

0. PICTURES OF CHAOS - Story Preface

1. WAS IT LIKE SARS?

2. ALBERT GITCHELL GETS SICK

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9. SWINE FLU (Influenza A H1N1) OUTBREAK of 2009

Spanish Flu also severely impacted Japan. The caption of this [1919 poster](#) wishfully states: "If treated quickly it gets better right away." Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

Pictures from official archives provide a glimpse of those troubled times when Americans experienced "the [worst epidemic](#) the United States has ever known."

- As flu quickly spread, local governments around the country closed places where people congregate. Theaters were [shut down](#). So were schools where students, like those in [San Diego](#), wore face masks.
- During October of 1918, as the war took its toll on soldiers and treasured European buildings (like the St. Quentin Cathedral in France), the Spanish Flu took its toll on the U.S. population. More Americans [died in October](#) of that year than any other month during the epidemic.
- [Flu villages](#), where sick people did their best to cope in [tents](#), were another way to [isolate](#) the well from the ill.
- Convalescing [patients](#) were cared for outdoors. Despite such precautions, at least 25% of the U.S. population got the flu during 1918.
- Nurses, who cared for patients outdoors, also [drew their water](#) outside. Doctors, nurses and other health-care providers were all exposed to the rapidly spreading virus.
- By November, the worst month of deaths had passed. But doctors at Love Field, in Texas, were still [spraying](#) the throats of soldiers in an effort to ward off the illness.
- In February of 1919, American soldiers (like this unfortunate flu [victim](#) in Bordeaux) were still dying in France.
- Alexander Graham Bell (in a [letter](#) to his wife) [discussed](#) the devastating effects of Spanish Influenza.

People everywhere were debilitated by the disease. But because so many countries were involved in World War I, censorship in belligerent nations kept the bad news, for the most part, out of the papers. That, at least in part, may help to explain why a worldwide [20th century disaster](#) is so little-known today.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/PICTURES-OF-CHAOS-Spanish-Flu-Pandemic>

Questions 2 Ponder

Why Is the 20th-Century's Most Widespread Disaster so Little-Known?

Although people throughout the world were struck-down or debilitated by Spanish Flu, the full extent of its disastrous impact was not widely known at the time, and is not widely known now.

If information about the true extent of Spanish Flu's impact on warring countries were known by the enemy, would that have made the impacted countries more vulnerable? Explain your answer.

Did "The Great War" prevent countries from working together to better understand Spanish Flu and to find a way to prevent, cure or treat it? Why, or why not?

Do you think nations who are at odds today - even if they are not fighting a war - could work together to better curb, or prevent, deadly illnesses and other types of disasters (like widespread hunger and lack of clean water)? Explain your answer.

Did Censorship Play a Role in Downplaying News about Spanish Flu?

Do you think censorship, during World War One, may have played a role in holding-back (or minimizing) information on the number of people who were sick, or dying, of Spanish Flu? Explain your answer.

Do countries tend to keep quiet about anything which makes them seem vulnerable, even if that is only a perception? Explain your answer.

Before you read this story, did you know that the World-War-One-era outbreak of Spanish Flu was the worst epidemic the U.S. has ever known? If not, why do you think this is "news" now, a century later?

Can you imagine knowledge about a worldwide pandemic, which is causing millions of people to die, being kept as quiet in the 21st century as it was in the 20th?

Media Stream



Spanish Flu in Japan

Image of 1919 Japanese poster, regarding Spanish Flu, online courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spanish-Flu-in-Japan>



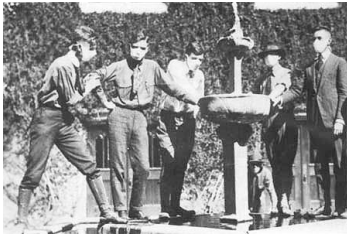
Theater Closure Notice - Flu Pandemic

Image online, courtesy Museum of History and Industry.

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<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Theater-Closure-Notice-Flu-Pandemic>



Students Wearing Masks - Flu Pandemic

Image online, courtesy [San Diego History Center](#).

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Flu Villages

Image, described above, gathered into a scrapbook by Gertrude Smith and maintained by the Otis Historical Archives at the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

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Tents Housing the Sick - Spanish Flu

Image, described above, gathered into a scrapbook by Gertrude Smith and maintained by the Otis Historical Archives at the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Tents-Housing-the-Sick-Spanish-Flu>



Flu Village Tents - Massachusetts in 1919

Image, described above, online courtesy Forgotten New England.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Flu-Village-Tents-Massachusetts-in-1919>



Military Patients - Spanish Flu

Image online, courtesy National Museum of Health and Medicine, Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (Smith 3).

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Spanish Flu - Spraying Soldiers' Throats

U.S. Army Signal Corps image (Reeve 33986), maintained by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology at the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

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View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spanish-Flu-Spraying-Soldiers-Throats>



American Flu Victim in Bordeaux

Image, described above, maintained by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology at the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

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View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/American-Flu-Victim-in-Bordeaux>



Spanish Flu - Drawing Water to Assist a Patient

Image online, courtesy Otis Archives (now maintained at the National Museum of Health and Medicine.

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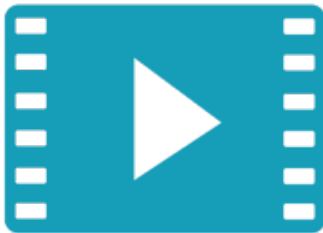
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PICTURES OF CHAOS

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Spanish Flu - More Deaths from Flu Than WWI Injuries

Online, courtesy Factual TV channel at YouTube.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Spanish-Flu-More-Deaths-from-Flu-Than-WWI-Injuries>