



A JOURNAL OF THE **Plague Year**

– Call for Submissions – “Arizona’s COVID-19 Pandemics” Online Exhibit

Arizona’s public mandates and nightly news reports don’t represent the lives and histories of those who lived in small towns and rural communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. County-specific data suggests that many people outside Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal counties endured different burdens than those in urban centers. I need your help to understand what the numbers from our last pandemic year have meant for small-town and rural Arizonans.



My lifelong love of history led me to ASU’s graduate Global History program, and I’m currently working on a digital public archive called *Journal of the Plague Year* that collects COVID-19 stories from the public. The archive accepts submissions from anyone in the world, in any language, and in almost any medium and format that helps someone tell their pandemic stories. To date, ASU’s faculty, staff, and global education partners have collected more than 15,000 submissions to the archive.

Despite the public stories already collected, I found what historians refer to as a “silence” in our archived collection when I began work on a digital history exhibit. I grew up in a small town, and I’ve never forgotten how different my life was before our family moved to the cities for work. In speaking with my relatives who still live back home, I’ve been fascinated and outraged by the differences between urban and rural pandemic experiences. To explore and illustrate those differences, I began an archive history exhibit on the Arizona pandemic experience. That’s where I encountered my first problem.



There is a shortage of stories that capture the perspective of rural Arizonans, so the overwhelming absence I discovered is likely *yours*. This absence threatens to allow rural stories to be told or presumed by the experiences and perspectives of others. I’m hoping enough people reading this article submit their experiences to demonstrate what their life was like during this pandemic.

Why should you submit your stories to the archive? I'm glad you asked!

The *Journal of the Plague Year* intends to serve the public and everyone who will someday study this outbreak like others are being studied now. We need stories from all places and walks of life to preserve more comprehensive viewpoints for the future.

- **“I want to help, but I don’t know what to write or talk about.”** Here are some things I would like to better understand about rural life during this pandemic:
 - What did you think of the pandemic when your first learned about it? When did your first personal friend or acquaintance come down with it? Did that impact your perspective?
 - How did your community first deal with the COVID-19 pandemic? How has that changed during the past year?
 - How did your experiences during the past year impact your trust in elected officials and public health professionals?
 - Are your pandemic experiences consistent with local and national news stories?
 - What did it feel like the first time you wore a mask or face covering into a business?
 - Do you think orders from elected officials have done enough to curb the spread of this virus? Have they gone too far?
 - Do you think the solutions and guidelines offered by city officials made sense in rural communities? What would you have done differently?
 - If you had been the Governor of Arizona during this pandemic, what would you have done differently?
- **“I’m not much of a writer.”** That’s okay! We accept submissions as audio files, voice recordings, and cell phone videos. We accept stories from anywhere in the world, in any language, and in almost any type of format. If you can use social media, you can submit to our COVID-19 archive.

I greatly appreciate your time and attention, and I hope you’ll consider submitting stories, photos, audio recordings, news articles, or whatever you deem important related to this historic moment in the human experience. *Please tag your submissions with “Rural Arizona.”*

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I hope you and yours are safe and well during these anxious and uncertain times.

SHARE YOUR STORY HERE: <https://covid-19archive.org/s/archive/page/Share>

Thank you for contributing to this historic and truly global effort.

All the best,
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