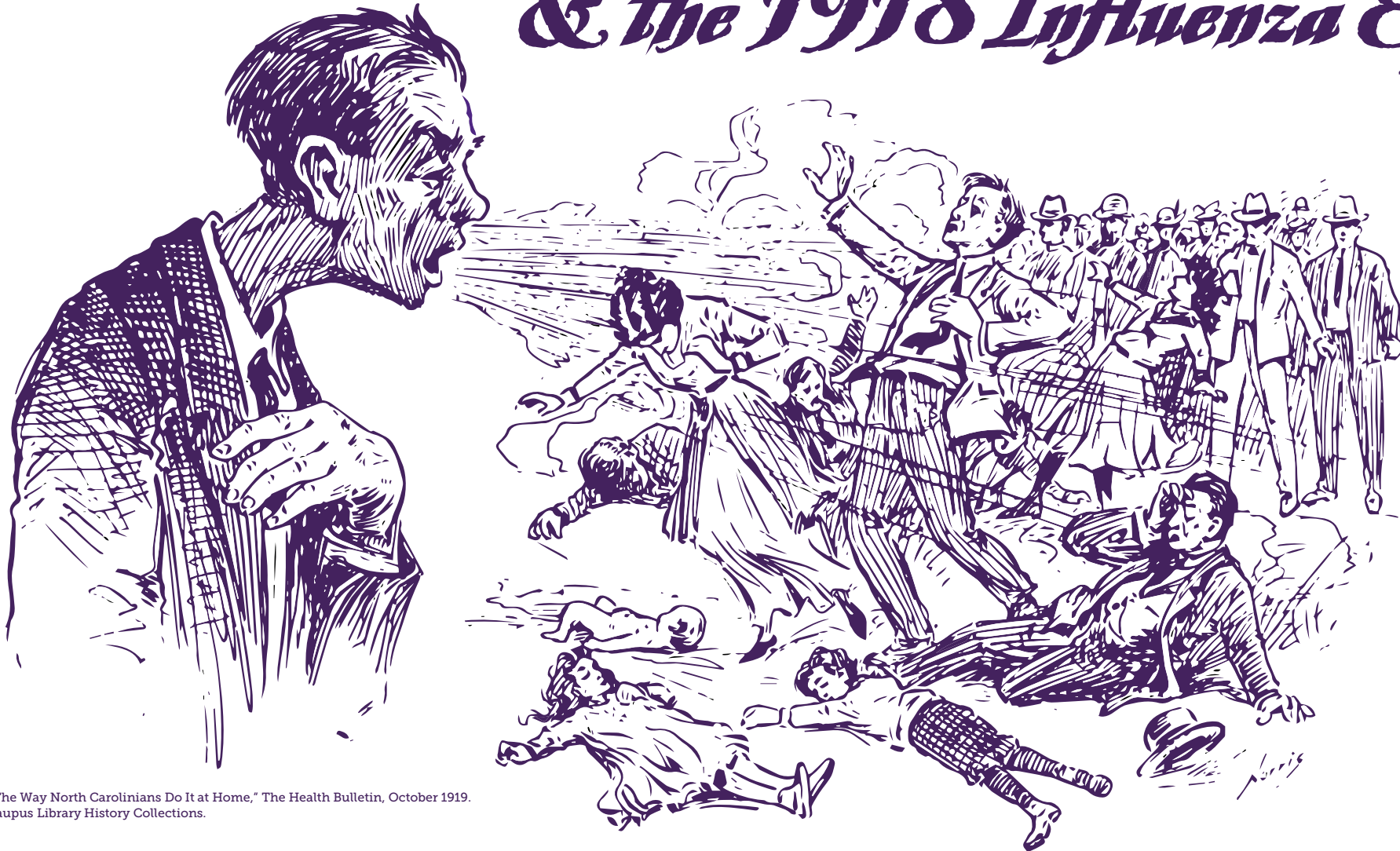


Eastern North Carolina *& the 1918 Influenza Epidemic*



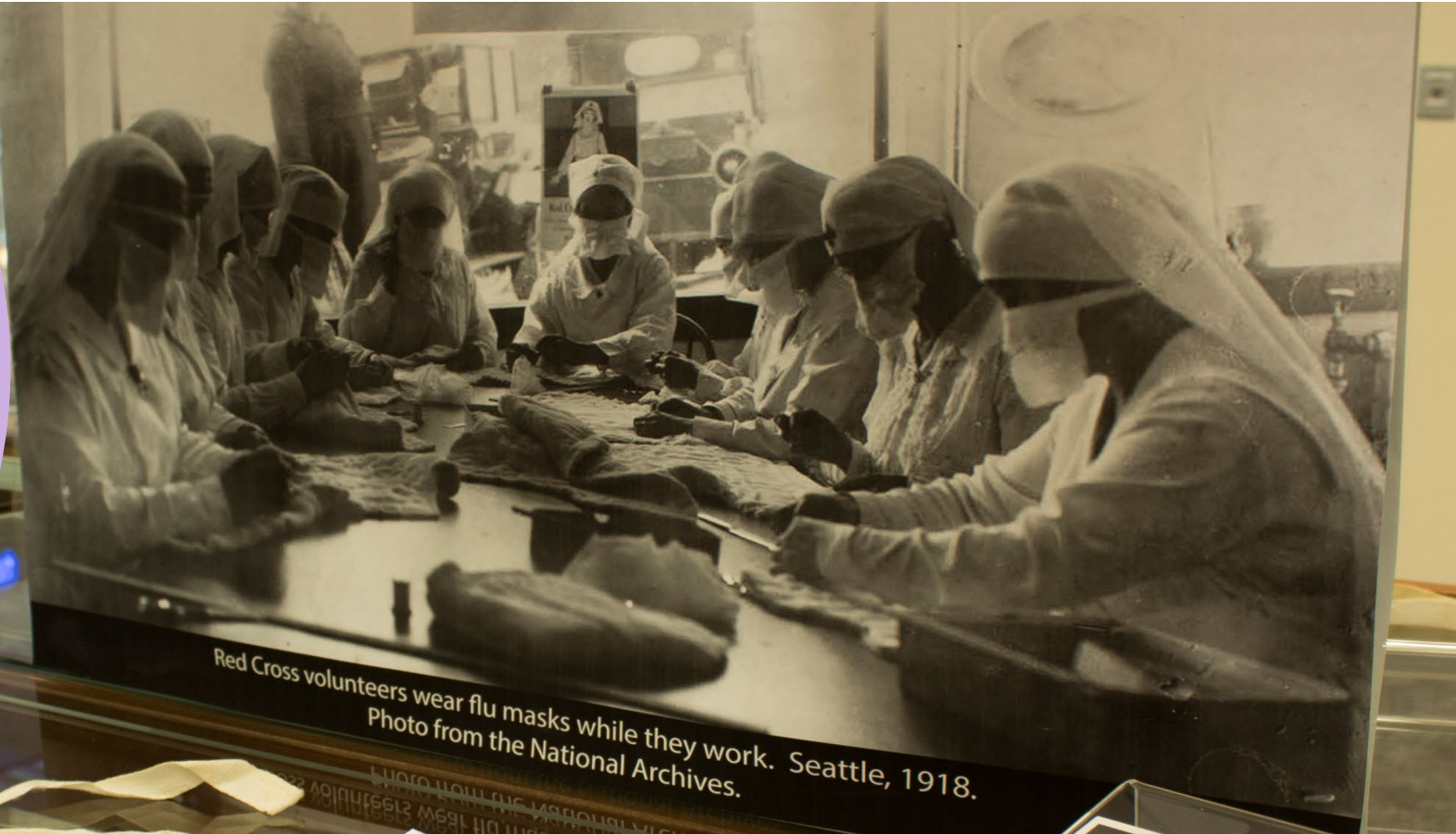
Presented by:

Layne Carpenter, MA

Archivist
at Laupus Library

The Exhibit

- Laupus Library, Fall 2018
- Joyner Library, Spring 2019
- Wake Tech, Fall 2019
- Story Map, Ongoing



Surgical Mask similar to those worn by physicians, nurses, volunteers and community members during the 1918 influenza epidemic.

