



Yellow fever is a viral infection that damages the liver. The resulting jaundice, or yellowing of the skin, is how the disease gets its name.



Four illustrations showing the progress of yellow fever in *Observations sur la fièvre jaune, faites à Cadix, en 1819*, Etienne Pariset and André Mazet, Paris, 1820
Courtesy National Library of Medicine

POLITICS OF *Yellow* IN ALEXANDER HAMILTON'S *Fever* AMERICA

THIS IS THE STORY OF HOW
PHILADELPHIA'S SICK, ANXIOUS RESIDENTS
RESPONDED TO YELLOW FEVER USING AN
UNEASY BLEND OF SCIENCE AND POLITICS.



"Man Helping Sick Person," ca. 1900
Courtesy Getty Images

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YELLOW FEVER RAVAGED
PHILADELPHIA,
THEN THE CAPITAL OF THE
UNITED STATES, IN 1793.



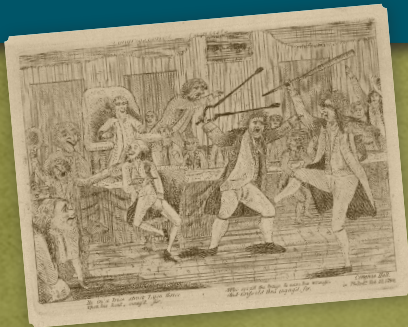
Portrait of Dr. Benjamin Rush, engraving by L. Le. Met, Philadelphia, undated
Courtesy National Library of Medicine

***A new order of things
is rising in medicine, as
well as in government.***

—Dr. Benjamin Rush

Within a month of yellow fever's arrival in Philadelphia, the city, state, and federal governments had essentially ceased to function.

Philadelphians confronted yellow fever in the absence of an effective cure or consensus about the origins of the disease. Medical professionals, early political parties, and private citizens seized on the epidemic to advance their respective agendas.



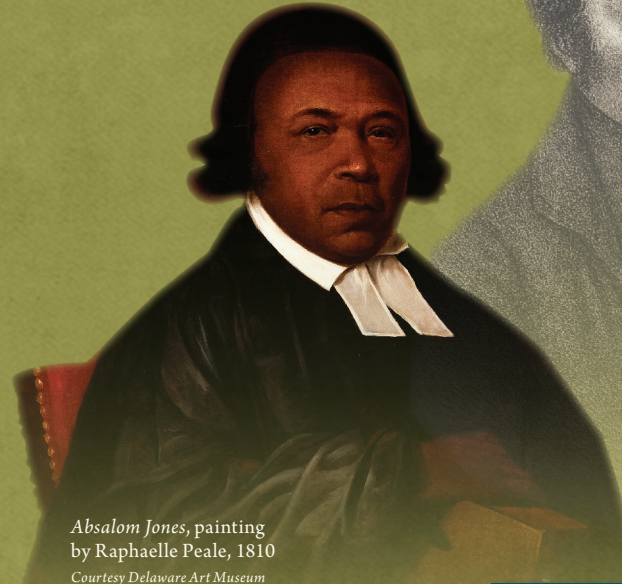
Congressional Pugilists, 1798
Courtesy Library of Congress,
Prints and Photographs Division



Engraved portrait of
Alexander Hamilton, undated
Courtesy Bureau of Engraving and Printing

***I have myself been
attacked with the
reigning putrid fever.***

—Alexander Hamilton

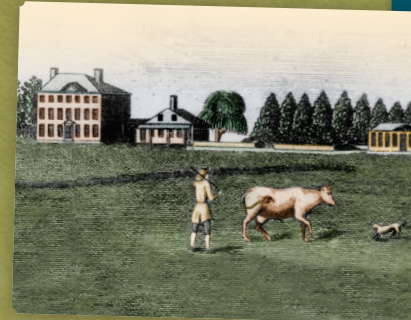


Absalom Jones, painting
by Raphaele Peale, 1810
Courtesy Delaware Art Museum



Richard Allen, Bishop of the first
African Methodist Episcopal
Church, undated

Courtesy Schomburg Center for Research
in Black Culture, Photographs and Prints
Division, The New York Public Library



A group of private citizens came together to organize desperately needed relief services while Philadelphia's free African American residents kept the city from total collapse.

"Bush-Hill, the seat of William Hamilton Esqr. near Philadelphia," engraving by Cornelius Tiebout, Philadelphia, 1793

Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints and
Photographs Division