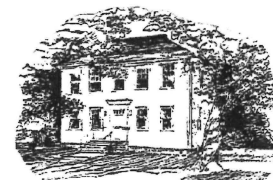


IMAGES

...THEN AND NOW

From the Indian Hill Historical Society



Buckingham Lodge
1861

Looking Back at the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1920

In 1918 an influenza virus spread around the world killing more people than any other outbreak of disease in history. Estimates are that between 20 and 100 million died worldwide, and more than half a million in the US. The pandemic lasted two years. Commonly called the Spanish Flu, it was deemed remarkable because usually flu kills the elderly and infants, but the majority of its fatalities were young adults in the prime of their lives.

The first significant outbreak in the nation occurred at Ft. Riley, Kansas in March 1918. Here over 50,000 Army troops, mostly recruits, were stationed preparing to be deployed overseas in World War I. Men were barracked together in close quarters, providing fertile ground for contagion. Within three weeks, physicians at the Army hospital treated 1100 men, all sick from severe influenza. Only 38 died, but the soldiers who survived went to Europe and transmitted the disease there.

The flu rebounded to the states at the conclusion of the war. It spread very rapidly especially in crowded cities.. It is believed that the virus became more virulent as it mutated over time. About 20 percent of the flu's victims had a mild case and recovered, but the vast majority perished within hours or days. Fatigue, high fever, chills, sore throat, sniffles, and muscle aches were common symptoms at the outset. As the disease progressed, bacteria attacked the afflicted's lungs, clogging them and destroying air sacs. Patients had difficulty breathing, became unconscious, developed a blue tint on their faces, black feet, and coughed up blood stained sputum before expiring.



Doctors, nurses, and undertakers were overworked and hospitals and cemeteries were overcrowded. Nursing shortages were so acute that the Red Cross asked local businesses to allow workers to have a day off if they volunteered in hospitals. Cities that ran out of coffins converted streetcars into hearses to keep up with demand.

Cities enacted a variety of different ordinances in an attempt to restrict contagion. Public gatherings were outlawed and venues (e.g. movie halls, dance halls, saloons, soda shops) were closed. Handshakes were illegal. Funerals could only last 15 minutes. Stores were forbidden to hold sales. Railroads

required passengers to have signed certificates of good health, and gauze masks were required wear in certain areas. Schools were closed and church services were cancelled. Chicago police officers were told to arrest anyone sneezing or coughing in public.

Placards appeared saying *Spitting equals Death* or *Obey the laws and wear the gauze; Protect your jaws from septic paws*. A catchy little rhyme was sung by schoolchildren as they jumped rope. The lyrics were "I had a little bird, And his name was Enza, I opened the window, And in flew Enza."

The pandemic ended in 1920 when the flu disappeared. But it had taken its toll, affecting the lives of people in every community, even Indian Hill. Robert Krohn Livingston, a Cincinnati native and Cornell University engineering graduate who was decorated with honors after his frontline service as a Lieutenant with the American Expeditionary Forces in France in World War I died from influenza at age 24. His father established Camp Livingston in memory of his only son. The camp on north Given Road hosted more than 15,000 campers over five decades. The camp's recreation hall was the site of current day Livingston Lodge.