On Loan from
The Country Doctor Museum
2022.284.005

THE AFRICAN AMERICAN

The African American population in North Carolina was hit hard from influenza as well. Interestingly, however, the mortality in black communities was fewer than in the white populations. Theories about why this is, including that more Americans might have contracted the milder strain during the spring 1918 epidemic, making them more resilient to the more lethal strain. Another interesting theory is that segregation might have functioned as a kind of quarantine. Either way, black communities still faced a head-on and mobilized the population to provide aid for the sick.

Board of Health Takes Action

The Martin County Board of Health has followed every precaution against the spread of the Spanish "Flu." All towns have been policed against people passing in and out, who have been exposed, and not allowed to congregate in or around public places. This seems to have had a very satisfactory result as the ratio of new cases is very much lower than last week. The matter of greatest importance is to stay from all places or persons where suspected cases are.

We have two solemn duties, one is not to give Influenza to our neighbors, the other is, not to catch it from others.

Remember we have had many deaths already and may have many more, but we can reduce it by care.

Research and Sources

- Ongoing Research Project
- History Collections Resources
- The Country Doctor Museum Artifacts
- Joyner Library Manuscript Collections
- North Carolina Collection Microfilmed Newspapers
- Digital NC
- Dan Shingleton

Presentation Outline

- Overview and the Influenza Virus
- The Experience in Eastern NC
 - Timing
 - The Role of Newspapers
 - The Red Cross and Public Activism
 - Treatment
 - Case Studies
- Aftermath



Image Credit: A street car conductor keeps a passenger from boarding without a mask, Seattle 1918. The National Archives.

Overview
&

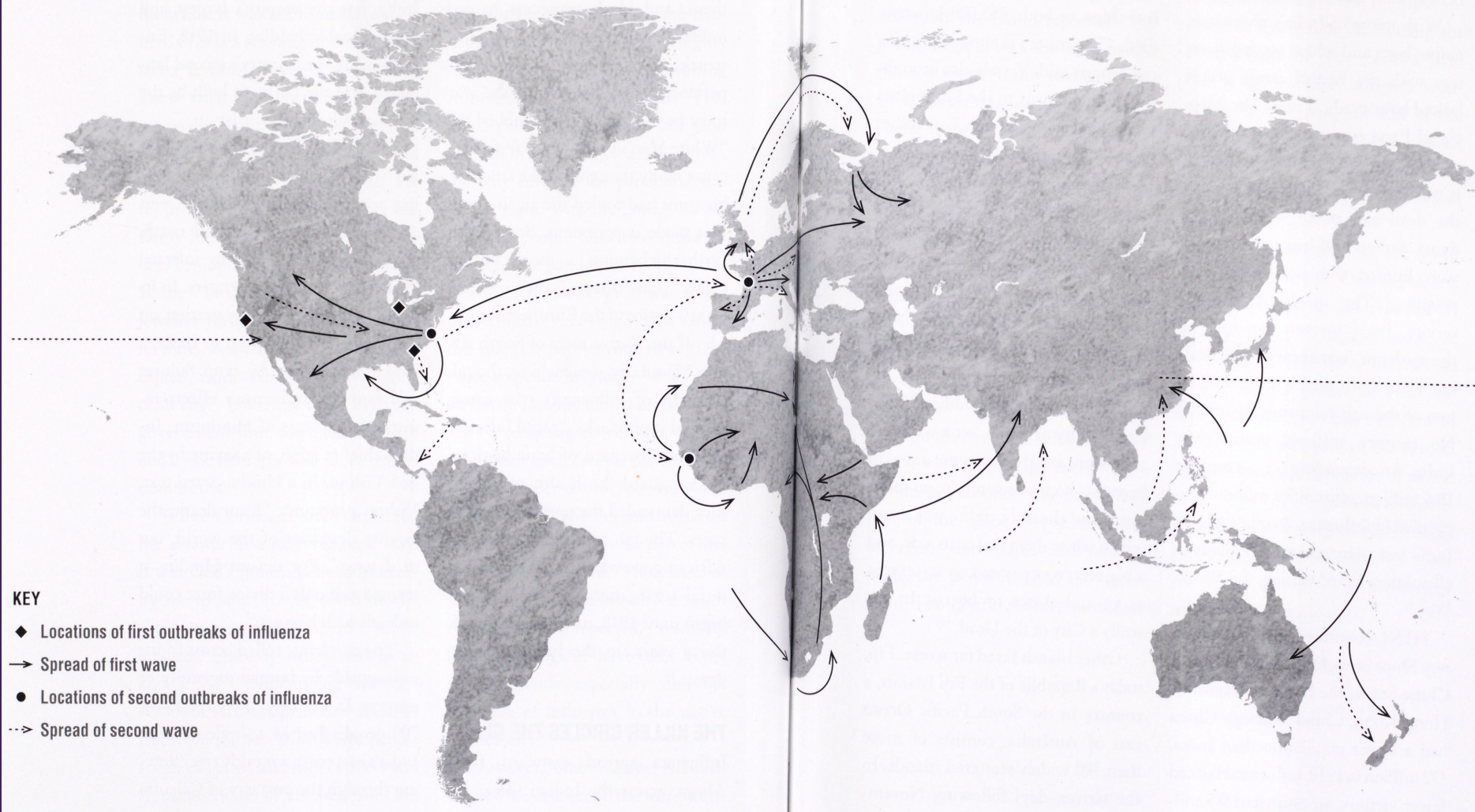
The Influenza Virus



The War and Influenza

- 1918 was the final year of the war
- Every community in NC was infected
- More people died from the flu than in the war
- At least 20 million people died worldwide, 1 million North Carolinians were infected

