, and then waking up one morning feeling like you were being suffocated by an unseen force. Back in March, this was my reality.

I had just returned from Europe, and roughly 10 days later started having flu-like symptoms. I became weak overnight and had trouble breathing. It felt like jogging in the Rocky Mountains without being in condition, only I wasn't moving. I went to the hospital, where I was tested for COVID-19.

I was one of the first people in Texas given a non-FDA-approved test. My results came back negative. As a social epidemiologist who deals with big data, I was certain it was a false negative.

More than four months later, the symptoms have not gone away. My heart still races even though I am resting. I cannot stay in the sun for long periods; it zaps all of my energy. I

have gastrointestinal problems, ringing in the ears and chest pain.

I'm what's known as a long-hauler—part of a growing group of people who have COVID-19 and have never fully recovered. Fatigue is one of the most common persistent symptoms, but there are many others, including the cognitive effects people often describe as brain fog. As more patients face these persistent symptoms, employers will have to find ways to work with them. It's too soon to say we're disabled, but it's also too soon to know how long the damage will last.

*The frustration of not knowing*

What made matters worse in the beginning was that my doctors were not certain I had COVID-19. My test was negative and I had no fever, so my symptoms did not fit into early descriptions of the disease. Instead, I was diagnosed with a respiratory illness, prescribed the Z-pack antibiotic and a low dosage of an anti-inflammatory medication normally used for arthritis patients.

A Yale study released in May shows COVID-19 deaths in America do not reflect the pandemic's true mortality rate. If I had died at home, my death would not have been counted as COVID-19.

By the end of March, I was on the road to recovery. Then I had a seizure. In the ER, the doctor said I had COVID-19 and that I was lucky—tests showed my organs did not have lasting damage. After the seizure, I lay in my bedroom for weeks with the curtains drawn, because light and sound had started to hurt.

*The search for answers*

I did not understand why I was not recovering. I began searching for answers online. I found a support group for people struggling with COVID-19 long-term. They called themselves long-haulers.

COVID-19 support groups show that there are many people not considered sick enough to be hospitalized—yet they are experiencing symptoms worse than the flu. It is possible COVID-19 is neurotoxic and is one of the first illnesses capable of crossing the blood-brain barrier. This might explain why many people like me have neurological problems. Many long-haulers are experiencing post-viral symptoms similar to those caused by mononucleosis and myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome.

A common frustration is that some medical doctors dismiss their complaints as psychological.

One woman in the support group wrote: “140 days later, so many are hard to breathe, and no doctors will take me seriously as I was diagnosed with a negative swab and negative antibodies.”

Paul Garner was the first epidemiologist to publicly share his COVID status. He described his 7-week fight with the coronavirus in a blog post for the British medical journal *The BMJ*. In July, I was interviewed by ABC. That month, an Indiana University researcher working with an online community of long-haulers released a report identifying over 100 symptoms, and the CDC expanded its list of characteristics that put people at greater risk of developing severe COVID-19 symptoms. On July 31, the CDC also

acknowledged that young people with no prior medical issues can experience long-term symptoms.

It's still unclear why COVID-19 impacts some people more severely than others. Emerging evidence suggests blood type might play a role. However, data are mixed.

A Dutch study found immune cells TLR7—Toll-like receptor 7 located on the X chromosome—which is needed to detect the virus is not operating properly in some patients. This allows COVID-19 to move unchecked by the immune system. Men do not have an extra X chromosome to rely on, suggesting that men, rather than women, may experience more severe COVID-19 symptoms.

Many COVID-19 survivors report having no antibodies for SARS-CoV-2. Antibody tests have a low accuracy rate, and data from Sweden suggest T-cell responses might be more important for immunity. Emerging evidence found CD4 and CD8 memory T-cell response in some people recovered from COVID-19, regardless of whether antibodies were present. A La Jolla Institute for Immunity study identified SARS-CoV-2-specific memory T-cell responses in some people who were not exposed to COVID-19, which might explain why some people get sicker than others. The complete role of T-cell response is unknown, but recent data are promising.

*Looking ahead in an economy of long-haulers*

Like many long-haulers, my goal is to resume a normal life.

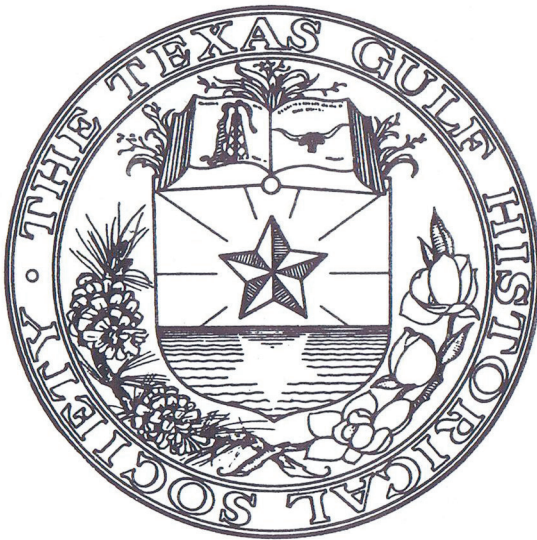
I still grapple with a host of post-viral issues, including extreme fatigue, brain fog and headaches. I spend the majority of my day resting.

A big challenge long-haulers face may be sustaining employment. Ultimately, it is too early to classify long-haulers as having a disability. Anthony Fauci reported that “it will take months to a year or more to know whether lingering COVID-19 symptoms in young people could be chronic illnesses.”

Economics is a big driver of health, and the link between employment and health care in America further exacerbates the need to maintain employment to protect health. Employers need to be ready to make accommodations to keep long-haulers working. The stress of being sick long-term, combined with the possibility of job loss, can also contribute to mental health issues.

