

Pandemic 2020 WRITING JOURNAL

**By
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Pandemic 2020 Writing Journal

Journal Entry #1

March 25, 2020

Today was my first day of online school, or as my school calls it “distance learning”. The Rhode Island school systems were forced to initiate this “distance learning” plan to help minimize the spread of the new Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19. There have already been 54,453 cases in the U.S., and they want to minimize the growth of that number. During my time off of school, which was about a week and a half, there were restraints on where I could go and what I could do. Many places had shut down, including restaurants, shopping centers, etc. One positive I took away from this was the time I got to spend with my family. Being stuck in the house with my family, we did many activities together to help pass the time. Before school this morning I was a little nervous about how it would go. A few minutes into the school day, I realized it was going to be alright, despite all of the technical difficulties. Although the experience of online school is different, it was almost as effective as regular school. My goal is that we will be back in school in under a month’s time and am hoping that nobody I know contracts the disease.

A Day in the Life Document below

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Choice Board Project

Wednesday, March 25

7-8 am

I woke up much earlier than I had wanted to. It may have been due to all of the emotions I was feeling last night. On one hand, I was excited to see how it would go. On the other hand, I was worried that I may not be able to get into my classes or something along those lines. It was about seven when I woke up, and after being able to sleep to at least eight on vacation, I felt tired and hungry. I got prepared for the day by putting in my contacts, getting dressed, brushing my teeth, and eating a bowl of cereal. It all went by in a blur. When I was ready it was about seven-fifty, fifty minutes until first period.

8-9 am

I was in deep anticipation for first period. It felt like time was moving in slow-motion. My sister was already in her school. Having never used Zoom, I was curious to see how it worked. So, for about fifteen minutes, I observed my sister's class and was satisfied with how it worked. It then came time to check into homeroom with a Google Form so that I could be marked present. There was still ten minutes until my first class and I spent that time worrying about how it would go. I then logged into Zoom and I saw pictures of Mrs. Oulette and all my classmates. I felt a deep sense of relief. I had been able to log in so easily and I felt happy seeing all my classmates again. Well, I only saw about half of them.

9-10 am

It seemed that we were missing around ten kids. I was wondering if they were having difficulty logging on or if they just forgot. I feel like everyone knew that there were going to be a few issues on the first day. We then started talking about our time off while waiting for everyone to get in. A

few more students showed up, but twenty minutes in we were still missing a multitude of people. Eventually, we just started a lesson and I was feeling pretty good about myself. I understood the material and was feeling an overall sense of calmness. We practiced this material with a worksheet that I found interesting because it involved *The Cat in the Hat* and we were also introduced to a “Pandemic Journal” that I was anxious to start.

10-11 am

My first period class wrapped up by going over our schedule and how the rest of the day was going to go. It then came time for second-period math with Mrs. Oswald. I was wondering if this class would go more smoothly than the last. It seemed as if it would at first, with almost all of the students getting in on time. But the technical difficulties started piling up again. Half the time you couldn’t hear someone talking and there was lots of lag. Many of the students were abusing the chat feature by typing unnecessary things in it. I then began to worry that this may be the way it will go for an extended period of time.

11-12 pm

Most of the time that class we were just talking about our vacation and how we were cooped up inside. My time in home-quarantine was spent by going outside and doing activities with my family. It seemed that many of my peers did the same kind of thing. We spent a small portion of the class doing some practice on a topic that Mrs. Oswald had taught us. During this class, I felt very relaxed, hungry and a little bit bored. It was slightly monotonous because we weren’t really doing much besides learning how Zoom worked. I was hungry and lucky for me, my next period was lunch.

12-1 pm

I was home with my Grandma and she made me grilled cheese for lunch. After eating it my hunger diminished and I felt more energetic. My homeroom teacher, Mrs. Oulette, had said that during FAST we were going to be starting that “Pandemic Journal”. I was excited to start it because there was so much to write about. I worked on it for the whole period and wrote about what was going on in the world, my vacation, and my online

school experience. When I finished, I was proud of what I had written and was looking forward to my first day of art.

