



Artifacts and Anchors

A quarterly newsletter for Members, Volunteers, and Friends of the Kittery Historical & Naval Society



1918 INFLUENZA AND TODAY

As we shelter at home and try to stay safe from Covid-19, the history of the influenza pandemic of 1918 offers insights into issues we face today.

The “Spanish flu” pandemic of 1918/19 was the deadliest in history, infecting an estimated 500 million people, one-third of the world’s population. Between 50 and 100 million people died, including 675,000 in the United States. The origin of the virus is the subject of debate, but it is agreed that it was not “Spanish.” Combatant countries in World War I did not allow press to report casualties or news that would weaken morale, so reports of the beginning of the pandemic were suppressed in the U.S., France, and U.K. Spain was a neutral country and the Spanish press reported on the epidemic widely. The King of Spain Alfonso XXIII, was reported to have contracted the flu. Because news of the influenza came from Spain, it was mistakenly assumed that the flu had its beginnings there. (The Spanish called it “the French flu.”)

Wherever the influenza began, it spread rapidly throughout the US Navy and Army, both here and abroad. The “first wave” of the influenza strain, in the spring of 1918, was less lethal than the later “second wave,” which spread worldwide that fall. Mortality was highest among healthy young people aged 20–40. Kittery, the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and the seacoast area were not immune. The Annual Reports of the Town of Kittery recorded no deaths at the Naval Hospital in 1916. In

1917 there were 15 deaths with an average age of 20. 53 deaths were reported at the Naval Hospital in 1918, with an average age of 23.

Maine sent young men from all over the state to train at Ft. Devens in Massachusetts, one of the first sites



Naval Hospital, Portsmouth (NH) Navy Yard

of the “second wave.” In 1918 there were no vaccines to protect from the virus and no antibiotics to treat secondary infections. The infection spread especially rapidly in military barracks, theaters, churches, public transportation, and schools. Infection often progressed rapidly to mortality. Maine’s Board of Health had no authority to order statewide measures to control the spread of infection; orders to close public places, schools, and churches came from local health authorities. Portsmouth, Kittery, York, Eliot, South Berwick, and Berwick formed one “sanitary district” in spring 1918 to control health issues around the shipyard. There was a severe statewide shortage of nurses and physicians. The Red Cross solicited the

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help of women willing to help care for the sick, both in homes and in hospitals. Local groups formed “diet kitchens,” where volunteers prepared food to take to suffering families.

We have combed the newspapers of the time for information about how the pandemic affected Kittery, the shipyard, and the surrounding areas, and also to find out how people in the area rallied to help. We also include material from a timeline of the pandemic in Maine prepared by Maine.gov.

**59 CASES AT
NAVAL PRISON**

There are 59 cases of the Spanish gripe at the Naval prison in this navy yard and more than a dozen cases in the yard hospital. The number of cases here, however, has been kept down to the minimum.

Portsmouth Herald, Sept. 17, 1918

**See the newspaper accounts
on pages 4 and 5.**



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From the PRESIDENT

Two hundred years ago, on March 15, 1820, Maine became the 23rd of the United States. Unfortunately, observations of our bicentennial have been cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Coincidentally, while Maine was celebrating its centennial in 1920 the world was recovering from World War I and the even more deadly 1918 Flu Pandemic.

One of the most disappointing aspects of the stay-at-home policies for us is that we have not been able to open the Museum as we usually do in April. Museum Director Kim Sanborn and our volunteers have made good use of the winter and now the lockdown to build new displays, rearrange existing displays and to work on entering our paper catalog records into our computer. The Museum is all ready to open with all kinds of new things to see, and we are anxiously awaiting the day when we can show them to you.

We do not yet have an opening date for the Museum. The Trustees and Museum Director are discussing how to open in a way that is both legal and safe for our volunteers and the visiting public. As we look forward to opening, along with the pandemic related issues, we find that we have some very important needs that require our attention.

The first is the need for volunteers. The days and hours that the Museum is open is dependent on how many trustees and volunteers we have. As we look at the number of volunteers we have for this season, we are having to seriously consider being open at least one day less than in previous years. If you are in a position to be able to spend just two hours a week helping out at the front desk, please contact us. We also have a continuing need for volunteers for data entry in our catalog system, for research and for other work around the museum.