SPREAD OF THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC OF 1918

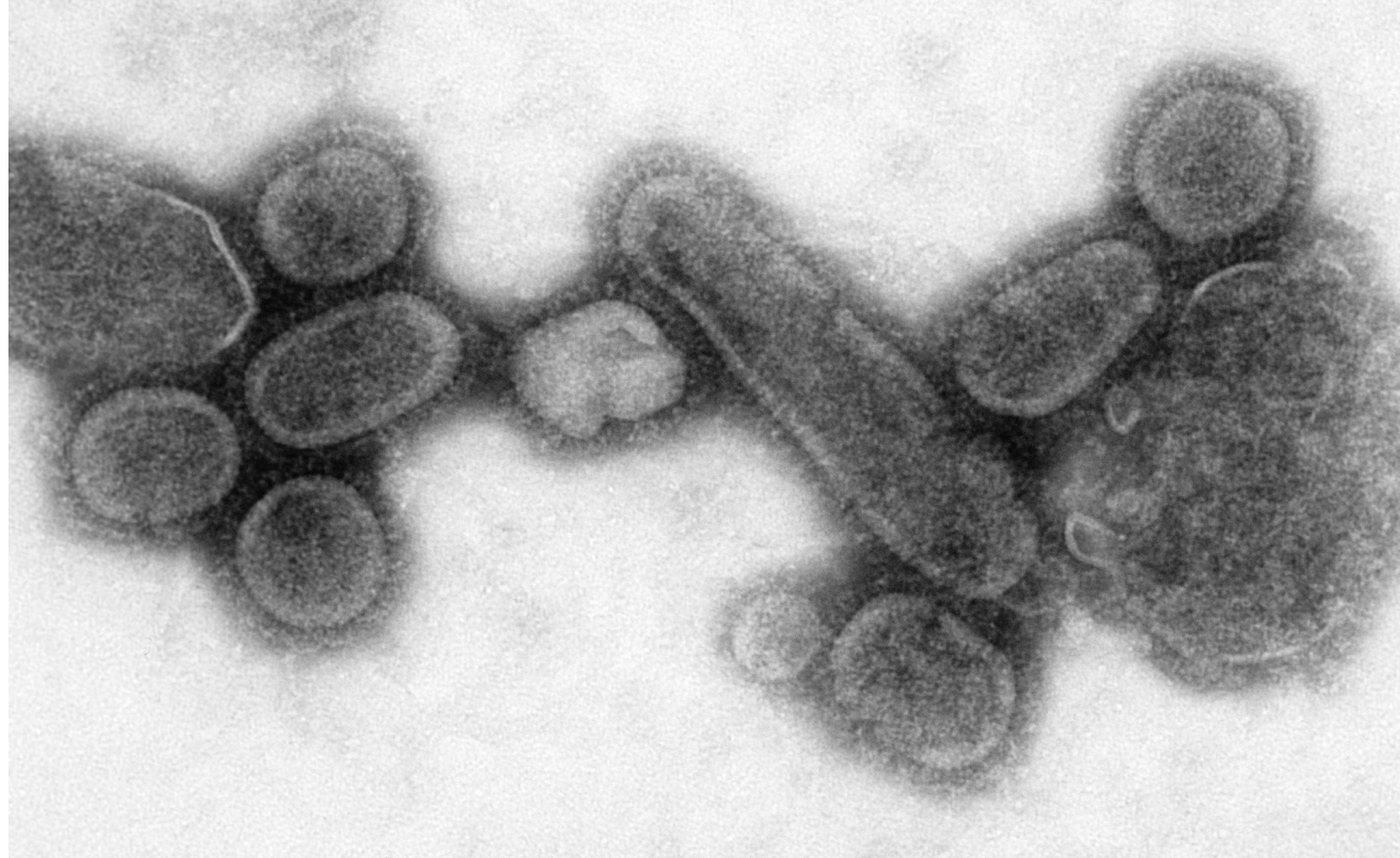


Origins of the Virus

- Mutation Location is Uncertain
- "Spanish Influenza"
- Haskell County, Kansas

The Virus

- Lethal Strain
- Bird Influenza and Human Influenza
- Virus Discovered in 2005



Electron micrograph of the 1918 influenza virus.

Photo Credit: Cynthia Goldsmith
Content Providers: CDC/ Dr. Terrence Tumpey
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Public Health Image Library

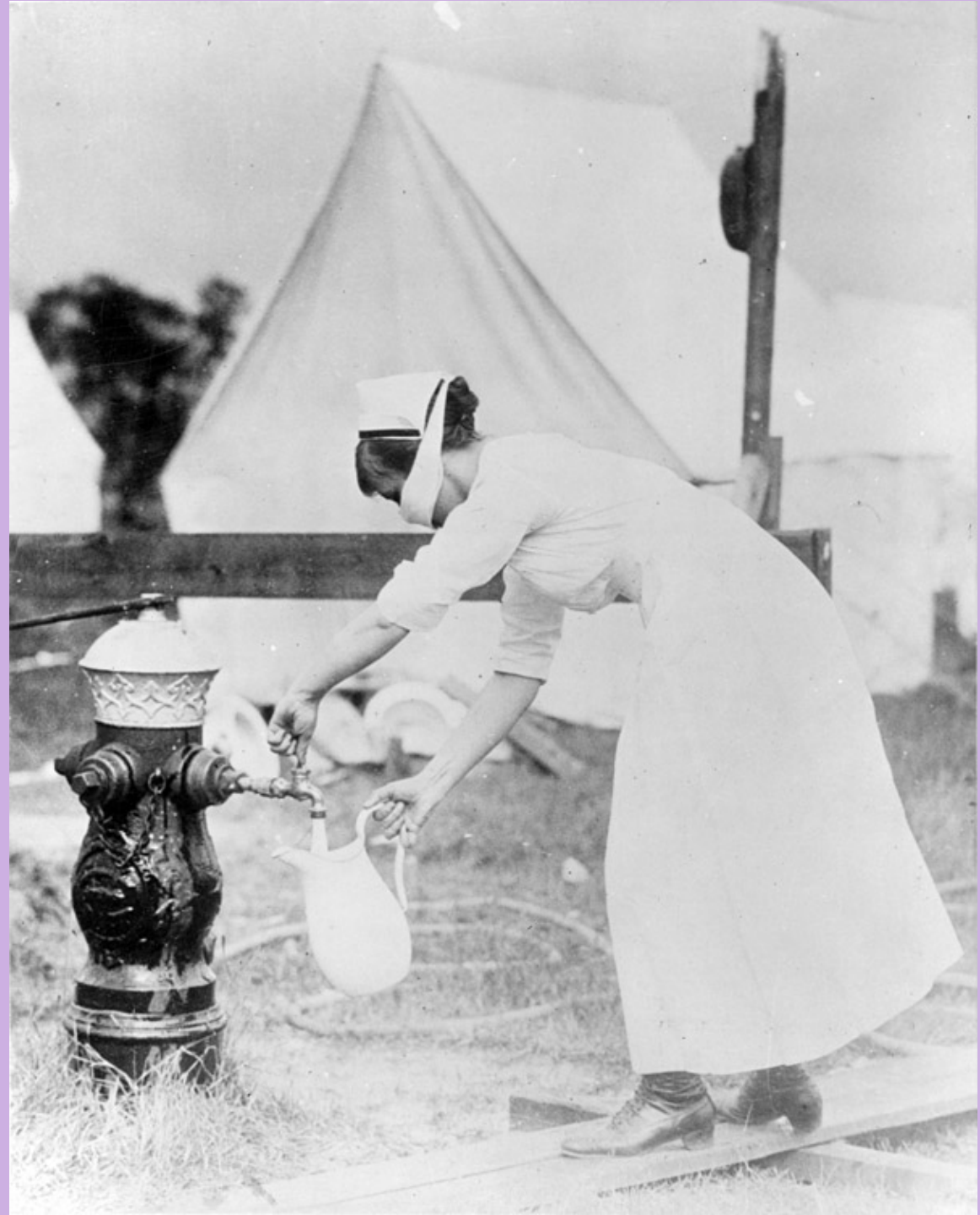
The Symptoms

Typical Flu Symptoms

- Body Aches
- Coughing
- Chills
- Fever

Additional Symptoms in 1918

- Pneumonia
- Turning Blue



“The chief symptoms which I can personally verify were a rapid, progressive feeling of weakness, aching, cough, chills and fever. Within an hour or so it was for one to become bedridden and nursed by terrified members of one’s family. In many cases, every member of a family would develop the disease eventually, where as in other families, one or two members seemed immune to the virulent flu.”