1-2 pm

This was my first day of art because the trimester had ended on the last day before of vacation. I had no idea what to expect. When I got into the classroom I realized the art teacher was nice and that the projects were going to be fun. I was ecstatic to start my first project. The project was to find both traditional art supplies and untraditional art supplies. Some of the traditional art supplies I found included colored pencils, pens, markers, chalk, and highlighters. I found finding the non-traditional supplies much more exciting. Some of the non-traditional supplies I found included dirt, grass, honey, sugar, mayonnaise, pepper flakes, and toothpaste. Overall, I really enjoyed the class.

2-3 pm

I was eager to see how P.E. was going to work out from home. Our teacher, Mrs. Gower, told us to make a Flipgrid video on the physical activities that we have been doing over the break. I was excited to have to opportunity to go outside, even if I was still in school. After some thought, I ended up making a video of me hitting a baseball off of a tee. When my class met up again, we watched everyone's video. It was great to see what other people have been doing to pass time during quarantine. We finished watching everyone's videos and our P.E. teacher kindly allowed us to go fifteen minutes early.

3-4 pm

I was relieved that the school day was over. It's difficult to sit down and stare at a computer screen for seven hours. So as soon as I was let out, I rushed outside to play basketball in the wonderful weather. I was instantly refreshed and relieved. I played at my neighbor's basketball hoop for a while. Each shot making me feel more invigorated and restored. Even just breathing in the fresh air made me feel better. Eventually, I walked back to my house at a slow pace, not rushing to get back.

4-5 pm

When I got back to my house, I remembered the project that I was assigned to do. During ELA, my teacher assigned my class a project involving writing a motivational saying. I worked on that for a while, carefully and methodically coloring everything in and finetuning all of the details. When it came time to stop to eat dinner I had almost finished. I was glad to have gotten most of that work out of the way for the week.

5-6 pm

I ate chicken tenders with barbeque sauce for dinner. I'll say it's not my favorite, but I don't mind it too much. After I finished dinner, I made sure to finish all of the work I needed to get done from math. I felt a little groggy again and decided to go outside. I played football with my Dad and Sister for a while, making me feel better. When we got back inside I determined that I should get my rest to prepare for my second day of "distance learning".

7-8 pm

I got ready for bed thinking about all of the events that had happened that day. I was a part of history. Nobody has ever experienced anything like this before. While I was brushing my teeth, getting into my pajamas, and taking my contacts out, I pondered this. When I finally got into bed I realized how tired that I was. As I began to drift off to sleep, I was thinking about the near future. One question stuck in my head was, "When will this be over?"

Journal Entry #2

March 26, 2020

Today was the second day of "distance learning" and I can tell that everybody is a little more settled in than before. For instance, there

were numerous technical difficulties yesterday that have now been resolved, allowing the class to be significantly more productive. Although I am grateful for “distance learning”, there are a few elements of normal school that I miss. One of them is that when you are online, it prevents you from talking and interacting with your friends. Another thing I miss is walking to get to classes. Although it may not seem like much exercise, it really helps you feel refreshed and is much better than sitting all of the time. There may be a few problems with “distance learning”, but there are also some positives to it. For example, it allows you to get more sleep. Since “distance learning” is from your house, you do not actually have to go to school, leaving you with more time in the morning. At the moment, Governor Gina Romundo has shut Rhode Island schools down for two weeks. On the other hand, Massachusetts Governor Charlie Baker extended the shutdown of Massachusetts schools until early May! I am wondering if Rhode Island schools will eventually be closed for that long a period of time. All in all, there are 11,220 more cases in the United States than yesterday, and all I can hope for is that the virus stops spreading and that fewer and fewer people will get it each day.

Journal Entry #3

March 27, 2020

COVID-19 cases are now up to over a hundred thousand in the U.S. That is a huge spike from yesterday. Unfortunately, I have a feeling that we will be out of school for longer than two weeks. Nevertheless, today was day three of “distance learning”. It seemed that today we were again experiencing some technical difficulties. For instance, half the time a student was trying to talk, we could not hear them, making classes very slow. I am wondering if there will ever be a time when the

class will run as smoothly as it was when we were at regular school. On the bright side, it is a beautiful Friday afternoon and I am excited to get some exercise in the nice weather. Being stuck at your computer screen all day isn't my favorite, but I can live with it if the weather is this nice. Since the temperature is getting increasingly warmer, I'm wondering if that'll help kill off the virus. In addition to that, it is important to follow the government's orders. They say that you should social distance to minimize contact with other people. Even asymptomatic people can still be carrying the virus, so you have to be very careful. In the end, it all comes down to how well people follow government orders. That is the difference between very few lives being lost and very many lives lost.

