

The great fire of london impact



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The London fire started September 2, 1666 approximately at 1: 00 am and ended four days later. London fire and the plague destroyed most of the city and its citizens. This historical fire did not only hurt the cultural but literature. The literature was burned to ashes as also the city. The positive aspect is the authors of this time could use this tragic experience in their writings. This helped shape the way authors write and express themselves. After all the harm it caused, it brought out the emotion, history, and creativity in the authors of that time period.

In 1666, most of the houses in London were made out of wood, which is dangerously flammable. Many of the citizens owned barns and had animals. Therefore there was hay and animal feed throughout the city. These factors contribute to the 1666 fire. The Great Fire of London began on the night of September 2, 1666. It started as a small fire on Pudding lane in Thomas Farynors baker. The fire began to spread very rapidly due to the surrounding materials in the city. There were hay and feed piles from barns, which helped spread the fires flames from houses to houses since they are good conductors. The citizen living there tried to stop the fire by throwing buckets of water on it from the river. This did not help stop the rapidly spreading fire. A method called Fire- breaks was usually used during a fire by destroying the houses on the path of the fame (Jokinen). By eight o, clock in the morning the next day the fire had spread halfway across the London Bridge. There was one obstacle stopping the fire from spreading to Southwark. The other side of the river was a gap that was caused by the fire of 1633. The fire continued to glow for another three days, when suddenly it halted near temple church but came back to life towards Westminster. King James

ordered the fire - break, which the fire finally died down. The aftermath of the fire would be a huge issue. Thousands of citizens were homeless and financially ruined, 430 acres was destroyed, 13, 000 houses, 889 churches, and 52 Guild Halls. The one positive effect of the fire was that the plague was reduced greatly. The rats that carried the disease were killed. Charles II did make an effort to make sure it wouldn't happen again. He was appointed six commissioners to redesign the city. The plan provided wider streets and building made up of bricks by 1671, 900 houses and public building were completed. The King had Christopher Wren design a monument to the great fire, which still stands on a street named Monument Street (Jokinen)

The Great Plague of London in 1665 was an epidemic that hit London hard in June of 1665. It was a long series that killed between 75, 000 and 100, 000 of London's population of about 460, 000 (The Great plague of London, 1665).

The contribution for this epidemic that swept through London is the rat infested alleys to the crowded homes. The rats were carrying this disease, the rats from trading ships would carry them. When a ship came into the city the rats would be let loose and spread the disease. This was a huge continuous cycle because the rats kept getting transported from place to place. The first sign of the plague was swelling around the groin or the armpit, and then it started to spread all over the body. The next step was black or red spots developed like a rash. The rash caused pain all over the body and the victim began to feel tired. The temperature of the body increased and this affected the brain and the nerves, Speech was affected, stumbling movements as if drunk and finally the victim became delirious. The average time of death from the first symptom was between four to seven days. It is thought that

between 50% and 75% of those who caught the disease died (Symptoms of the Plague). The citizens started to flee from the plague. The richer residents fled to the countryside, which left the poor behind in the rat infested city. There were many miss conception about how this disease came and why it was still here. One of the answers to solve the problem was killing off the animals that were no use of food. Thousands of dogs and cats were killed to eliminate a feared source of contagion. Also mounds of rotting garbage were burned. The Plague Orders, first issued by the Privy Council in 1578, were still effective in 1665. These edicts prohibited churches from keeping dead bodies on their premises during public assemblies or services, and carriers of the dead had to identify themselves and could not mix with the public. (The Great plague of London, 1665).

Not only was the city burned to ashes and the disease stopped there was one other physical object lost: literature. One of the objects destroyed during the London Fire was the literature before 1666. John Dryden commemorated the fire in his poem *Annus Mirabilis* in 1667. In his poem " *Annus Mirabilis*" salutes London upon her survival of the plague and the Great Fire in 1666 (john Dryden). Throughout his poem he interprets the Great fire as patriotic because it gave London the chance to recreate or redesign the city. . " More great than human, now, and more August, New deified she from her fires does rise. Her widening streets on new foundations trust, and, opening into larger parts she flies" (Dryden and Johnson 203) He also talks about how the characteristics of the fire will help change England as a whole. Also England will dominate, " By an high fate thou greatly didst expire; Great as the world's, which at the death of time Must fall, and rise a nobler frame by

fire.”(Dryden and Johnson 37). When he says “ Rise a nobler frame by fire” shows how he thinks the fire was a noble thing such as a miracle and not a disaster. He later goes on to talk about Charles II and his capability to restore the city. The fact that Charles II did the clean up so quickly makes Dryden to believe the fire wasn’t a curse. When the citizens read his book, different ideas came to them on what really was the London Fire. Was it a cure or was it a miracle as John Dryden stated? He persuaded some of the population into believing the horrific fire that burned the city to ashes was a worthy for the city overall. Samuel Pepys conveyed images of the people wandering the streets. He showed the desperate people stuck inside this never ending cycle of the plague, just looking for some sort of relief. His notes showed the severity of the situation in London. In July, he lamented “ the sad news of the death of so many in the parish of the plague, forty last night, the bell always going . . . either for deaths or burials.” A month later, when London’s mortality rate rose sharply, Pepys noted that survivors “ are fain to carry the dead to be buried by daylight, the nights not sufficing to do it in.”(The Great Plague of London, 1665). Another author at this time was William Boghurst. He was a nurse who studied and described the symptoms of the plague. He wrote Loimographia in 1665 as an eyewitness account. The one thing he wrote is how the standard treatment of the infected households or victims. He criticized how they quarantined and fumigated the houses of the infected. “ oft [been] enough tried and always found ineffectual.”(Atkinson and Majury 297). The Great Plague appears in fictional works, such as William Harrison Ainsworth’s Old Saint Paul’s (1847) and Daniel Defoe’s A Journal of the Plague Year (1722), in which he describes London as “ quite abandoned to despair.”(“ The Great Plague of London, 1665)

The London fire had different effects in categories. It was not only a political and economic issue but culturally too. There were new roads built along with the material used to build houses and other buildings. The plague killed the very long epidemic cause by the rat infested city. The books were destroyed in the fire along with everything else. The authors of the time used this experience to help their writings. For instance in Daniel Defoe's a journal of the plague year (1722), William Harrison Ainsworths Old saint Pauls (1847) William Boghurst Loimographia (1665) and John Dryden and his poem Annus Mirabilis (1667)

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