

Westborough's Coronavirus Pandemic Response Collection

Finding Aid

Last Revised: July 29, 2024

Collection Summary

Collection number: LH.069
Collection title: Westborough's Coronavirus Pandemic Response Collection
Dates: 2020
Size: 1 linear foot (1 box)
Creator/Collector: Westborough Public Library and the Westborough Historical Society
Acquisitions info.: Items collected by Anthony T. Vaver and Kristina Nilson Allen
Language(s): English
Repository: The Westborough Public Library
Processed by: Anthony T. Vaver, 2020

Rights and Access

Access restrictions: Collection is open for research

Physical access restrictions: None

Publication rights: No known copyright restrictions. No known restrictions on use.

Scope and Content Note

In March 2020, all businesses were ordered to be shut down and people were ordered to shelter in place by the Massachusetts governor until further notice. This collection brings together essays, reflections, poetry, and items relating to the coronavirus pandemic and provides insight into Westborough's response to this public health crisis.

In May 2020, the Westborough Historical Society and the Westborough Public Library partnered in a project to collect reflections from residents about what it is like to be living through this historic time. The Westborough Center for History and Culture also gathered digital and physical items that document the effect that the spread of the virus had on Westborough and its people.

In some cases, I have added contextual information for some of the items in this finding aid to indicate why it was important to add them to the collection.

Series Overview

Series I. Essays, Reflections, and Poetry
Series II. Westborough Ephemera
Series III. Non-Westborough Ephemera
Series IV. Digital Collections

Collection Inventory

Series I. Essays, Reflections, and Poetry

Box 1: Folder

- 1.01 “Help Us Document Life during the Coronavirus Pandemic!”, *Westborough Local History Pastimes*, Blog Post – 5/4/2020
- 1.02 “Life in the Pandemic of 2020,” Maloo Chetan – 5/9/2020
- 1.03 “Westborough Coronavirus Pandemic Response,” Kathy Cavaliere – 5/17/2020
- 1.04 “Westborough’s Coronavirus Pandemic Response,” Chitvan Koldawala – 5/27/2020
- 1.05 “Thoughts on the Early Days of a Pandemic,” MaryJo Kurtz – 5/31/2020
- 1.06 “Gone in a Flash” (Poem), Alana McCarthy, *Community Advocate* – 6/5/2020
- 1.07 “Recollections on Living in Westborough during the COVID-19 Virus,” Kristina Allen – 6/7/2020
- 1.08 “Town Meeting Then and Now,” Kristina Nilson Allen – 7/27/2020
- 1.09 “Life in the Time of Corona” and Other Poems, Mary Ann Burritt – 3/25/2020 – 7/6/2020
- 1.10 Pandemic Pastimes Essays, Anthony Vaver – 3/23/2020 – 9/16/2022

Series II. Westborough Ephemera

Box 1: Folder

- 2.01 Face Mask (Unused) Made By Emily Henderson-Sperber (town resident) – 4/2020
- 2.02 Face Mask (Unused) - handed out to staff when the library reopened for curbside pickup – 6/9/2020
- 2.03 Customer Pickup Slip, Civic Kitchen & Drink – 5/2020
Context: Restaurants were shut down but were eventually allowed to offer take-out service. Many of them developed procedures to reduce the amount of contact during the transfer of food. Some restaurants offered “family meal” deals, and some sold bulk food directly to customers to cook themselves in an attempt to find another revenue stream and offset food shortages in grocery stores. Unfortunately, I did not think to collect physical items that demonstrate examples of these practices until they had already disappeared. Some examples, though, appear during the spring of 2020 in the “Westborough Foodways” collection in Archive-It: Westborough on the Web (<https://archive-it.org/collections/10811>). Arturo’s and Tavolino (the formatting may be off for the latter, but look for a small text link for “Eat” at the bottom) provide at least two examples of new pick-up procedures and special family meals.
- 2.04 “SEE,” Anthony Vaver, Library Instagram Post – 5/12/2020
Context: The library staff was highly active on Facebook and Instagram social media sites during this time as a way to continue to provide library services to residents. After being disconnected from our library patrons for a while, we came up with the idea of creating a “miss you” composite post featuring each of us holding an individual word.
- 2.05 “Class of 2020” Spirit Rock, Found Outside the Library – 5/2020

Context: Westborough Connects organized an activity to create spirit rocks where people could paint messages on them and then place them in inconspicuous places throughout town for people to stumble upon. This one was placed outside of the library, and it shows support for the high school class of 2020, which did not receive a proper graduation ceremony due to the pandemic.

- 2.06 Surgical Mask (unused) – Spring 2021
Context: Disposable surgical masks were commonly handed out and offered to people who entered a building without a mask but were required to wear one. This one was kept on hand at the library for such a purpose.
- 2.07 Face Mask (unused) - handed out to the library staff as a morale booster– Spring 2021
- 2.08 *UUCSW Quarantine Cookbook: Being a Collection of Recipes and Personal Stories Contributed by Members and Friends of the Unitarian Universalist Congregational Society of Westborough Concerning Their Experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020-21*
- 2.09 ATM (Automated Teller Machine) Sign
- 2.10 *Community Advocate* Cartoon by Ed Turner

Series III. Non-Westborough Ephemera

Box 1: Folder

- 3.01 “President Trump’s Coronavirus Guidelines for America,” CDC Postcard, plus a reflection on it by Anthony Vaver – 3/16/2020
- 3.02 “103 Things to Do When You’re Stuck at Home,” *Globe Magazine* – 4/5/2020
Context: With people stuck in their homes and discouraged to leave them unless they absolutely had to, newspapers and organization offered ideas for filling up the extra time that people suddenly had on their hands. Some people, like me, came to realize that we were just as busy, if not busier, during this time period, due to new parental responsibilities, a shift to digital work (and the transitional steps and adjustments needed to make the shift happen), and friends and relatives wanting to connect via video over the Internet.
- 3.03 “What to Expect after Getting a COVID-19 Vaccine,” handout from the temporary Gillette Stadium vaccination clinic – Spring 2021
- 3.04 “I Got Vaccinated at Gillette Stadium” button, handed out at the temporary Gillette Stadium vaccination clinic – Spring 2021

Series IV. Digital Collections

Digital Repository:

Westborough’s Coronavirus Pandemic Response

(<https://westboroughdigitalrepository.omeka.net/collections/show/15>)

Face Mask Selfies and other photographs illustrating the pandemic’s effect contributed by the Westborough community.

Westborough on the Web: Archive-It

Westborough’s Coronavirus Pandemic Response

(<https://archive-it.org/collections/13879>)

Web and social media sites that document governmental and organizational responses to the pandemic. The effects of the pandemic can also be found in other Archive-It collections during this time period.