Journal Entry #4

March 30, 2020

Many credible medical experts have provided estimates exceeding one million COVID-19 cases. At the moment there are merely 122,653 cases, meaning that there is much worse to come. President Donald Trump now says that we will have to social distance until at least the end of April. This means that Gina Romundo, the Rhode Island Governor, will probably announce the continuation of "Distance Learning" until the end of April in her press conference today. That brings me to the fact that today was my fourth day of online learning. It seems that technical difficulties are becoming the norm for online school. It is very hard being stuck at a computer for seven hours a day (especially when they aren't working), and I'm hoping to go back to regular school as soon as possible. Being stuck inside every day isn't the best, but, to my delight, the weather has

been amazing the last couple of days. Besides the intense thunderstorm we had in Barrington last night, it's been consistently at least 45 degrees and sunny. With the weather being so nice, when school is over I can just rush out the door and get some fresh air. I am feeling both worried and excited. I am worried because the virus is still on the uprise in the U.S., but I am also really excited for this whole thing to be over. In the end, I really just want things to go back to normal.

Journal Entry #5

March 31, 2020

It has now become official that we will be having online school until at least the end of April. When Gina Romundo announced this, she also announced that we were going to have the next three Fridays off. She said that this would allow the teachers to work on their plans for the upcoming weeks. I am grateful for these days off, but I am wondering if each of these days will count against our summer vacation. Anyway, today was the fifth day of "distance learning". I'd say that it went pretty smoothly today. I'd still much rather be in regular school though. With there being 140,904 cases in the U.S. it seems that isn't going to happen anytime soon. On the bright side, the death rate from the Coronavirus is minimal. There have only been 2,405 deaths reported. But, people with underlying health conditions that are over sixty-five are at the highest risk. So that means that we have to self-quarantine to keep those people safe. Speaking of self-quarantining, it isn't the most exciting thing in the world. You have to stay close to your house at all times and stay away from other people. It does allow you to find your interests. For instance, you may start painting still-lifes to pass time and then you realize you really

enjoy it. Even though there are positives to being in quarantine I just want life to go back to normal.

Journal Entry #6

April 1, 2020

It's April Fool's Day today. I think it would be good for everyone to lighten up a little and laugh. Anyway, I heard yesterday that the city of Toronto banned all public gatherings until June 30. At first, I was worried because my favorite baseball team, the Toronto Blue Jays, may have to play with no fans. I then found out that the ban didn't apply to any pro sports. Even with the ban allowing pro sports, I doubt that even when the Blue Jays come back into action, they will be playing with fans. I am very excited for the MLB season to come out of its postponement. That is if it does come out of postponement. As of March 31, there have been a total of 163,539 cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. That includes 2,860 deaths from the virus. Anyhow, today my sixth day of "distance learning" and I wrote my first ACES paragraph of "distance learning". I'd say it went okay, although I had some difficulty. After school, I will go outside in the chilly, but rather nice weather. I'm hoping that we will be done with "distance learning" by the end of April, but right now it seems like kind of a longshot. Even China, having experienced the virus in early winter, has continued it's postponement of the Chinese Basketball Association. All I can do now is hope for the best and hope that we aren't affected for that long a period of time.

Journal Entry #7

April 6, 2020

There have now been 340,169 cases of COVID-19 in the U.S., with 123,018 cases in New York. That is probably a result of their dense population compared to every other state. Luckily, there have only been 922 cases in Rhode Island. Even though that number may seem low, our state is tiny and the virus can spread quickly. Today was my eighth day of “distance learning” and I am enjoying most aspects of it. Some of the positives of it are that it helps occupy my time and I enjoy the classwork that we are doing. I have stated before that one of the things I strongly dislike about distance learning is sitting down all day at a computer screen. Although most days are going smoothly now, today was an exception. On a hike yesterday, my friend’s dad was talking about how many Zoom classes were getting interrupted by people doing inappropriate things. This ties back to “distance learning” because now Zoom has made it so that all classes had passwords. With such short notice this morning via e-mail, many kids were unaware of this change. For instance, in my math class, only fourteen students were able to get into the class. Anyway, I am hoping that everybody I know stays safe and that the virus’s spreading comes to a screeching halt.

