A DEADLY SECOND WAVE without SOCIAL DISTANCING



0. A DEADLY SECOND WAVE without SOCIAL DISTANCING - Story Preface

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Although the "authorities" urged people to avoid gathering in crowds, during the time of Spanish Flu, it was difficult to stay home when major announcements excited everyone. People in Philadelphia, where more than 12,000 individuals died of Spanish Flu in October of 1918, gathered the following month to celebrate the Armistice announcement on the 11th of November, 1918. A similar gathering at Trafalgar Square, in London, caused many Brits to fatally "catch the flu." Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

Whether they were coming home from the war or preparing to leave for overseas duty, America's protectors became the source of the country's most immediate danger in the late summer and early fall of 1918.

First it was the sailors who returned to places like Boston's Commonwealth Pier or Philadelphia's Naval Yard. Then it was the soldiers who traveled on overcrowded troop trains infecting each other, and civilians, along the way. Within three weeks, influenza had spread throughout the whole country.

When the second wave of Spanish Flu struck, it did so violently and with little, if any, warning. One minute a person was apparently healthy. Within an hour or two, the patient was nearly prostrate. Fevers could quickly reach as high as 105 degrees Fahrenheit. Sick people said they felt as though they'd been hit with a club.

American's surgeon general, Rupert Blue, desperately tried to find a cure. He, like others around the world, was unsuccessful. To manage the contagion, health officials alternated the head-end and foot-end of sick beds.

People, everywhere, wore masks. From postal carriers (delivering mail), to secretaries (typing letters), to policemen (walking their beats), masks were part of the dress code. Streetcar conductors were known to turn-away potential passengers who weren't wearing masks.

For most, the illness passed after several days. But between five and ten percent of those infected with the virus developed severe and massive pneumonia. It was that complication which caused so many deaths. And ... it was that complication which caused survivors to later recall: "We Heard the Bells."

Americans supported the war in Europe with money as well as men. Much of the money was raised through war bonds or war stamps. As President Woodrow Wilson gave a speech in the U.S. Senate, supporting the right of American women to vote, Philadelphians prepared for a major rally to support the war through Liberty Bonds.

As word began to spread that the Russian Tsar, Nicholas II, and his entire family had been murdered by the Bolsheviks (the October Revolution, ushering in the era of the Soviet Union, had occurred one year earlier), people in America were utterly preoccupied with other matters. Then, as the first wave of Spanish Flu seemed to dissipate, a second wave was about to begin.

On the 28th of September, 1918, people in Philadelphia gathered for a "Liberty Loan" parade. Within days of that crowd-packed event, the flu pandemic had crippled the "city of brotherly love."

Before the month of October was over, Spanish Flu and its complications had killed more than 12,000 Philadelphia citizens. The influenza death toll for the entire country that month was a staggering 175,000.

The world, truly, was in chaos.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-DEADLY-SECOND-WAVE-without-SOCIAL-DISTANCING-Spanish-Flu-Pandemic

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/A-DEADLY-SECOND-WAVE-without-SOCIAL-DISTANCIN

Questions 2 Ponder

What Illness Put the World in Chaos?

When Americans experienced “the worst epidemic the United States has ever known,” the U.S. was not alone in battling the disaster. People around the world were sharing the same fate.

In Japan, posters encouraged the public with words like:

If treated quickly it gets better right away.

That, alas, was not always the case.

Since so many people were sick - historians estimate that 25% of Americans got sick with Spanish Flu - overflowing hospitals could not accommodate all the patients. Instead, people were often treated in tents.

Can you imagine being deathly ill and treated in a tent? What would that be like?

Can you imagine being a health-care provider, called-upon to treat patients who have a virus you know causes people to die? What would that be like?