To effectively fight COVID-19 and understand the risks, these patients with continuing symptoms must be studied. Online support groups, meanwhile, are helping long-haulers feel understood.

**Margot Gage Witvliet** is an Assistant Professor of Social Epidemiology at Lamar University. The online news journal *The Conversation* originally published this essay on August 11, 2020. Thanks to Dr. Witvliet and *The Conversation* for allowing *The Record* to include it in this volume.



*Vox audita perdit, littera scripta manet.*

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# COVID-19

*THE RECORD STAFF*

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**F**utility, perhaps, best describes any attempt to assess the historic significance of COVID-19 while the pandemic continues to worsen. Although by December 31, 2020, two companies had distributed the first round of vaccines, the City of Beaumont, Texas, reported the highest number of active cases (1,888) since the outbreak with the expectation that infections would increase through the first weeks of the New Year. The project of historians to understand current events must wait, but they can offer useful perspectives by situating the present in context with its past.

The sampling of documents and statistics included in the previous sections on yellow fever, influenza, and the bubonic plague establish several commonalities with the COVID-19 experience. For one, health emergencies have revealed deep ethnic and gendered divisions in the region. For another, past and present civic leaders struggled to balance public health concerns against economic interests. Southeast Texans also had to contend with fear, rumor, and fantasy that could lead to misinformed decisions that unnecessarily deepened these crises. Then as now, arguments against public health

measures seem motivated by economics. For example, in response to a *Beaumont Enterprise* editorial that criticized three city council members for defying mask-wearing, a local reader equated masking laws to the Salem Witch Trials and the rise of Adolf Hitler and further asserted, “Each Covid death represents 17,000 unemployed and untold number of business closings.”<sup>1</sup> The author provided no basis for the statistics, but the point raises the same questions from the past about how a community assesses the value of the lives of its neighbors.

In this and previous sections of volume 55, *The Record* includes several statistical tables that provide modest degrees of context. As the writer to the *Enterprise* illustrated, the data cannot tell the whole story. The impact of “Each Covid death”—each yellow fever death or bubonic plague death—on the individual family and the larger community is often lost to history. Furthermore, the emphasis on death rates overshadows the struggles that survivors face, and as Dr. Margot Gage Witvliet’s experiences confirm (see page 119), many who contracted COVID-19 will endure any number of poorly understood “long-haul” symptoms that may linger for years after their initial recovery.

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1 “Our View: Rogue Councilmen Ignore Governor, Set Bad Example,” *Beaumont Enterprise*, August 13, 2020; Letters to the Editor, *Beaumont Enterprise*, August 23, 2020.



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## *Timeline to December 31, 2020*

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*Tuesday, December 31, 2019:*

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission in China reported “a cluster of cases of pneumonia” to World Health Organization.

*Tuesday, January 21, 2020:*

First U.S. case of the “novel coronavirus” confirmed in Snohomish County, Washington.

*Sunday, February 9:*

Patient at Baptist Hospital, Beaumont, tested negative for the “novel coronavirus.”

*Tuesday, February 11:*

World Health Organization named disease Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19.

*Saturday, February 29:*

First confirmed COVID-19 related fatality in the United States occurred in King County, Washington.

*Wednesday, March 11:*

The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic. The National Basketball Association suspended its 2019-2020 basketball season. U.S. President Donald Trump addressed nation.

*Thursday, March 12:*

The National Hockey League suspended its 2019-2020 season. Buckner Retirement Services in Beaumont announced restricted visitor policy at its Calder Woods facility.

*Friday, March 13:*

Jefferson County Judge Jeff R. Branick issued Declaration of Disaster “because of the extreme potential for health hazards posed by COVID-19.” Branick also issued an “Amended Emergency Order” cancelling publign events of over 200 people.

*Monday, March 16:*

Hardin-Jefferson ISD and Port Arthur ISD announced closures.

*Tuesday, March 17:*

Superintendent Shannon Allen announced Beaumont ISD will close until April 23.

*Wednesday, March 18:*

City of Beaumont confirmed first case of COVID-19. Bishop Curtis Guillory suspended public masses and “liturgical service” in the Catholic Diocese of Beaumont.

*Thursday, March 19:*

Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott prohibited public gatherings of more than 10 people and restaurant dine-in; closed bars and gyms. Hardin, Jasper, Jefferson, Newton, and Orange counties formed the Southeast Texas Regional Operations Center to coordinate COVID-19 response. Chambers and Tyler counties later joined.

*Tuesday, March 24:*

First drive-through testing opened at Jack Brooks Regional Airport.

*Wednesday, March 25*

Beaumont ISD board voted to pay its employees “as long as campuses remain closed.”

*Friday, March 27:*

Beaumont mayor Becky Ames issued “stay-at-home” order. Michael Westbrook of Lumberton, band director at Hardin-Jefferson ISD and member of the Symphony of Southeast Texas became first COVID-19 fatality in Southeast Texas.

*Tuesday, March 31:*

Gov. Greg Abbott issued statewide stay-at-home order. Texas became the 43rd state to issue such orders.

*Wednesday, April 1:*

City of Beaumont confirmed first COVID-19 fatality. Later identified as Randy Flatau, former owner of Randy’s Fine Jewelry, Dowlen Road.

*Monday, April 6:*

City of Port Arthur confirmed first COVID-19 fatality. News sources did not immediately identify the individual. James Washburn first Jasper resident to die from COVID-19 related symptoms at Christus Saint Elizabeth, Beaumont.

*Monday, April 20:*

Gov. Greg Abbott announced that stay-at-home order will expire on April 30 and that Phase 1 of reopening to begin on May 1.

*Thursday, April 23:*

Southeast Texas four deaths in single day.