Journal Entry #8

April 7, 2020

There is a big debate around the U.S. about if masks are actually effective at reducing your likelihood of contracting the virus. There are many different kinds of masks at many different prices. First, there are the traditional medical masks that usually don't cost that much. Although now not many are available, making the cost skyrocket. These aren't even said to be the most effective masks. The N95 mask is supposed to be better. The N95 mask's sides are closed off, whereas the regular masks are open. You will have to pay a price for better protection though. These masks are around ninety dollars apiece. Who knows, it may be worth it with 367,776 cases in the United States and 1,360,039 worldwide. That may seem like a small percentage of the earth's population of 7.8 BILLION, and it is. But this virus is so contagious that we have to take extreme precautions even though about .017% of the world has been infected. Anyway, today was my ninth day of "distance learning" and it went about how it usually goes. Pretty smoothly. The tech cooperated with us today and we got a lot done. Not as much as we usually get done in regular school, but we got some work done nonetheless. I do have some hope. The MLB season may actually start in May in Arizona. If they can start a whole league, then maybe we can get back into school. I don't know, all I can do now is stay safe and hope for the best.

Journal Entry #9

April 13, 2020

This Sunday was Easter and I had a great lot of fun. Even though it was different than usual, meaning that there were no egg hunts or distant family coming over, I still enjoyed it. My family went on a walk in the beautiful morning sun to the beach. When we came back, I was

trying to construct a Lego set that I had. When it came time for dinner, we had some overly fatty ribs from Shaw's. We didn't really enjoy those, but it was still a great Easter, normal or not. Anyway, the reason that we couldn't have a normal Easter is that there are now 561,103 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the U.S. That is also the reason why I am doing "distance learning" now, and it is even the reason that I am doing this journal at all. To think that the world has been shaken by some person who ate an undercooked bat in Wuhan, China is awe striking. One person can affect the whole world by doing something that seems so insignificant. Yet this small, insignificant act has affected everyone. It has caused the whole world to go on shut down, it has forced students and teachers to learn on a "distance learning" format, and has killed over 114,979 people. All in all, this line from a movie I watched I think sums it up pretty well, 'the single threat to human dominance on earth is the virus itself'.

Journal Entry #10

April 14, 2020

It is getting pretty boring and dull being stuck at home. Not that it wasn't monotonous before, but it is now more evident than ever. You can't go anywhere, can't do anything with anyone, and there hasn't been a real sporting event in over a month. Though I am looking forward to the NFL Draft. It is actually still being held, but it is organized very differently than last year. For one, it is being done digitally, and the picks will be made from the team executive's houses. Another thing is that only the top players will be in attendance when usually all of the players eligible would be there. It starts on April 23 and I am curious to see how it goes. Even though

actual games aren't happening, leagues are creating plans for their return. One of the interesting plans I heard was from MLB. Their idea was that the games should be held at their Spring Training facilities in Florida and Arizona. They don't know for sure when they are going to return, but at least they have hope. Unfortunately, confirmed COVID-19 cases are now up to 587,357. Most of these cases come from highly populated states like New York and New Jersey. Since Rhode Island is not too population-dense, there are not very many people with the virus in the state (There is a low number of cases, but it is hard to compare because Rhode Island is so small). All in all, this outbreak has to end at some point and let's just hope its sooner rather than later.

Journal Entry #11

April 20, 2020

Even though there are 778,027 COVID-19 cases in the U.S now, there are some positives coming out of this mess. During this pandemic, global pollution has eased up. I guess that that is a result of fewer people driving and less production in factories. Anyway, my Mom is a doctor and she says that she is hearing that the peak of the virus will hit around May third. That means that the virus should soon be regressing. Nobody knows for sure, but I'll take it as a good sign.

Maybe it means that we will go back to school soon. In “Distance learning” they keep critiquing the schedule. Our teachers say that they get e-mails as late as the morning telling them about a sudden change in the schedule. The new schedule they received involves screen light Wednesdays. Screen light Wednesdays are supposed to be days where we cut down on our computer usage. I think that they have the right idea in trying to cut back on screen time, but knowing kids in my grade, they are all going to be confused. All we can do is try our best. All in all, I’m hoping that we have to push through this for just a little bit longer and that things will go back to normal soon.