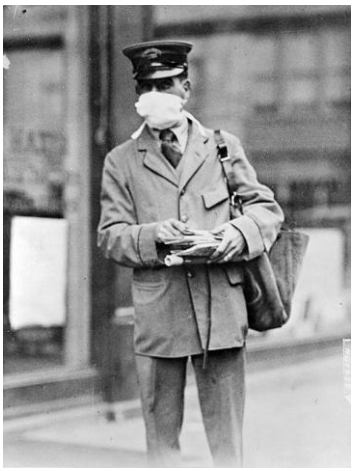
How would you handle being personally, and routinely, exposed to a virus which has no-known preventive vaccines?

What do you think made Spanish Flu so deadly?

Media Stream



Lack of Social Distancing Leads to More Spanish Flu
Philadelphia gathering - Armistice Day 11 November 1918 - online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.
View this asset at:
http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lack-of-Social-Distancing-Leads-to-More-Spanish-Flu



Flu Outbreak - Postal Carriers Wear Masks
Photo online, courtesy U.S. National Archives - image 165-WW-269B-15.
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Flu Outbreak - Secretaries Wear Masks
Photo online, courtesy U.S. National Archives - image 165-WW-269B-16
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Flu Outbreak - Police Wear Masks

Photo online, courtesy U.S. National Archives - image 165-WW-269B-25.

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Flu Outbreak of 1918 - Wearing Masks on Street Cars

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Flu Outbreak - Native Americans Not Spared

Photo and description online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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Buying Liberty Bonds - WWI

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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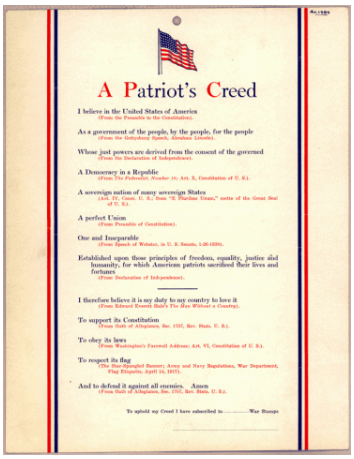


Raising WWI Funds in the US

Image online, courtesy Library of Congress.

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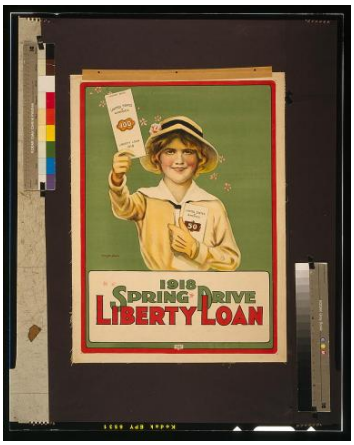
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War Poster: A Patriot's Creed

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

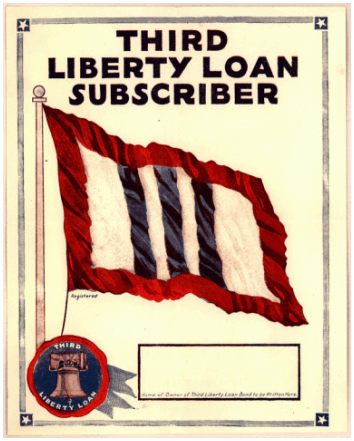
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Raising Money for the War

Image online, courtesy the U.S. Library of Congress.

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Liberty Bonds

Image online, courtesy New York State Archives.

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Exposure to Spanish Flu - Philadelphia

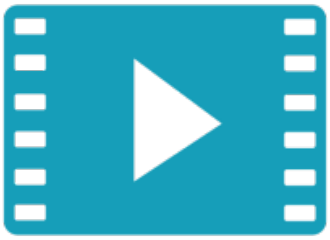
U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph - Photo NH 41730. Online, courtesy U.S. National Archives and the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command.

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A DEADLY SECOND WAVE

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Spanish Flu - "We Heard the Bells"

"We Heard the Bells," a film by Lisa Laden and narrated by S. Epatha Merkerson. Online, courtesy FedFlix at Archive.org.

Executive Producer for CMS: Dr. James Randolph Farris, M.D.

A presentation from the U.S. Department Of Health And Human Services, Centers For Medicare & Medicaid Services.

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