Our second need is financial. Since the museum is not open, we are missing our normal admissions income. Along with admissions, membership dues are a substantial part of our operating budget. If you are already a member, please use the enclosed envelope to renew your membership. If you are not already a member, please consider joining. All new and renewal members will receive a printed copy of our Bicentennial booklet "A Brief History of Kittery." Please help the Kittery Historical and Naval Society community collect, preserve and display the history of our remarkable town.

Bob
Bob Gray

From our library:

MANNERS

Culture and Dress

IN THE

Best American Society

by Richard A. Wells, A.M.,
King, Richardson & Co., Publishers,
1890

CORNER LOAFERS.

No gentleman will stand in the doors of hotels, nor on the corners of the street, gazing impertinently at the ladies as they pass. That is such an unmistakable sign of a loafer, that one can hardly imagine a well-bred man doing such a things.

From the DIRECTOR

Hello Friends,

Hope this finds you and your families healthy. What an interesting time in history we are living in.

Here in the Museum, although we have been closed for the winter as usual, we have been busy with some major changes. New exhibits are finished. Many other displays have been updated. We also have new merchandise in our gift shop including “Maine 200th” items.

As we move forward with a “new normal,” we will strive to keep our volunteers and visitors safe and healthy, per State guidelines. We are still working to refine what this means for the Kittery Historical and Naval Museum. We will keep you updated on our Facebook page and website, both of which have been revamped over the past few months.

Currently, some of our volunteers are working remotely to continue to digitize our collections. Other volunteers are researching from home to carry on the important work we do to examine and preserve our history.

At this time the Museum needs you more than ever! But not in the Museum (Stay Home and Stay Safe). Still, we need your support. In an ordinary year, by June we would be welcoming visitors through our doors. The admissions, sales from our gift shop, and donations that we receive keep this place running. We are looking forward to a time when we can again invite you to wander through Kittery’s past, explore our new displays, and discover items that have been uncovered in our archives.

Members like you are SO valuable to the Kittery Historical and Naval Museum. There is an envelope enclosed with this newsletter—if you have not done so already, please renew your membership today! And we look forward to seeing you soon!

We will get through this together,

Kim

Kim Sanborn, Director



New exhibits for 2020

- Kittery Point Through the Centuries
- The Gallery featuring Art and Artists of Kittery
- Kittery’s Working Waterfront



Museum Publications

This year, we celebrate the Bicentennial of Maine statehood in 1820. Now is also a good time to learn about Kittery’s history, with a town anniversary coming in 2022. Our Society will recognize these events with several publications. The first, “A Brief History of Kittery,” is available today as a free, 16-page booklet. In honor of the Bicentennial, the story of Maine statehood is included in the book.



As town offices re-open, we hope to make this booklet widely available. Until then, you can get a copy at the Museum or find it on our website: kitterymuseum.com by clicking on the History tab. We know of nothing else quite like this booklet, either here or among other museums. Please share it to broaden the understanding of our town’s history. And watch for more Society publications in the future!

Kittery and the Influenza Epidemic of 1918

A sampling of local newspaper accounts of the effect of the influenza epidemic of 1918 on Kittery and the Portsmouth Navy Yard as reported in the months from September to December. All clippings are from the Portsmouth Herald (Portsmouth, NH) unless noted.

September

September 7 *

THE FIRST SOLDIER AT CAMP DEVENS BECOMES ILL WITH INFLUENZA

Just 35 miles northwest of Boston this camp, like so many other military camps, was hurriedly erected the summer of 1917 just after President Wilson and Congress declared war against Germany and entered the United States into World War I.

Built to hold a maximum of 36,000 soldiers, Camp Devens is now crammed with over 45,000 soldiers, most of whom have been recently assigned there from Maine and other New England states after the draft was expanded from 21 to 35 year old men to include any healthy men ages 18 to 45 years old.



Naval Prison, Portsmouth (NH) Navy Yard

September 14

59 CASES AT NAVAL PRISON

There are 59 cases of the Spanish gripe at the Naval prison in this navy yard and more than a dozen cases in the yard hospital. The number of cases, however, has been kept down to a minimum.