Journal Entry #12

April 21, 2020

It has almost been a month since our first day of “distance learning” and it has gone by rather quickly. Maybe that’s because we had a decent amount of days off, but still, it’s not like I really did anything exciting during those days. From the first day of “distance learning” to today, there have been a lot of improvements. First and foremost, everybody is settled in now and understands the expectations. In addition to that, the schedule has been revised to reduce screen time and increase teaching quality over quantity. Some things just don’t go away though. It seems that no matter how experienced you become at using Zoom, there will always be technical difficulties. Another thing that has not changed is the rapidly increasing COVID-19 cases. Reports say that there are now over 800,000 cases of the Coronavirus in the U.S. I have no doubt that Coronavirus cases will at some point exceed 1,000,000. Although there are this many cases, some states have gradually begun to

reopen. States like Georgia have allowed the reopening of businesses like gyms, fitness centers, salons, and bowling alleys (What?) as early as April 24. I don't necessarily support some of those decisions, but am all for reopening businesses that will make our lives more convenient. One of the businesses that I am praying for to reopen soon is the barber shop. My hair and many other people's hair is getting a little long and itchy. Anyway, my hope is that all businesses will reopen soon, and that our lives will revert back to normal.

Journal Entry #13

May 4, 2020

The weather was great this weekend and I had many chances to go outside and get fresh air. On Sunday, I was biking with my friend and his brother. We were going to my house and when we got there, my sister and three of her friends were there. This wasn't planned and I'm pretty sure that they weren't social distancing. Anyway, we were six feet apart and we noticed our neighbor staring at us. We were about to play basketball when a police car pulled up. The officer told us that we had too many people at the house and that some of us had to go. The three of us, being the generous people that we are, volunteered to go. We then biked back to his house and told his parents what happened. Eventually, it was time for me to go home and my Dad told me which neighbors called on us. It turned out that it was these two seniors who lived across the street. This is just the world we are now living in, where you get the police called on you for having too many people at a house. Well, there are now 1.18 million Covid- 19 cases in the U.S. I think that if people got more educated on this virus it could help stop the spread. For instance, this weekend I saw a man wearing a N95 mask and his nose was hanging out. That

isn't effective and if he knew how to wear it, he could be helping other people. On the flip side, some good news is that the state is re opening some businesses this weekend. I am just hoping that it is soon that all businesses will be open and that everything will be back to how it was before this outbreak.

Journal Entry #14

May 19, 2020

I haven't written in this journal in a while, and over the 15 days I didn't write anything, COVID-19 cases have increased by 360,000 for a total of 1.54 million. That averages out to 24,000 new cases per day. Anyway, many states are beginning to open up. For instance, Rhode Island is opening up non-essential retail stores, closed contact businesses (gyms, spas, and hair salons. This does not include recreational and entertainment businesses), and are allowing outdoor dining with parties limited to 5 people. They have split reopening into three phases. Phase one is what is in action now, and phase two and three will be initiated when safe. I find that there is a slight increase in activities I can do as a result of reopening. I am still angry about some of Massachusetts's policies though. I am a member of a country club in Massachusetts and I want to play golf. Now I'm not very good at golf and need practice before going out to the actual course, and Massachusetts has opened up courses but not driving ranges. What is the significant difference? Both are outdoors and involve minimal contact. In addition to the reopening of states, some sports leagues have resumed play. Both NASCAR and the UFC have begun holding matches again without fans. I'm not really a fan of either NASCAR or the UFC, but it is a sign that the sports I like, baseball, basketball, and golf, could play soon. All in all, the reopening of the economy is

inching forward and I am excited when I see any sign of hope. I am hoping that it will be soon that everyone can go back to their daily lives.