Dr. Robert Fales, Wilmington, NC Physician

3 Waves

1st

SPRING 1918

LOW DEATH RATE

2nd

FALL 1918

HIGHEST DEATH RATE

3rd

WINTER 1918-
EARLY SPRING
1919

MANY REPORTED
CASES BUT FEWER
DEATHS THAN THE
SECOND WAVE



The Case Studies Will Focus on this Wave

Arrival in North Carolina

- Wilmington on September 19, 1918
- Charlotte in late September 1918
- Most of the state was affected by early October
- The University of North Carolina

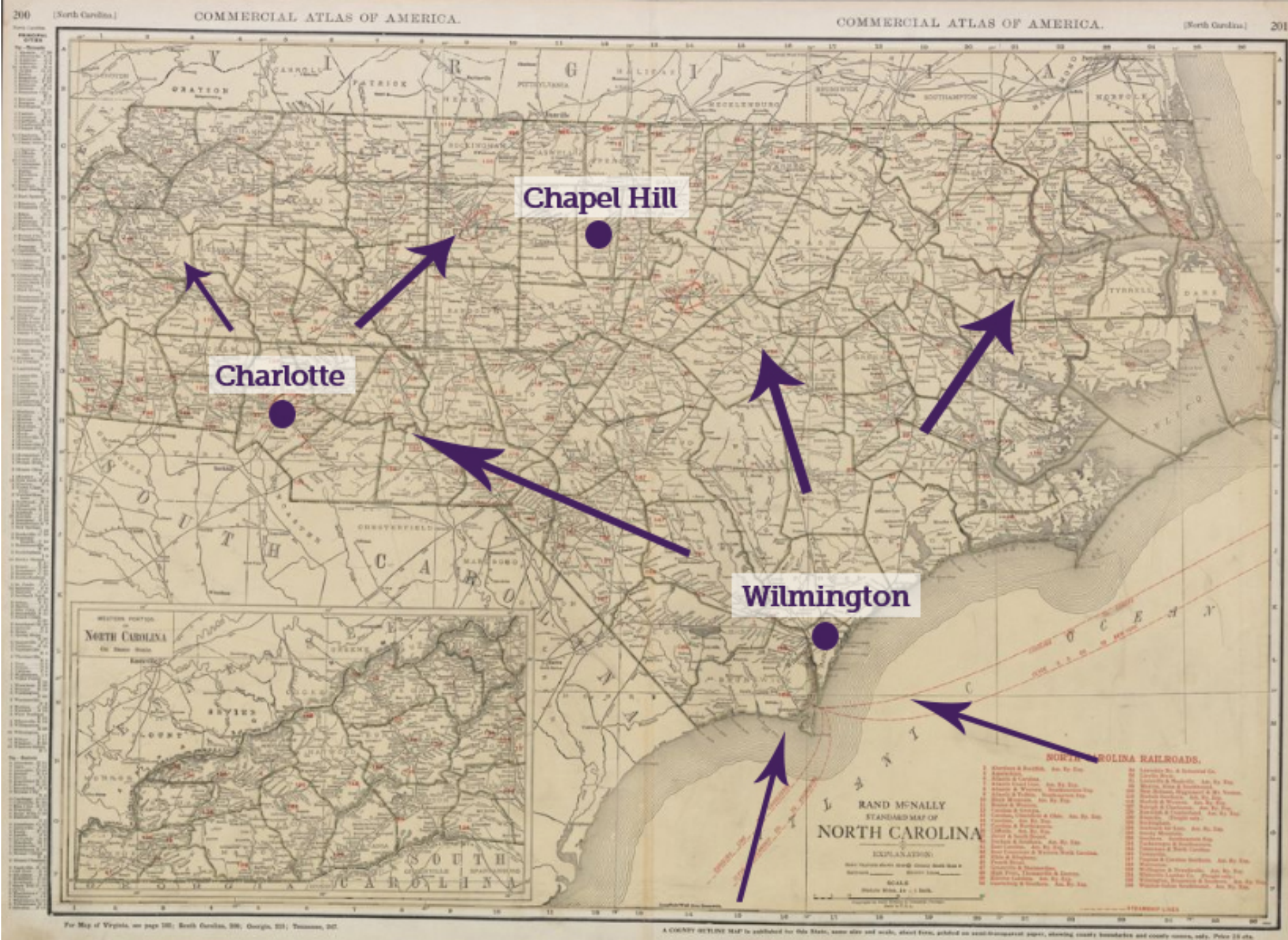


Image Credit: "Standard Map of North Carolina," Joyner Library. Overlaid information added by the author.

The Experience in Eastern North Carolina

Timing

- World War I meant a shortage of doctors on the Homefront
- Dr. Cecil Garrenton and Bethel Citizens



Image Credit: Garrenton Family Papers (LL 02.02), at The William E. Laupus Health Sciences Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

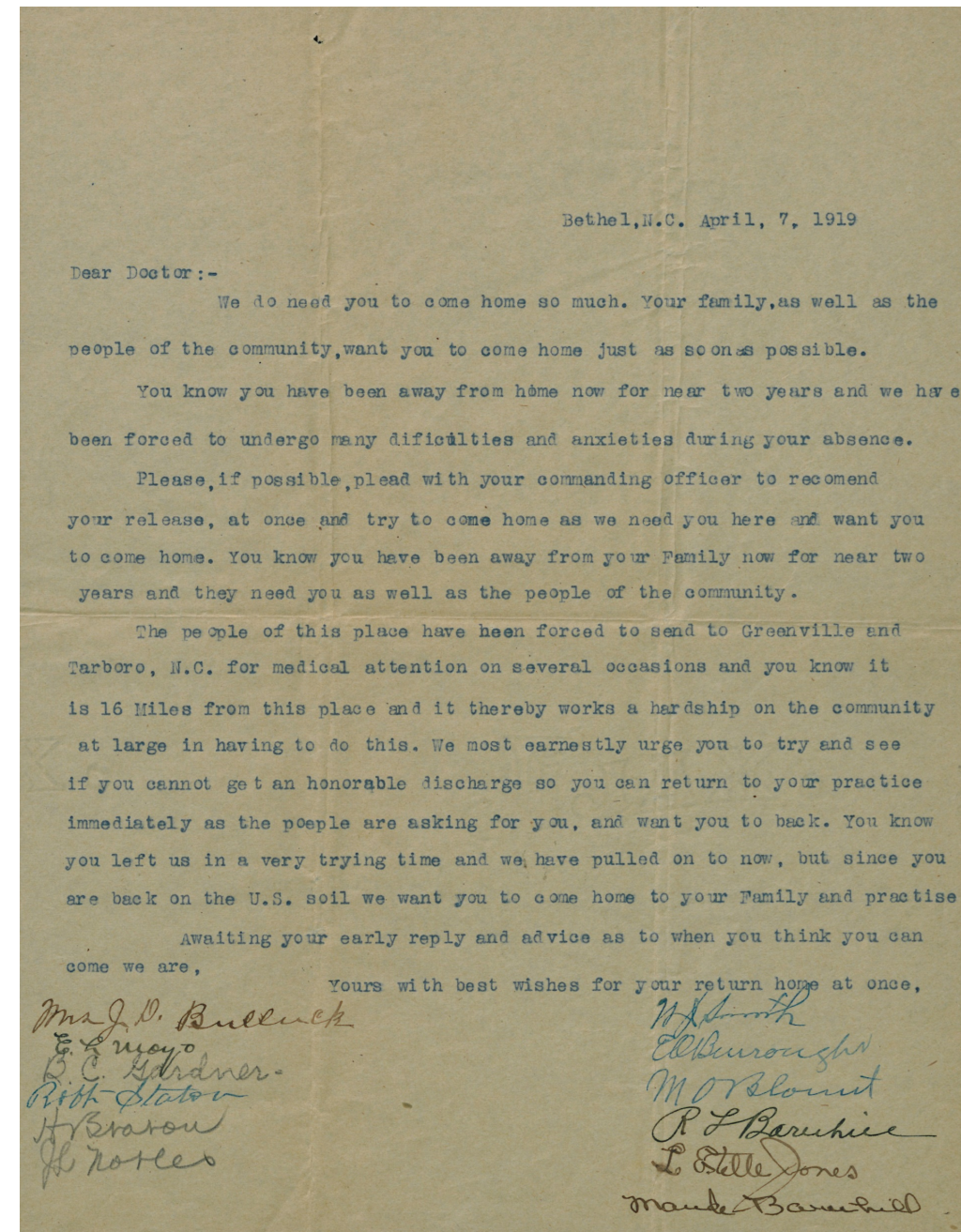


Image Credit: Garrenton Family Papers (LL 02.02), at The William E. Laupus Health Sciences Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Public Fear and the Role of Newspapers

