

Summer reading - AP Biology - Dr. C. Killian

The American Plague: The Untold Story of Yellow Fever, the Epidemic that Shaped our History

By Molly Caldwell Crosby

2006

Berkley Publishing Group (paperback available)

This book covers the great yellow fever outbreak in Memphis in the summer of 1878. Most of the population of Memphis fled or died from this disease, which at the time seemed to come out of nowhere and attack without reason. This epidemic forever changed the city of Memphis and public health and infectious disease studies in this country.

We will discuss parts of this book as we begin AP Biology. Some topics to consider as you read this summer:

What is yellow fever?

Where does it come from?

How does it spread?

What is the cause (pathogen)?

Could it be treated effectively in 1898? Could it be treated today?

What is the role of immunization or public sanitation today?

What was the effect on Memphis in 1898?

Are any effects still present today?

How is this disaster remembered today? (Monuments, etc.)

Why are viral infections more difficult to treat than bacterial infections? (even today)

How did Walter Reed and the doctors in Cuba try to think up logical experiments to determine the cause and spread of yellow fever?

Do you think the risk of using human subjects in disease studies is ever justified?