*Monday, May 15:*

The Southeast Texas Regional Operations Center closed drive-through testing sites and disbanded.

*Wednesday, May 17:*

National death toll surpassed 100,000. State total for Texas: 1,562. For Southeast Texas: 38 (Jefferson, Orange, Hardin, Tyler, Jasper, Newton, Chambers, and Liberty counties).

*Wednesday, June 3:*

Gov. Greg Abbott announced Phase 3 reopening business at 50% capacity.

*Monday, June 22:*

State of Texas reported over 5,000 new cases in a single day for the first time. Cities of Beaumont and Port Arthur reported 33 new cases.

*Tuesday, June 23:*

Jefferson County Judge Jeff R. Branick issued Ninth Amended Order requiring “all people 10 years or older shall wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when in a commercial entity or working in areas in a commercial entity that involve close proximity with others.”

*Friday, June 26:*

Jefferson County Judge Jeff R. Branick issued a letter responding to the “pure hatred and profanity laden messages” from anti-maskers.

*Thursday, July 2:*

Gov. Greg Abbott issued orders to wear face coverings in public.

*Monday, August 3:*

Bridge City ISD first in area to start 2020-2021 academic year with 80% in attendance for in-person instruction.

*Tuesday, August 11:*

Gov. Greg Abbott meets with local leaders in Beaumont to discuss COVID-19.

*Tuesday, August 18:*

First day of fall semester at Lamar University with online, hybrid, and in-person classes.

*Wednesday, August 19:*

Port Neches ISD started 2020-2021 academic year with 94% in attendance for in-person instruction and with 8 employees in quarantine with positive COVID-19 tests.

*Thursday, August 27:*

Category 4 Hurricane Laura made landfall near Cameron, Louisiana.

*Friday, October 2:*

U.S. President Donald Trump announced from his Twitter account that he and wife Melania Trump tested positive for COVID-19. He left Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, on October 5.

*Friday, October 9:*

Category 2 Hurricane Delta made landfall near Creole, Louisiana.

*Tuesday, November 3:*

U.S. voters elected former Vice President Joe Biden as president. Incumbent Donald Trump refused to concede claiming voter fraud.

*Monday, November 9:*

Pfizer (U.S.) and BioNTech (Germany) announced that their COVID-19 vaccine tested 90% effective.

*Tuesday, November 10:*

Texas reported 10,685 new cases and becomes the first U.S. state to surpass 1 million confirmed infections.

*Monday, November 16:*

Moderna (U.S.) announces that their COVID-19 vaccine tested 94.5% effective.

*Tuesday, December 1:*

Jefferson County reported 219 infections, highest one-day total since start of epidemic.

*Thursday, December 11:*

U.S. Food and Drug administration authorized emergency distribution of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine. Jefferson County exceeded 10,000 cases (10,149).

*Monday, December 14:*

The first of Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine dispensed in New York. Jefferson County recorded 12 fatalities, the worst single-day total since the beginning of the epidemic.

*Thursday, December 17:*

Port Arthur mayor Thurman Bartie admitted to a hospital in Friendswood, Texas, for COVID-19 treatment. He remained for 12 days. The first of Pfizer-BioNTech's vaccine administered in Beaumont.

*Tuesday, December 29:*

City of Beaumont surpasses 6,000 cases (6,049) or 5.1 percent of the 2018 population (118,428).

*Wednesday, December 30:*

First U.S. case of COVID-19 variant confirmed in Colorado. First identified in the Great Britain, the variant exhibited a greater degree of contagion but not more lethal and not more resistant to vaccination.

*Thursday, December 31:*

City of Beaumont reported highest number (1,888) of active cases.

**Branick's Declaration of Local Disaster**  
**March 13, 2020**

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JEFF R. BRANICK  
County Judge

Jefferson County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 4025  
Beaumont, TX 77704

Beaumont (409) 835-8466  
Pt. Arthur (409) 727-2191 Ext. 8466  
Facsimile (409) 839-2311

March 13, 2020

Governor Greg Abbott  
c/o Nim Kidd, TDEM

FAX: 512-424-2444

RE: Jefferson County Declaration of Disaster

Dear Governor Abbott,

On March 13, 2020 I, as County Judge of Jefferson County, entered an Order declaring Jefferson County to be in a state of disaster (copy attached) because of the extreme potential for health hazards posed by COVID-19. This Declaration of Disaster for Public Health Emergency. A copy of this Declaration is being faxed to your offices.

We are requesting that you extend your prompt attention in this regard and assist Jefferson County and your assistance in this regard will be greatly appreciated. If you require anything further, please contact me in my office.

Sincerely,

Jeff Branick  
County Judge, Jefferson County



**DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER FOR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, beginning in December 2019, a novel coronavirus, now designated COVID-19, was detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, and has since spread throughout the world; and,

WHEREAS, symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, coughing, and shortness of breath. In some cases the virus has caused death; and,

WHEREAS, extraordinary measures must be taken to contain COVID-19 and prevent its spread throughout Jefferson County, Texas, including the quarantine of individuals, groups of individuals, and property and, additionally, including compelling individuals, groups of individuals, or property to undergo additional health measures that prevent or control the spread of disease; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNTY JUDGE OF JEFFERSON COUNTY, TEXAS:

1. That a local state of disaster for public health emergency is hereby declared for Jefferson County, Texas pursuant to section 418.108(a) of the Texas Government Code.
2. Pursuant to section 418.108 (b) of the Government Code, the state of disaster for public health emergency shall continue for a period of not more than seven days from the date of this declaration unless continued or renewed by the Commissioners Court of Jefferson County, Texas.
3. Pursuant to section 418.108(c) of the Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster for public health emergency shall be given prompt and general publicity and shall be filed promptly with the County Clerk.
4. Pursuant to section 418.108 (d) of the Government Code, this declaration of a local state of disaster activates the Jefferson County emergency management plan.
5. Any individual, group of individuals, or property subject to a Local Health Authority Order restricting the movement of that individual or group of individuals or restricting movement to, from, or within that property, shall limit ingress and egress and take such measures as specified by that Local Health Authority Order.
6. That this declaration shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

DECLARES this the 13th day of March, 2020.