- Local newspapers spread the word about:
 - Symptoms
 - Number of local cases
 - Quarantines
 - Other closures
- Local papers also published State Board of Health statements

The Greenville Daily News
J. CORNAD LANTIER, President; JAS. L. MATO, Secretary & Manager.
Printed at the Post Office at Greenville, S. C., as second-class matter June 18, 1917, under Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.
Published every afternoon except Sunday by Greenville Publishing Co., Inc.
(Owned by Charles White, principal stockholder of the city or by such subsequent holder.)
1 Year.....\$4.00. 6 Months.....\$2.50.
3 Months.....\$1.50. 1 Month.....\$0.50.
(Subscriptions Payable in Advance)
Subscriptions during the Daily News, discontinued will please notify office.
Outside paper will be continued at regular subscription rates. To insure earliest delivery, remittance should be made promptly to the circulation department, No. 225 Broad Street, Telephone No. 78.
Monday Afternoon, October 7, 1918

**"SPANISH INFLUENZA"—"3-DAY FEVER"
"THE FLU."**

What is Spanish Influenza? It is something new? Does it come from Spain?
The disease now occurring in this country and called "Spanish Influenza" resembles a very contagious kind of "cold" accompanied by fever, pains in the head, eyes, ears, back or other parts of the body, and a feeling of severe sickness. In most of the cases the symptoms disappear after three or four days, the patient then rapidly recovering; some of the patients, however, develop pneumonia, or inflammation of the ear, or meningitis, and many of these complicated cases die. Whether this so-called "Spanish Influenza" is identical with the epidemics of influenza of earlier years is not yet known.

Epidemics of influenza have visited this country since 1647. It is interesting to know that this first epidemic was brought here from Valencia, Spain. Since that time there have been numerous epidemics of the disease. In 1889 and 1890 an epidemic of influenza starting somewhere in the Orient, spread first to Russia, and thence over practically the entire civilized world. Three years later there was another flare-up of the disease. Both times the epidemic spread widely over the United States.

Although the present epidemic is called "Spanish Influenza," there is no reason to believe that it originated in Spain. Some writers who have studied the question believe that the epidemic came from the Orient and they call attention to the fact that the Germans mention the disease as occurring along the eastern front in the summer and fall of 1917.

How can "Spanish Influenza" be recognized?
There is as yet no certain way in which a single case of "Spanish Influenza" can be recognized; on the other hand, recognition is easy where there is a group of cases. In contrast to the outbreaks of ordinary coughs and colds, which usually occur in the cold months, epidemics of influenza may occur at any season of the year, thus the present epidemic raged most intensely in Europe in May, June and July. Moreover, in the case of ordinary colds, the general symptoms (fever, pain, depression) are by no means as severe or as sudden in their onset as they are in influenza. Finally, ordinary colds do not spread through the community so rapidly or so extensively as does influenza.

In most cases a person taken sick with influenza feels sick rather suddenly. He feels weak, has pains in the eyes, ears, head or back, and may be sore all over. Many patients feel dizzy, some vomit. Most of the patients complain of feeling chilly, and with this comes a fever in which the temperature rises to, from 100 to 104. In most cases the pulse remains relatively slow.


If there is cough and sputum or running of the eyes and nose, care should be taken that all such discharges are collected on bits of gauze or rag or paper napkins and burned. If the patient complains of fever and headache, he should be given water to drink, a cold compress to the forehead, and a light sponge. Only such medicine should be given as is prescribed by the doctor. It is foolish to ask the druggist to prescribe and may be dangerous to take the so-called "safe, sure, and harmless" remedies advertised by patent-medicine manufacturers.

If the patient is so situated that he can be attended only by some one who must also look after others in the family, it is advisable that such attendant wear a wrapper, apron, or gown over the ordinary house clothes while in the sick room, and slip this off when leaving to look after the others.

Nurses and attendants will do well to guard against brushing in dangerous disease germs by wearing a simple fold of gauze or mask while near the patient.

Will a person who has had influenza before catch the disease again?
It is well known that an attack of measles or scarlet fever or small-pox usually protects a person against another attack of the same disease. This appears not to be true of "Spanish Influenza." According to newspaper reports the King of Spain suffered an attack of influenza during the epidemic thirty years ago, and was again stricken during the recent outbreak in Spain.

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Actually Want--**



Taft & Vandyke

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Millinery
And Ready-to-Wear**

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C. Heber Forbes
WE SELL WAR SAVINGS STAMPS

Living Room
Exemplifying the spirit of that room—Comfortably constructed, tastefully, and low priced here
**May We Have the Pleasure of S
HIGGS-TAFT FURNI**

The Red Cross

- Localized relief
- M.K.B., Morehead City
- Committee Chapter on Influenza



Image Credit: "Demonstration of the Red Cross Emergency Ambulance Station in Washington D.C. Library of Congress.

"A mass meeting was held in the Red Cross rooms where we organized for work. The town was divided into districts, each district having a committee to make house calls...I was on duty nearly twenty hours a day, the first three days after my arrival, and from fourteen to eighteen thereafter, only going off duty when I could no longer stand...From the beginning, the physicians... the volunteer nurses and I, wore face masks, made and furnished free by the Red Cross."

M.K.B., Red Cross Nurse serving in Morehead City, NC

The American Journal of Nursing, May 1919

Soup Kitchen Opened.

We are requested by the committee to inform those in need of nourishment, and their friends, that a soup kitchen has been opened in the Leggett store recently occupied by T. L. Smith, where hot soup and other nourishments for the sick can be had upon application, until this terrible epidemic has passed.

Donations of material for the proper maintenance of this institution for the help of local needs, are earnestly solicited.

Public Activism

- Community Members rose to the Occasion
- Soup Kitchens
- Plymouth, N.C. Example

Image Credit: Article published in *The Roanoke Beacon* (Plymouth, N.C.), October 11, 1918.

"I have been delivering soups for the last two weeks to the sick, those that have no one to wait on them. We have a soup kitchen down town. Make beef and chicken soup, boiled custard, chicken salad, lemon cream, and sandwiches. In some homes every member of the family would be down with it. In others, two three and four would be sick. We carry things all around town and as far as ten miles out in the country."

Mammie, Plymouth, NC, October 23, 1918

Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #381

Treatment and Care

- Quarantines and Fresh Air
- City-wide Quarantines
- Newspapers

NINE MORE DAYS OF
'QUARANTINE' HERE;
CONQUERING MALADY

Kinston Daily Free Press, October 11, 1918.

Board of Health Takes Action

The Martin County Board of Health has followed every precaution against the spread of the Spanish "Flu." All towns have been policed against people passing in and out, who have been exposed, and not allowed to congregate in or around public places. This seems to have had a very satisfactory result as the ratio of new cases is very much lower than last week. The matter of greatest importance is to stay from all places or persons where suspected cases are.

“I believe in staying in five days after you think you are well, and have sunshine and air in your room.”

Maria Whitehurst, New Bern, NC, October 28, 1918

Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #617

“Great emphasis was placed on the need of fresh air, cleanliness, and nursing care, in every home that I entered.”

M.K.B., Red Cross Nurse serving in Morehead City, NC

The American Journal of Nursing, May 1919

Treatment and Care

- Attempts to ease the suffering of patients
- Pain medication
 - Aspirin and Morphine
- Controlling Coughing
 - Codeine and Heroin
- Stimulants
 - Atrophine and Strychnine
- Vaccines and Quinine
- Gelsemium
- Self Prescribed



Use for Booze.

