Haley Thomas was born in Mesa, Arizona. She has a Bachelor’s in European History with a minor in Spanish Literature and is working on her Masters in Global History at Arizona State University. Her current profession is being a caretaker. For her first submission to the archive, Haley wanted to get her story out there because she felt it was important even if it was not unique. Haley believes that the stories, despite their similarities, could help show trends for future researchers of this topic. After going through the history program at Arizona, Haley noted that she was frustrated at not finding certain topics because the writings and general literacy of the past were flawed. However, today, we have advanced both technological, communication, and literacy rates, which presents more opportunities for anyone to submit to the archives. She wants to help the people of the future by understanding this period through what she and others have experienced during the pandemic. Haley’s first submission for this archive was done through a Public History course back in 2020. Since becoming an intern, Haley has posted not just her own experiences, but also interesting news articles or social media posts to generate more content for the archive. Haley also adds items that she does not think the same way about to train herself to understand other perspectives, which contributes to her goal to make the archive more well-rounded and to preserve as much as she can.

The pandemic did not change Haley’s life too drastically, but Haley notes that the economic fallout from the lockdowns and the other restrictions was one of the biggest changes. Before the pandemic, everything was cheaper and she felt like she could spend money more freely. Her spending habits have changed a bit since then, but she is not in any major economic trouble due to her husband’s work, but gas and groceries have increased compared to the beginning of COVID. She thinks that the economic issues are based on the overspending in Washington D.C, which caused inflation to rise and Haley hopes that everything will get better and that she can afford more things to provide for a family. Another part of her life that has changed is her trust in the government, though she was always wary of how the government handles things, it was COVID that increased her distrust. Haley did not like the idea of extending lockdowns, considering it inhumane, especially when thinking about her own mental health issues. In her opinion, Haley believes that mental health is just as important as physical health because mental health can affect physical health in many ways. Stress can do a lot to a person; aging, impacts one’s eating habits, and it can kill you. She understood the lockdowns in the beginning, but she believes some cities and states took it too far. Finding work and not socializing with other people does not help social cohesiveness and Haley that states even people who did not have mental health issues have been suffering now too. If the government had been more upfront about the mental issues people could experience from lockdowns and tried to remedy this by easing up on the restrictions, more people have benefitted from that. Haley’s philosophy is that you cannot rely on only one type of expert for something like COVID, which she has seen, through the archive, just how massive the social impact has been made. She wonders why mental health experts were not consulted along with public health experts and why weren’t economists deferred to about the supply chain issues caused by the lockdowns? The government only asked for one type of expert most of the time for guidance, which put people in bad places. “Follow the science” was stated, but she did not hear them asking why more people were not consulted for COVID responses. Haley notes that the archive helps to show the social impact COVID has had on society

A fun fact about Haley is that despite not being too fond of the government, Haley does love to discuss politics and she would like to run for local or state office in her state. She would like to be part of the state legislature to help vote on state bills, even a city council or a school board. Whatever position Haley receives, her goal is to help her area become better, with her main issues running would be economy, schools, and mental health advocacy. Haley was diagnosed with autism at a young age and while she is glad for the improvements in care, she believes there is still room for improvement. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 20-25% of all homeless in the United States have some form of severe mental illness and she believes that tax money should be spent on helping people who are mentally ill, giving them homes instead of spending it on foreign wars. If she could spend the money on these homes, then she would want them to function like nursing homes, but with staff trained in caring for different types of mental illness. Yes, homes like this have had bad reputations in the past, but if held to the same accountability measures as in nursing homes, there would be fewer cases of abuse. Mental health issues are complicated and they will not be easy to solve, but with money concentrated on programs and these homes could help. Haley hopes that running for a political office will help at least one person in the future.

Like every contributor, Haley has submitted much to the archive. However, she has anonymously contributed a wide range of items to the archive as well.