Jeff R. Branick  
Jefferson County, Judge

Coronavirus COVID-19 Related Documents and Declarations, Jefferson County, Beaumont, Tx.

**Branick's Amended Emergency Order  
March 13, 2020**



JEFF R. BRANICK  
County Judge

Jefferson County Courthouse  
P.O. Box 4025  
Beaumont, TX 77704

Beaumont (409) 835-8466  
Pt. Arthur (409) 727-2191 Ext. 8466  
Facsimile (409) 839-2311

AMENDED EMERGENCY ORDER

I, Jeff R. Branick, duly elected Judge of Jefferson County, based on most recent information received from the Emergency Management Offices personnel and Public Health Authorities issue this Order REGARDING THE OCCUPANCY OF PREMISES THROUGHOUT JEFFERSON COUNTY, TEXAS:

Under the authority granted to me by Chapter 418, Texas Government Code, a disaster declaration has been issued effective on March 13, 2020. Additionally pursuant to Section 418.108(d)(g), Texas Government Code, I hereby issue the following orders:

- 1) Any event sponsored or permitted by Jefferson County shall cease.
- 2) Events greater than 200 persons shall cease at all public facilities across Jefferson County.
- 3) Any event greater than 200 persons held at private facilities is urged to cancel but those who are conducting such events should make those determinations within their organizations and with staff of those facilities to adequately protect the public.
- 4) Events of 200 persons or more that would include any population with compromised health conditions or who are at severe risk of severe illness should cease. The population at the greatest risk is anyone over the age at 65 and/or those with severe medical conditions as defined by Centers for Disease Control guidelines.
- 5) Nursing homes and senior living centers should limit visitation of the public within their facilities.

This order does NOT extend to law enforcement activities, emergency response operations, court operations, including jury operations, and to all school districts or jurisdiction of Jefferson County.

All Jefferson County Employees must report for work as required by their supervisors. Effective immediately and through the duration of this order, all Jefferson County employees. **So as to allow the City Mayors adequate time to craft their own emergency management orders, this Order shall not extend to City properties, facilities or events until Monday, March 16, 2020 @ 12:00 p.m.**

This order shall take effect immediately and extend for a duration of 30 days and may be extended as needed.

Signed at 4:01 p.m, March 13, 2020.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff R. Branick, County Judge

Coronavirus COVID-19 Related Documents and Declarations, Jefferson County, Beaumont, Tx.



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***Branick's Ninth Amended Emergency Order***  
***June 23, 2020***

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**AMENDED (To Correct Effective Date)**

**NINTH AMENDED ORDER OF COUNTY JUDGE JEFF R. BRANICK**  
Regarding Health and Safety Policy and Face Coverings

**Whereas**, on March 13, 2020, Judge Jeff R. Branick issued a Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency to allow Jefferson County to take measures to reduce the possibility of exposure to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) and promote the health and safety of Jefferson County residents in accordance with Section 418 108(a) of the Texas Government Code, and

**Whereas**, on March 13, 2020, Governor Greg Abbott issued a Declaration of State of Disaster, certifying under Section 418 014 of the Texas Government Code that COVID- 19 poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas and to thus take additional steps to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate the spread of COVID- 19 to protect the health and welfare of Texans, and

**Whereas**, in March 2020, the US Centers for Disease Control issued guidance as to individuals, recommending that individuals practice social or physical distancing to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by staying at least 6 feet from other people, by refraining from gathering in groups, by staying out of crowded places and by avoiding mass gatherings, and

**Whereas**, on March 15, 2020, the US Centers for Disease Control issued guidance as to large events, explaining that larger gatherings (for example, more than 250 people) offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose a greater risk of COVID-19 transmission and community spread, counseling that based upon what is currently known about the virus, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within 6 feet), and urging organizers to continually assess whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce (if possible) the number of attendees at larger gatherings, and

**Whereas**, on March 17 2020 the Jefferson County Commissioners Court extended the Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency to March 25, 2020 in accordance with Section 418 108(b) of the Texas Government Code, and

**Whereas**, on March 19, 2020, after determining that COVID- 19 represents a public health disaster within the meaning of Chapter 81 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Commissioner John Hellerstedt issued the first Public Health Disaster Declaration released in the State of Texas since 1901, and

**Whereas**, the Jefferson County Commissioners Court has continued to extend the Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency to the present date in accordance with Section 418 108(b) of the Texas Government Code; and

**Whereas**, on April 12, 2020, Governor Abbott issued a proclamation renewing the Disaster Declaration for all counties in Texas in accordance with Section 418 014 of the Texas Government Code, and

**Whereas**, on April 17, 2020, DSHS Commissioner Dr. Hellerstedt renewed the State's Public Health Disaster Declaration, and

**Whereas**, on May 12, 2020, Governor Abbott issued a proclamation renewing the Disaster Declaration for all counties in Texas in accordance with Section 418 014 of the Texas Government Code, and

**Whereas**, on May 15, 2020, DSHS Commissioner Dr. Hellerstedt renewed the State's Public Health Disaster Declaration, and

**Whereas**, the COVID-19 virus is contagious and spreads through person-to-person contact, especially in group settings; and