Journal Entry #15

June 2, 2020

Phase two of reopening the economy in Rhode Island began effect yesterday. Phase two will allow fifteen people to gather and it will also allow restaurants to reopen their dining rooms at 50 percent seating capacity, Churches are allowed to resume in-person services with attendance maxed out at 25 percent, and hair salons are able to reopen operations while having safety precautions taken. I am very glad that hair salons have opened up because my hair has gotten very long. I am also excited about the new fifteen person limit because it will allow my baseball team to practice again. It seems that this is a big step forward and will bring us closer to normal life. Anyway, COVID-19 cases in the U.S. are up 1.85 million. I wonder if that number is completely accurate because many people can carry this virus while being asymptomatic. This brings us to the possibility that sports resume play. Many leagues including the MLB, NBA, and NHL are all trying to make restart plans in case an opportunity arises. One of their fears is that one person on a team may have the virus and then the whole team will have to be in quarantine. The MLB specifically has also had problems agreeing with the players on how much to pay them. The players think that they should get 50 percent of their normal salaries because they are going to play half as many games. The owners think that the players should get less than 50 percent because they are getting no revenue from fan attendance. I

really hope that these leagues are able to resume play, but if they aren't, it wouldn't be the end of the world. All in all, I hope that more businesses will begin to reopen and we will be able to go back to our normal lives.

Journal Entry #16

June 8, 2020

Sometimes I question what is going on in the world. Recently, there have been many protests against police brutality and racism. In fact, I saw one in Barrington yesterday. I totally agree that police have no right to kill people for no reason. I also believe that everyone should be equal. The thing is that these protests are a very large gathering of people. Hundreds of people attend these things at once. In Rhode Island, the limit of people to gather is fifteen. While the governors are allowing people to do that, Barrington isn't having a baseball season. In baseball, there are usually about forty people at the field at once, and we are all spread out. Anyway, while town baseball may not be happening, my AAU baseball team is going to have a season. I am looking forward to our first practice on Wednesday. It will have to be indoors because in Warren they aren't going to open up the fields until the weekend. At this point, I'm fine with anything that gets me playing baseball with my team. Speaking of baseball, The MLB is one of the only leagues without any sign of a restart plan. Both the NBA and NHL have made large steps toward coming back, but the MLB just can't seem to agree with their players. Anyway, the world has been turned upside down by this virus and I really hope that it will be turned rightside up again soon.

Journal Entry #17

June 11, 2020

This entry that I am currently writing is my last one. I thought that it would be a good idea to reflect on my experiences and see what I would've done differently. If I could've given myself advice to myself on the first day, I would've told him not to get too stressed. Sure you may get kicked out of Zoom sometimes, but so does everybody else. Now, after doing a whole trimester of "Distance Learning", I am so glad that it is over. Some of my biggest problems with "Distance Learning" were the constant sitting and screen time. Sure, summer this year isn't going to be the same, but at least I am not at my computer all day. I can't even say goodbye to my teachers in person, it will have to be digitally. Anyway, during the time I was stuck at home, I learned to do new things, as I feel many others have too. I began playing golf, and I've realized that I really enjoy it. These types of experiences show that it isn't all bad being in a pandemic, just mostly bad. The one other positive is the extra time I got to spend with my family. In the beginning we did things to pass the time, and I think we really got to know each other better. Although, towards the end, my sister started biking with her friends every single day. I spend more time with my parents now, it isn't like she is any big loss. As I look back, deep in reflection, I realize what a flurry of emotions that this experience had been. Some days you're calm, or stressed, or bored, and some days you felt multiple of these emotions all at once. All in all, you don't experience a pandemic often, and when you do, it'll change the world as you know it. I am just hoping that there will not be another outbreak next year or anytime in my life or yours.

Pandemic Poem - By Andre Gil

**The virus is new,
We have to push through,
Keep us protected,
By following what is suggested.**

**Everything is shut down,
I see so many masks around town,
Sports are prohibited,
What we can do is so limited.**

**Doing school online,
No one is using airlines,
Being inside is not divine,
All I want is some sunshine.**

**No one can visit,
There are many limits,
Have to stay in the house,
All over the world, the virus is arouse.**

Time Capsule Images

The images down below are pictures of me and my sister with my the items in the time capsule (I put hand sanitizer, toilet paper, a mask, a fork to symbolize eating at home, and a golf ball to symbolize how I've taken all of the extra time to try and get better at golf, in the time capsule), the actual time capsule itself, tracings of my family member's hands, and my drawing of our house. I wish I could have had my Mom and Dad in the pictures too, but they were working at the hospital. The only way I even had traces of their hands were from earlier this year. Anyway, I have created this time capsule to help future people understand what this time was like. All the pictures are below.

