

Name: _____ Date: _____

“History of Garbage”

People who lived during Prehistoric times usually lived together in small groups and would travel across the land very often. Their garbage was thrown directly on the land. Since they did not stay in one place for a long time, the garbage was not a problem.



In early civilizations, there was no garbage collection. The people left garbage on the floor of their home. Sometimes it was even thrown in the roadway or in rivers. The Egyptians threw their garbage in the Nile River! Can you imagine what the river looked like?

About 500 B.C., the Greek people built the first dump-style area for garbage. The Greeks established a law that required garbage to be thrown away at least one mile away from the city walls. They also established a law that made it illegal to throw garbage on the streets.



During the Middle Ages, civilizations became more populated. Most people threw garbage into the streets. Pigs walked freely down the street eating the garbage. There weren't any garbage trucks that came and picked up the garbage. It was not very healthy to leave rotting food and other garbage in the streets. Insects, rats and other animals would go into the streets to eat the food. In fact, the rats spread a disease known as the Bubonic plague that killed thousands and thousands of people.

In the late 1700's, Benjamin Franklin started the first garbage collection service and street-cleaning service. Also during this time people began digging holes and burying their garbage in their own backyard rather than throw it into the street. As a result, there was less garbage on the streets and health conditions improved.



In England during the 1800's garbage was burned. During the early 1900's in the United States, garbage was placed in a dump or placed in the ocean, rivers or it was burned.

During the middle of the 1900's, garbage was placed in sanitary landfills which are more environmentally-friendly.

In Palm Beach County, your garbage is burned and used to make electricity. Then the ashes that remain from the burning process are placed in the landfill.

- Source: American Forest & Paper Association