**Whereas**, there currently still exists a declaration of public health disaster in and for the State of Texas as declared by Texas Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and by approving the weekly extensions of the Declaration of Local Disaster for Public Health Emergency, the Jefferson County Commissioners Court authorized the Jefferson County Judge to take such actions as are necessary in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of Jefferson County by the issuance of executive orders as necessary (each, an "Executive Order"),

**Whereas**, the transmission of COVID-19 has not dissipated but remains a significant threat to the health and safety of the Jefferson County Community and rates of infection are increasing at an alarming rate and the number of people ending up in the hospital, ICU, or on ventilators is also dramatically rising despite efforts by local authorities to control the spread, and

**Whereas**, the County Judge has determined that extraordinary emergency measures must be taken to try and mitigate the effects of this public health emergency and to facilitate a response to the public health threat;

**Whereas**, a County Judge acts as the emergency management director for the county and serves as the Governor's designated agent in the administration and supervision of duties during a state of emergency declared by the Governor in accordance with Section 418.1015(a) and (b) of the Texas Government Code; and

**Whereas**, a County Judge, serving as the Governor's designated agent in the administration and supervision of duties during a state of emergency declared by the Governor, "may exercise the powers granted to the governor under this chapter on an appropriate local scale" in accordance with Section 418.1015(b) of the Texas Government Code, and

**Whereas**, a County Judge, serving as the Governor's designated agent in the administration and supervision of duties during a state of emergency declared by the Governor, is authorized to control ingress to and egress from a disaster area and control the movement of persons and the occupancy of

premises on an appropriate local scale in accordance with Sections 418.1015 and 418.018 of the Texas Government Code, and

**Whereas**, upon Declaration of a Local Disaster, a County Judge is authorized to control ingress to and egress from a disaster area and control the movement of persons and the occupancy of premises in accordance with Section 418.108(g) of the Texas Government Code, and

**Whereas**, it is the intent of this Executive Order to remain as consistent with and to harmonize, to the extent possible, the executive orders of Governor Greg Abbott, and

**Whereas**, by the authority vested in me as Jefferson County Judge and as the Emergency Management Director for Jefferson County to continue to protect the health and safety of the community and address developing and rapidly changing circumstances when presented by the current public health emergency, I issue this Executive Order

**NOW THEREFORE, I, COUNTY JUDGE FOR JEFFERSON COUNTY, TEXAS, PURSUANT TO THE AUTHORITY VESTED BY TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE CHAPTER 418, HEREBY FIND AND ORDER:**

That the findings and recitations set out in the preamble to this ORDER are found to be true and correct and they are hereby adopted by the County Judge and made a part hereof for all purposes

**Effective at 12:01 p.m. on Wednesday, June 24, 2020, and continuing through 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, June 30, 2020**, unless extended, modified or terminated early by County Judge Branck or as otherwise indicated below:

- I Public Health Emergency That this Executive Order shall incorporate and adopt the most recent executive order GA-26 issued by Governor Greg Abbott on June 3, 2020, and any subsequent orders by the Governor relating to the expanded opening of Texas in response to the COVID-19 disaster
- II Health and Safety Policy — Commercial Entities From the date of this Executive Order, all commercial entities in County providing goods or services directly to the public must develop and implement a health and safety policy ("Health and Safety Policy"). The Health and Safety Policy must require, at a minimum, that all employees or visitors to the commercial entity's business premises or other facilities wear face coverings when in an area or performing an activity which will necessarily involve close contact or proximity to co-workers or the public. The Health and Safety Policy required to be developed and implemented by this Order may also include the implementation of other mitigating measures designed to control and reduce the transmission of COVID-19. Failure to develop and implement the Health & Safety Policy required by this Executive Order within five (5) calendar days following the Effective date may result in a fine not to exceed \$1,000.00 for each violation
- 111 Face Coverings — General Public Except for the exemptions below, all people 10 years or older shall wear a face covering over their nose and mouth when in a commercial entity or working in areas in a commercial entity that involve close proximity with others. The CDC advises face coverings for people 2 years or older. Face coverings may include homemade masks, scarfs, bandanas, or a handkerchief. Jefferson County residents should continue to maintain social distancing of at least six feet while outside the home. Jefferson County

employees also are required to wear face coverings under the same circumstances as the general public

IT IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT PEOPLE NOT OBTAIN OR WEAR MEDICAL MASKS or IN-95 RESPIRATORS AS THEY ARE A NEEDED RESOURCE FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AND FIRST RESPONDERS. Our healthcare workers and first responders on the front-line combating COVID-19 must have priority access to medical masks or other personal protective equipment. Face coverings do not need to be worn in the following circumstances.

- When exercising outside or engaging in physical activity outside,
- While driving alone or with passengers who are part of the same household as the driver;
- When doing so poses a greater mental or physical health, safety, or security risk,  
(Businesses may not inquire of the state of a patron's mental or physical condition)
- While pumping gas or operating outdoor equipment;
- While in a building or activity that requires security surveillance or screening, for example, banks, or
- When consuming food or drink

Please note that face coverings are a secondary strategy to other mitigation efforts. Face coverings are not a replacement for social distancing, frequent handwashing, and self-isolation when sick. All people should follow CDC recommendations for how to wear and take off a mask. Residents should keep up the following habits while in public:

- Washing hands before you leave home and when you return, • staying at least six feet away from others; • avoiding touching nose or face, • not using disposable masks more than three times; and • washing reusable cloth masks regularly to prevent the spread of the virus.

Consistent with Executive Order GA-26 issued by Governor Greg Abbott, no civil or criminal penalty will be imposed on individuals for failure to wear a face covering.

IV. Severability. If any subsection, sentence, clause, phrase, or word of this Order or any application of it to any person, structure, or circumstance is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a decision of a court of competent jurisdiction, then such decision will not affect the validity of the remaining portions or applications of this Order.