Numerous reports say the Government is shipping whisky to points where the influenza is epidemic. One report has it that an enormous quantity of 100-proof passed through Goldsboro recently en route to Camp Jackson; this was not confirmed. New Bern expected a supply at the weekend. Other places have made requisitions for it. It is said by some that rye spirits make absolutely the best medicine that can be used in treating the disease.

USE OF ALCOHOL QUESTIONABLE.

The Free Press does not regard the tendency to let down the anti-liquor laws in the fight against influenza very favorably. Any latitude that is given the health officers will certainly be taken advantage of by some unscrupulous persons. A large part of the medical fraternity is now agreed that alcohol is not a stimulant and is not necessary for medicinal purposes. The Free Press ventures the prediction that the percentage of recoveries where alcohol is not used will be greater than where it is employed and it is a well established fact that those who are addicted to alcoholism are most susceptible to the ravages of pneumonia.

FOR THE "FLU."

Mrs. R. B. Dunn has received the following from a resident of Swansboro as a "sure cure" for those afflicted with la-grippe, which seems to be analagous to the present epidemic of influenza: "Old-time, but good as gold and given to help humanity--If taken, take one yard of flannel, cut opening in center large enough to slip head through, heat linseed oil hot enough and thoroughly saturate, and slip over head and fasten under arms. Stay in bed. If bothered with cough, mix yolk of one egg, one tablespoonful honey or sugar, 1-2 teaspoonful camphor and 15 drops spirits-turpentine. Take 1-2 teaspoonful at dose as needed."

Kinston Daily Free Press, October 15, 1918.

"I am not taking aspirine, [sic] now I take every night—5 grams quinine & an asafetida pill. Sadie is taking aspirine [sic] and quinine. I haven't been out any where since 'flu' started. I thought best to stay at home..."

Maria Whitehurst, New Bern, NC, October 15, 1918

Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #617

"I am taking castor oil and spraying our throats. I do [hope] we will escape it, for I don't know what on earth we would do if I should have it."

Mrs. Raby, Leggett, NC, October 14, 1918

Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #317

Case Studies



Image Credit: "Main Street, looking South from Sunset Ave., Rocky Mount," Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #441.

Rocky Mount

- Mrs. Raby, wife of a local doctor
- Wrote to her husband about Leggett and Rocky Mount
- In six days, the number of flu cases more than doubled (400 to 900)
- Churches became hospitals and stores closed

"The epidemic here is terrible... There are 900 cases in Rocky Mount. Every nurse in the Edgecombe Hospital has it but two. They are begging for volunteers to go there to help nurse. In Rocky Mount the churches are being turned into hospitals. Never before have I known such an awful epidemic in this country... The people who have died that I have heard of only lived from two to four days after being taken."

Mrs. Raby, Leggett, NC, October 8, 1918
Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #317



Image Credit: "Episcopal church and post office, New Bern," Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #126.

New Bern

- September 30: Churches, Schools, Theaters, and the Library Close
- October 9: Less than 100 cases documented
- October 14: Tobacco Warehouses and the Cotton Exchange Close. Circus not allowed to perform.
- 1918 was an election year and the flu interfered with the campaign

"You can't hear anything but war and influenza. Every morning when I read the paper I have the 'blues' for a while. There are always some deaths of some one you know of, if you don't know them... The churches, schools, movies have all been closed for two weeks & tobacco ware houses were ordered closed this week. The circus was not allowed to show here after it came. So they went on to Washington N.C."

Maria Whitehurst, to her son, Harold Whitehurst, New Bern, NC, October 15, 1918
Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #617

"My boy, you don't seem to know the danger of this influenza. Please stay in bed, you will have pneumonia. I am worried to death about you... People are dying in every direction of the town. If I had known you were going on the trip you did, I should have advised you not to go... Especially at such a time as this. I should have thought you would have known better... Stay in, don't go among people."

Maria Whitehurst, to her son, Harold Whitehurst, New Bern, NC, October 21, 1918
Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #617



Image Credit: "Episcopal church and post office, New Bern," Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #126.

New Bern

- September 30: Churches, Schools, Theaters, and the Library Close
- October 9: Less than 100 cases documented
- October 14: Tobacco Warehouses and the Cotton Exchange Close. Circus not allowed to perform.
- 1918 was an election year and the flu interfered with the campaign



Image Credit: "Queen Street, looking North from Caswell, Kinston," Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #126.

Kinston

- October 1: Flu first appears as "Grippe"
- October 5: Papers claim nothing will close
- October 7: 300 cases of the flu in Kinston
- October 10: "Enforced Holiday"
- October 18: Dr. Mitchener asks for another week of Quarantine

“‘Flu’ has struck our town. Several cases have been reported. I advise people to let the other fellow go to the circus for them, and the picture shows and public meetings in general as well. Help the other fellow by covering your cough and sneeze. You may be a carrier or have it in the early stages.”

Dr. J. S. Michener, Head of the Health Department in Kinson, October 1, 1918
Kinston Daily Free Press, Joyner Library Microfilm Collection

“It is criminal to spit or sneeze promiscuously. It is criminal because principally by these means the disease is spread. Sometimes the Spanish influenza kills.”

**UP TO INDIVIDUALS
TO KEEP OFF 'FLU.'
AND CHECK SPREAD**

Health Officer Says Care-
lessness Now Not Short
of Criminal

NOT A BAD SITUATION

Numerous Cases in City But
Disease Gains Very Slow-
ly — Every Precaution
Taken at the City
Schools



Image Credit: "Queen Street, looking North from Caswell, Kinston," Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #126.

Kinston

- October 1: Flu first appears as "Grippe"
- October 5: Papers claim nothing will close
- October 7: 300 cases of the flu in Kinston
- October 10: "Enforced Holiday"
- October 18: Dr. Mitchener asks for another week of Quarantine

HUNDREDS OF CASES OF INFLUENZA HERE AND NUMBER GROWS

Unofficial Reports Tend to
Make Situation More
Serious

DEATHS ARE VERY FEW

Action by Authorities—Ten-
dency to Postpone Court.
Weekend Brings Increase
in Patients — Bad in
Country

ENFORCED HOLIDAY HERE WITH PUBLIC PLACES CLOSED UP

Mitchener Will Try to Get
the Soda Fountains
Included

NOT MUCH IMPROVEMENT

Although Number of Con-
valescents Reduces In-
fluenza's Score Some-
what—Better Suspension
Than Funerals

MITCHENER TO ASK HEALTH BOARD TO EXTEND QUARANTINE

Wants at Least Another
Week of Suspension
Order, Says

PROTECT THE WORKERS

Public Doctor Would Keep
Hundreds From Going to
Tasks Too Soon—Situa-
tion is Still Clearing
Up

Kinston Daily Free Press, October 7, 10, and 18, 1918, Joyner Library Microfilm Collection.

Coastal Plain Fair

- Planned to be held in Tarboro on October 29, 30, 31, and November 1, 1918
- Speculation about whether it would occur circulated in the local papers for a month.
- Canceled on October 25

"We are getting ready now for the Big Fair in Tarboro, but are not sure yet if they will have it on account of this epidemic all over the state. They have cut out most all of them in the state."