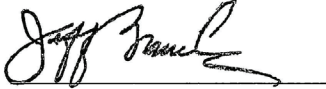
V. Interpretation and Additional Terms. To the greatest extent possible, this Executive Order shall be interpreted as consistent with and supplemental to any executive order issued by the Texas Governor. All provisions of the executive orders of the Texas Governor either existing or as, if and when issued, which are made applicable to all jurisdictions by law shall be

automatically incorporated into and constitute terms of this Executive Order, enforceable as if set forth herein without necessity for the issuance of any further orders

VI. Enforcement Excepting Section III of this Executive Order and in accordance with the limitations contained in the executive orders of Governor Greg Abbott, any peace officer or other person with lawful authority is hereby authorized to enforce the provisions of this Executive Order in accordance with the authority granted under the Texas Disaster Act of 1975 (at Section 418.173 of the Texas Government Code) and pursuant to the Plan adopted by Jefferson County Commissioners Court

VII. Posting. Jefferson County will post this Order on the Internet

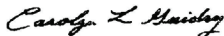
ORDERED at 3:40 p m on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of June, 2020, in Jefferson County of, Texas



Jeff R. Branick, County Judge

RETURN TO  
JUDGE BRANICK  
4TH FLOOR  
BEAUMONT, TX 77701

FILED AND RECORDED  
OFFICIAL PUBLIC RECORDS



Carolyn L. Guidry, County Clerk  
Jefferson County, Texas

June 23, 2020 03 54 26 PM

FEE \$0 00 2020018208

***Branick's Letter to Jefferson County Residents***  
***June 26, 2020***

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I recognized when I entered the mandatory mask order that there would be people who would not like it. What I didn't expect was the level of pure hatred and profanity laden messages that would make a sailor blush. That's okay, it comes with the territory. What has been most disappointing to me has been the level of insistence by many that my orders are a direct affront to their constitutional rights. The U.S. Supreme Court, since 1794, after the Whiskey Rebellion, and times since has repeatedly held that these types of orders are allowed in certain circumstances and are, in fact, constitutional. Those who say otherwise are misinformed or are depending on Natural law, not Constitutional law. I have not asked people to lay down their arms, surrender their right to free speech or to be subject to having soldiers quartered in their homes, I've asked them to suffer the inconvenience of placing a 4x6" piece of material over their mouth and nose when in a business to protect their friends and neighbors. Individuals who seem to have no problem with a restaurant requiring shoes and a shirt go ballistic over a business asking them to wear a mask.

Eighty years ago, the greatest generation planted victory gardens, collected tin, rubber and steel, had food ration books and endured black outs, all to support the war effort. Their sacrifices were significantly more weighty than the inconvenience the present order requires. I want to thank a fellow county judge for reminding me of this. Today, a small minority is screaming that this is some kind of communist plot to overthrow the nation. When did it happen that we all became so focused on our rights and not our obligations to our fellow man and woman? Jesus said "Greater love has no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends". I'm not directing anyone to lay down their life. Galatians 6:2 says "Carry each other's burdens and in this way you will fulfill the Law of Christ". I love you, because that is what Christ teaches us to do.


“I wear a mask not because I am afraid but because it is one way of showing that I care about my neighbors. There is a lot we don’t know about COVID-19 but all the evidence suggests that wearing a mask helps to prevent the spread of the virus. If wearing a mask prevents one person from dying, then isn’t it worth the minor inconvenience? If wearing a mask helps us get our country and economy back to normal, then isn’t it our patriotic duty to do so?” I received this in an email from an Orange County resident. It is a note he keeps in his pocket which he gives to people who make snide remarks about his wearing a mask in stores.

Based on my conversations with numerous physicians, directives from the president of the Texas Medical Association, the thoughts of the head of the Department of state health services, and many others in the medical field, masks can prevent the spread of the virus. Might we find out next year after peer reviewed studies that such is not the case? Can I find a YouTube video from an OSHA inspector that supports the opposite view? Yes to both questions. But we are in the midst of the largest spread that we have seen thus far, and to prevent another shutdown of “nonessential” businesses and to keep our hospital system from becoming overwhelmed I am acting on the best available information. Those “nonessential” businesses have families to feed and mortgages to pay and I want them to be able to do that without having to worry if they are at some point going to have to depend on unemployment benefits, if they are even available to them. I will lift the order as soon as I possibly can, but in the meantime I pray for your cooperation.

Jeff Branick  
County Judge  
Jefferson County Courthouse

*Courtesy of the author, Office of the Jefferson County Judge, Beaumont, Texas.*

**Mayor Becky Ames's Daily Report  
December 31, 2020**




# BEAUMONT

TEXAS

Covid-19 Daily Update  
Thursday, December 31, 2020 , as of 4pm

Mayor Becky Ames  
Emergency Management Director



\*\*\* 69 New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases in the Beaumont Area \*\*\*

City	Beaumont	China	Nome	Hamshire	Fannett	Cheek	Bevil Oaks	Recovered	Death(s)
	66				2	1		52	

Age/Gender:

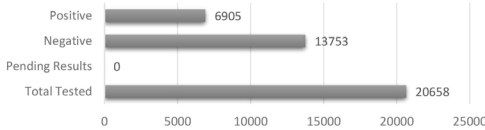
Age Range	0 - 10	11 - 20	21 - 30	31 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	61 - 70	71 - 80	80+
	2	6	12	7	13	14	10	3	2

**Beaumont Jurisdiction Confirmed Cases = 6905**

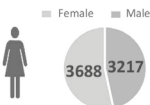
City of Beaumont = 6200

- Hamshire = 128
- Fannett = 283
- Cheek = 58
- China = 138
- Nome = 32
- Bevil Oaks = 66

**Status\* of COVID-Test**

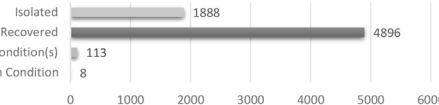


**Status of Confirmed Cases**

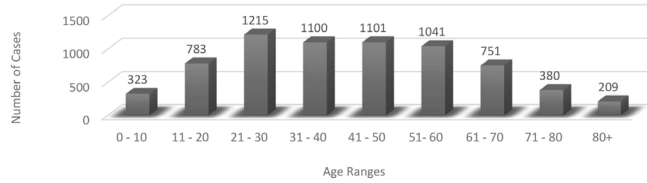


Deaths with Underlying Health Condition(s) = 113

Deaths without Underlying Health Condition = 8



**Confirmed Cases by Age Range**



Please see next page for further data and a message from Mayor Becky Ames.

DISCLAIMER: \* The accuracy of the Status of COVID-Test is dependent upon the availability of data received from participating agencies and healthcare providers as well as when it was received with respect to; Total Tested, Pending Results and Negative. Recovered - release of individual from self-isolation/quarantine as defined by CDC guidelines.

Top page, Mayor Becky Ames's Daily Report, City of Beaumont, Texas.



***Table 1: COVID-19 in Southeast Texas*****Confirmed Cases and Deaths in Ten Southeast Texas Counties**

County	Cases	Deaths
Chambers	2,627	11
Hardin	3,352	50
Jasper	1,502	44
Jefferson	13,606	219
Liberty	4,230	92
Newton	392	17
Polk	2,068	58
Orange	5,089	72
San Jacinto	424	19
Tyler	786	11
<b>Totals</b>	<b>34,076</b>	<b>593</b>

**Sources:** Coronavirus Resource Center, John Hopkins University and Medicine as of 11:00 am, January 1, 2021.

Table 2: COVID-19 Worldwide and Historical

COVID-19 Worldwide and Historical Context

Location	COVID Cases	COVID Deaths	Flu 1918-1919 Deaths	Flu 2018-2019 Deaths	WWII Military Deaths <sup>1</sup>
Worldwide	83.7 million	1.8 million	50 million	NA	24 million
United States	19.9 million	346,043	550,000	34,200	300,000
Texas	1.5 million	27,944	NA	10,020 <sup>2</sup>	15,764
Jefferson Co.	13,606	219	355	NA	326
Beaumont	6,200	121	216	NA	NA

These figures compiled from varied sources that use different methods of calculation. (1) World War II totals for period 1941-1945. (2) Includes pneumonia and influenza related deaths. **Sources:** Coronavirus Resource Center, John Hopkins University and Medicine; Texas Department of State Health Services; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

*Table 3: Texas Causes of Deaths***Annual/Seasonal Texas Statewide Causes of Death**

Cause	Period	Mortality
Heart Disease	2018	46,763
Cancer	2018	40,866
COVID-19	2020	27,944
Stroke	2018	10,810
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	2018	10,766
Pneumonia & Influenza	2018-2019	10,020
Alzheimer's Disease	2018	9,763
Diabetes	2018	5,991
Kidney Disease	2018	4,592
Septicemia (blood infection)	2018	4,378
Automobile Accident	2019	3,610
Drug Overdose	2018	3,005
Homicide	2018	1,557

**Sources:** Coronavirus Resource Center, John Hopkins University and Medicine; Texas Department of State Health Services; Texas Department of Transportation; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

*Selected Sources*

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12 News, Beaumont, TX ([www.12newsnow.com](http://www.12newsnow.com)).

*Beaumont Enterprise*.

Coronavirus COVID-19 Related Documents and Declarations, Jefferson County, Beaumont, TX.

Coronavirus Resource Center, John Hopkins University and Medicine, Baltimore, MD.

Mayor Ames's Daily COVID-19 Reports, City of Beaumont, Beaumont, TX.

*Newton County News*.

Texas Department of State Health Services, Austin, TX.

Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, TX.

U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Bethesda, MD.

World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland.

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PROCEEDINGS  
*Texas Gulf Historical Society Minutes*

ELLEN RIENSTRA

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Fall Meeting  
October 29, 2019

The Texas Gulf Historical Society met at the McFaddin-Ward House Visitor Center on October 29, 2019. President Bill Yoes called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Treasurer Joe Fisher presented the Financial Report, announcing that the finances of the Society are in good order, and that, thanks to our association with Lamar University, our expenses are decreasing. Cash at BBVA Compass is \$22,138.00, and income received from dues since last meeting is \$1,419.00. Expenses include \$989.00 for printing of the Record, \$358.00 for mailing expenses, and post office box rental \$204.00, for a total of 1,551.00.

Dr. Jimmy Bryan reported for LU History Department Chair Dr. Mark Mengerink that the department proposes more online courses in an effort to increase enrollment in the master's and undergraduate degree programs in history at Lamar. He is confident we can award the Andrew Johnson Award for Historical Essays this year. Dr. Bryan contacted

North Texas State University about digitizing *The Record* and reported that we may have it online sometime next year. We already have a cost estimate.

Under new business: Joe Fisher reported on the Andrew Johnson Award to the student making the best presentation in history. With Dr. Johnson now deceased, only enough money remains to fund the Award for two more years. Joe proposed that the Society continue to provide funds for the Award. The motion was made and seconded, and it carried.

Ellen gave a report from the Nominating Committee. Two positions are coming vacant: those of President and Recording Secretary. The Nominating Committee presented a slate: for President, Anne Fisher Winslow, and for Recording Secretary, Ellen Rienstra. The other executive positions remain the same: Judy Linsley for Vice President, Suzanne Stafford for Corresponding Secretary, and Joe Fisher for Treasurer. By the report, Ellen moved that we accept the slate by acclamation, and the motion was seconded and carried. The Society extended thanks to the outgoing officers, President Bill Yoes and Recording Secretary Ann Creswell, for jobs well done.