M. Heilbroner, Tarboro, NC, October 15, 1918
Joyner Library Manuscript Collection #317



Aftermath

Death Toll

- At least 20 million worldwide
- Over 13,000 North Carolinians
- Deaths per County Map

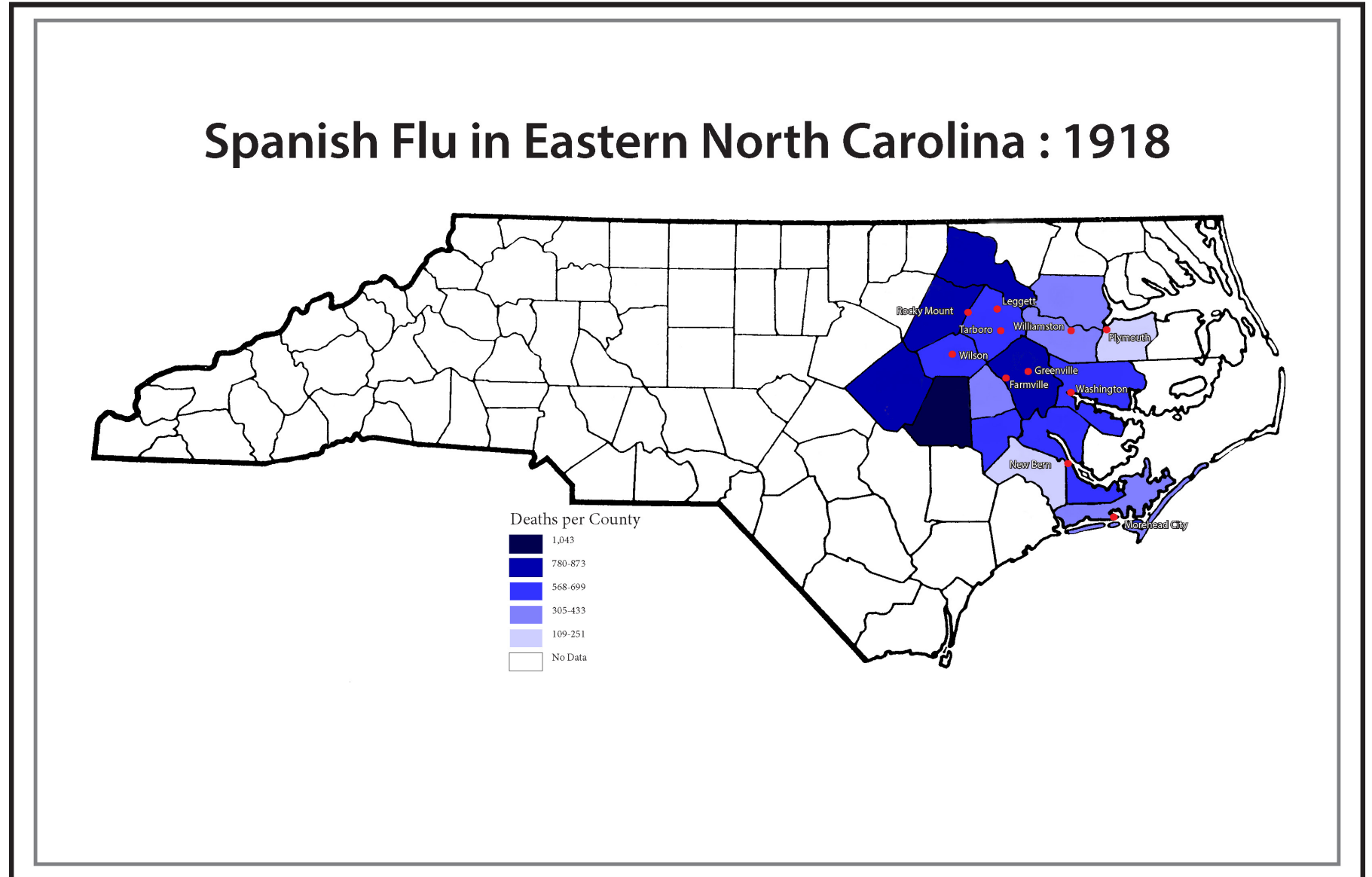


Image Credit: Data collected by author from NC Mortality Statistics. Map created by Sara Mackenzie Parkin.

Rural Health

- Needed more health care support in rural areas
- *"...that rural health be provided for by an appropriation" from the state and the federal government.*
- Dr. Watson S. Rankin testified before Congress
- Rural Health Act passes, NC receives \$50,000 for rural sanitation

RURAL SANITATION.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D. C., February 17, 1919.

The committee met at 10.30 o'clock a. m., Hon. Asbury F. Lever (chairman) presiding.

Present: Members of the committee; also Dr. W. S. Rankin, of Raleigh, State health officer of North Carolina and president of the conference of State health officials; Dr. J. W. Schereschewsky, assistant surgeon general of the United States Public Health Service, and Assistant Surgeons General B. S. Warren and L. L. Lumsden, of the United States Public Health Service.

The CHAIRMAN. We have met this morning, gentlemen, to hear statements with reference to H. R. 14185, a bill to provide that the United States shall cooperate with the States in promoting the health of the rural population of the United States and for other purposes.

STATEMENT OF DR. W. S. RANKIN, RALEIGH, N. C., STATE HEALTH OFFICER OF NORTH CAROLINA AND PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS.

Recognizing The Value of Public Health

- *Transactions of the Medical Society of North Carolina*
- Reports on how the epidemic affected their population
- Dr. C.V. Reynolds of Asheville
- Wilson County Health Department

"...the epidemic of influenza has been the most potent factor in popularizing the work of our department..."



"The Way North Carolinians Do It at Home," *The Health Bulletin*, October 1919. Laupus Library History Collections.

Preventing Another Epidemic

- *The Health Bulletin*
- Newspapers
- Health Departments

Public Health System Improvements

- Petitions
- Funding Increases
- 1920 NC State Board of Health Budget
- Public Health Nursing

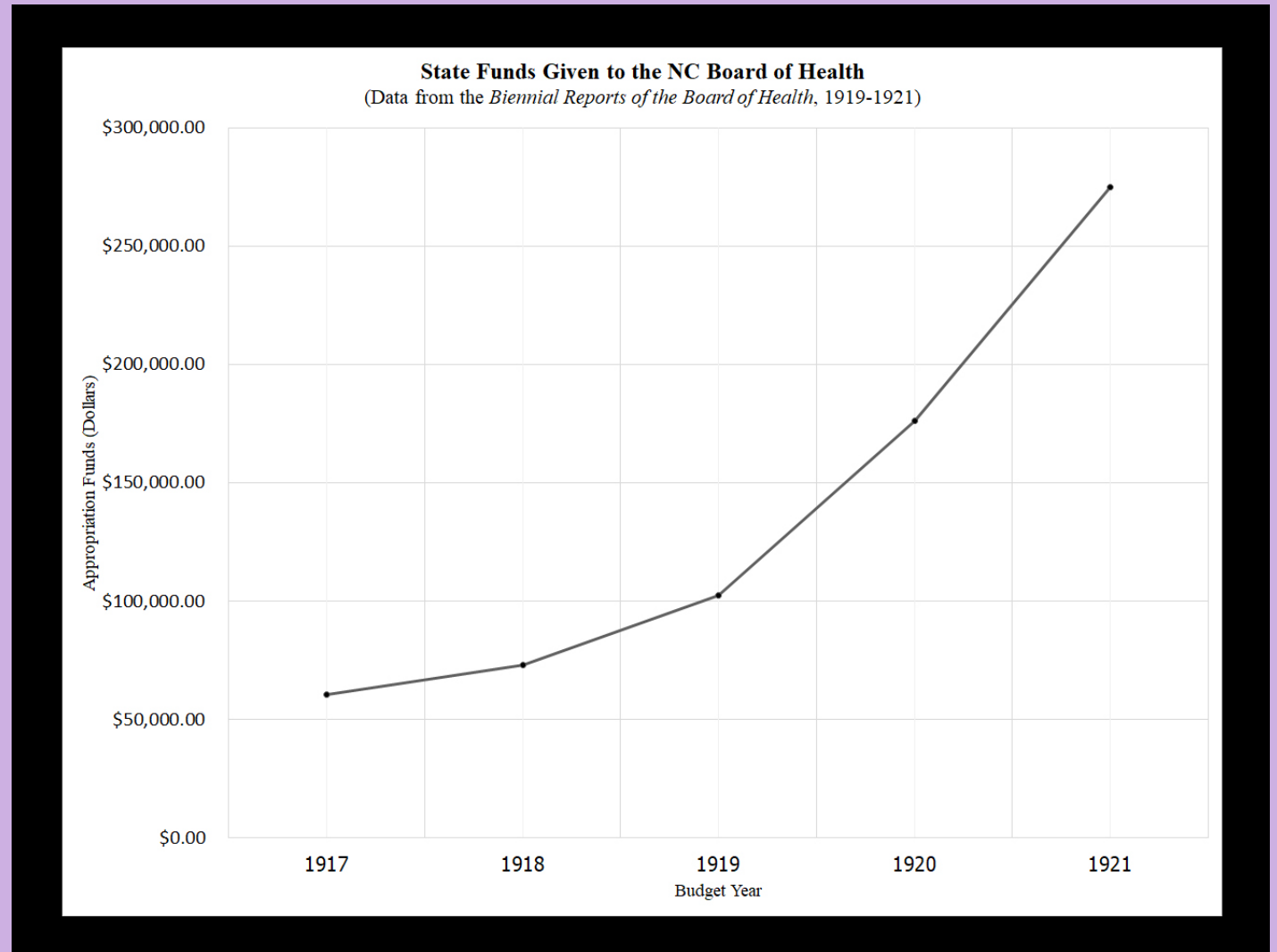


Image Credit: Graph created by the author. Data pulled from Biennial Report of the North Carolina State Board of Health. Raleigh, N.C.: The Board, 1919-1920. Biennial Report of the North Carolina State Board of Health. Raleigh, N.C.: The Board, 1921.

Hospitals

- Dr. Charles O'Hagan Laughinghouse
- "Hospital For Pitt Imperative"



Image Credit: "Pitt Community Hospital," Laupus Library History Collections, (LL02.,09).

HOSPITAL FOR PITT IMPERATIVE; SHOULD CORRECT MISTAKE MADE

(By E. G. FLANAGAN)

I am simply calling to the attention of the voters of Pitt County, the mistake we made when we had the privilege of voting to establish a Community Hospital in Pitt County.

Our friend and soldier, Lieut. Col. Chas. O'H. Laughinghouse who is now fighting on foreign soil, to protect our homes and freedom, conceived the idea that a Community Hospital for Pitt County should be established in Greenville, for the benefit of all the people, both white and colored. There was an element of voters who argued that Dr. Laughinghouse's personal sacrifices of both time and money were being used to build a home for his own benefit and personal convenience. Let me say that I talked to Dr. Laughinghouse many times during his cam-

them two or three, and Pitt the richest of them all has not a Hospital within her borders.

I know that it was a great disappointment to Dr. Laughinghouse when the majority of people whom he loved and strived to serve, failed to support him in the establishment of the Hospital.

Would that I were capable of outlining some plans to build a Hospital in Greenville for the benefit of all of our people. There is no more God-fearing, Charitable or Patriotic people on earth than you will find in Pitt County:—a citizenship that has always done their duty to their Nation, their God, and to Humanity, with one exception, when they had an opportunity to vote for a Community Hospital for Pitt County, they were weighed in the balances and found wanting.

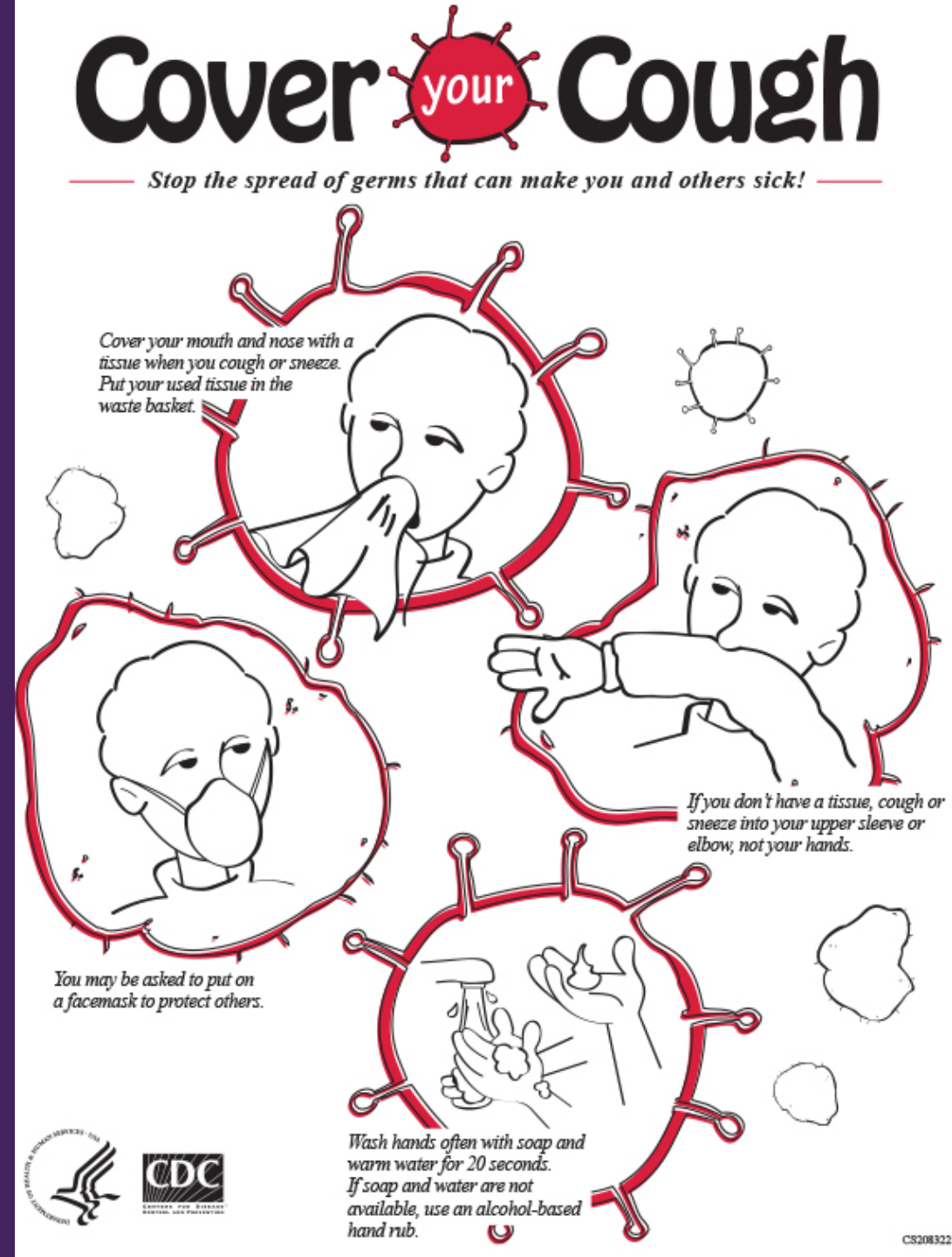
Image Credit: Greenville Daily News, October 28, 1918.

- Pitt Community Hospital
- Throughout the 1920s, new hospitals were built across the state.

Conclusion

- The Flu Today
- A Universal Vaccine?
- Flu Clinic at Laupus, October 30th, 9am – 1pm

Image Credit: CDC website.



CS208322

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