Joe Fisher commended Suzanne and John Stafford for their fine work as Corresponding Secretary.

Steve Lewis, president of the Tyrrell Historical Library Association, reported on the status of the Tyrrell. The City of Beaumont has paid for damage from Hurricane Imelda.

The main problem with the building now is termite damage, but Bill Grace estimates the Tyrrell will open in January or February of 2020.

Robert Robertson introduced our speaker, Judy Linsley, the new director of the Center for History and Culture of Southeast Texas and the Upper Gulf Coast at Lamar University. Judy gave a short history of the Center, which was founded in 2016 through a special visionary initiative grant. The grant has now ended, but the Center continues, seeking to preserve and educate about this region's history and culture. The Center is able to interact with various other disciplines, offering programs dealing with such diverse subjects as the Texas City Explosion, Native Americans dealing with Climate Change, and Mardi Gras. Subjects for future programs include Dave Oliphant's Jazz Poetry November 7 and Dr. Daniel Chand's reflections on the immigration experiences of his grandfather, a native of India, on November 25.

The Center for History and Culture also awards fellowships and funds undergraduate research. It awards book prizes, the two latest being *Frontiers of Science: Imperialism and Natural Science in Gulf South Borderlands, 1500-1850*, by Dr. Cameron Strang, and *Born to Serve: A History of Texas Southern University*, by Dr. Merline Pitre. The Center holds fundraisers, including a trip on the Neches River on the *Ivory Bill*, with commentary about the river's history and biology.

Goals for the Center include expanding its services and programs, both on campus and in the community, and finding a permanent home (does anyone want to give a significant donation and have the Center named for them??). The Center is also involved in the "Lamar 100" project—Lamar's hundredth anniversary in 2023—constructing a time line, collecting and digitizing photographs, aerial photos, and other memorabilia. The collection will be donated

to Lamar's Special Collection and also be utilized for the Centennial History of Lamar, which the Center is editing. (Already collected is a 1938 red-and-blue football jacket.) Timeline highlights: South Park Junior College was created in 1923, renamed Lamar Junior College 1932. In 1946 the postwar yearbook published a Gold Star Service list. In 1947, Jack Brooks introduced a bill to make Lamar a four-year college. The bill was passed in 1949 with the stipulation that Lamar would not be a liberal arts, but a technological school. Lamar State College of Technology opened in 1951. It was desegregated in 1956, and Anthony Guillory became the first African American athlete at Lamar. In 1969, Lamar engineering graduate John Hirasaki figured prominently on the Apollo 11 mission team. And in 1971, the school became Lamar University.

Funds and donations for the Center are welcome, and the CHC wants your Lamar story!

The Society extended its thanks to Sue Philp and Anne Winslow for the refreshments, including the delectable Jasper sausage.

Respectfully submitted,  
Ellen Rienstra, Recording Secretary



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Chilton O'Brien	1968-1970
Dr. Charles Walker	1970-1972
Gilbert T. Adams	1972-1974
Judge Joseph J. Fisher	1974-1976
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Peter B. Wells	1980-1982
Fred Lock Benckenstin	1982-1984
Gilbert T. Adams Jr.	1984-1986
Judge Wendell Conn Radford	1986-1988
Dale Dowell	1988-1990
Don Kelly	1990-1992
Robert J. Robertson	1992-1994
Naaman J. Woodland Jr.	1994-1996
Joan Mayfield Hataway	1996-1998
Yvonne Osborne Moor	1998-1999
William B. Hataway	1999-2001
Alex Broussard	2002-2003
Penny Louisa Clark	2004-2006
Curtis Leister	2006-2008
James Earl Brickhouse	2009-2011
Gilbert T. Adams Jr.	2012-2013
Dr. John Nelson	2013-2015
Ben S. Woodhead Jr.	2015-2017
William H. Yoes	2017-2019

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Beatrice Burnaby	1968-1969
Alexine Crawford Howell	1970
J. Roger Omohundro	1971-1972
Charlsie Berly	1973, 1976, 1978-1985
W. T. Block	1974-1975, 1977
Ellen Rienstra and Judith W. Linsley	1986-1989
Marion Holt	1990-1995
Jonathon K. Gerland	1996-1999
Judith W. Linsley	1999-2002
Penny Louisa Clark	2004-2006
Robert Schott	2007-2008
Dr. Ralph Wooster	2009-2010
Dr. John Storey	2011

## INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

Allen County Public Library	Fort Wayne, IN
American Antiquarian Society	Worcester, MA
Baylor University Libraries	Waco, TX
Beaumont Heritage Society	Beaumont, TX
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Fire Museum of Texas	Beaumont, TX
Galveston Texas History Center	Galveston, TX
Harvard College Library	Cambridge, MA
History Center, the	Diboll, TX
Houston Public Library	Houston, TX
Jefferson County Historical Commission	Beaumont, TX
Lamar State College—Orange Library	Orange, TX
Lamar State College—Port Arthur Library	Port Arthur, TX
Lamar University John Gray Library	Beaumont, TX
McFaddin Ward House	Beaumont, TX
New York Historical Society Library	New York, NY
Orange Public Library	Orange, TX
Sam Houston Regional Library	Liberty, TX
Stephen F. Austin State University Library	Nacogdoches, TX
Sterling Municipal Library	Baytown, TX
Texas Christian University Mary C. Burnett Library	Fort Worth, TX
Texas A & M University Evans Library	College Station, TX
Texas Energy Museum	Beaumont, TX
Texas Tech University Library	Lubbock, TX
Newberry Library	Chicago, IL
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