September 18

INFLUENZA SPREADING IN THIS CITY

The cases of influenza in this section are increasing although not as much so as in Boston and other places. There is a steady increase at the navy yard and at the prison there are now 160 cases and many have developed into pneumonia, but no deaths have been reported.

There are a good many cases among the workman at the navy yard and at the Atlantic ship yard upwards of 100 cases being reported.

NO CASES ON SHIP

Owing to the epidemic of Spanish Grip no exchange of prisoners is permitted between the prison ship Southery and the Naval Prison. The Southery so far has been free from the malady.

September 23

DIED AT NAVAL HOSPITAL

E.J. Cowans, a sailor whose home was in Philadelphia, and A. F. Flanagan, a sailor who enlisted at Chicago, died on Saturday night at the Naval hospital, after an illness of only a few days with pneumonia, which developed from influenza. They were the two first deaths from the disease at the hospital.

September 24

TWO DEATHS AT NAVAL HOSPITAL

There were two deaths at the Naval Hospital on Monday from pneumonia resulting from the influenza. They were both sailors, T. J. Seidel and R. D. Andrews.

There are many more very critical cases and more deaths are expected. The number of new cases on Monday was not as great as the preceding days and the naval officials think it is at its height

September 25

OUTSIDE MACHINISTS START AID

The candy counter in building No. 89 outside machine shop at the navy yard, which was started about three months ago has netted \$960, to date. The directors of the enterprise are Fred W. Hayes and R. J. Ferrin. At a recent meeting it was voted to let the Public Health Services Commis-



Portsmouth Herald, Sept. 25, 1918

sion draw upon the fund for \$600 to help support two nurses inside the hospital and two outside during the Spanish influenza epidemic. The balance of the account will be used to help the destitute families in Portsmouth and vicinity who have sickness and are without aid during this trying time.

September 25

FOUR DEATHS FROM INFLUENZA

There were four deaths from pneumonia resulting from influenza at the Naval Hospital on Tuesday... There were, however, a great many cases estimated as high as 1,000 in the city.

September 26

INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC SHOWS NO INCREASE

Reports from the shipyards, navy yard and hospitals showed no further increase in influenza cases today. The government officials were warm in their praise of the determination here to promptly check the epidemic. The germ came here with a number of infected naval prisoners, and from there it communicated to the workmen. Later two ships arriving at the yard had a number of cases. The most serious cases have been at the Naval Prison and there were two deaths there today.

September 27

KITTERY POINT

The schools closed in town on Thursday until a later date, owing to the prevailing epidemic of influenza.

September 30

DEATH RATE FROM INFLUENZA INCREASING

The death list from influenza and the resulting pneumonia for the past twenty-four hours was eight in this city and two at the navy hospital. The number of new cases are, however, on the decrease.

October

October 2

KITTERY

Eugene Lewis of North Kittery who is in training at Camp Devens, is reported being very ill.

Mr. and Mrs. David Walker of Kittery Depot visited their son, Dwight F. Walker at Camp Devens on Sunday.

October 4

U.S. SURGEON GENERAL

The only way to stop the spread of the influenza is to close churches, schools, theaters, and public institutions in every community where the epidemic has developed, in the opinion of the U.S. Surgeon General Blue of the Public Health Service.

"There is no way to put a nationwide closing order into effect," he said today, "as this is a matter which is up to the individual communities."

From H. P. Gardiner Executive Secretary of the State Safety Committee: "Canvass your town thoroughly for women who will volunteer as nurses in the present emergency.

"It is not necessary that they be experienced or trained nurses.

"You can include women who have practical experience in the home. Ask each if she can and will volunteer for nursing in this State or elsewhere at regular nurses' wages with her traveling expenses paid..."

KITTERY **

Joseph W. Cutts has returned to Camp Devens, having been called home by the death of his sister, Marjorie.

October 5

FIFTY GIRLS OFFER THEIR SERVICES

Will Act as Assistant Nurses During Epidemic

Fifty girls employed in the electrical shop at the navy yard as female operators, have offered their services as assistants to nurses in the Public Health services during the present epidemic.

* "1918 Pandemic Influenza in Maine" (2020). Influenza in Maine: 1918 Epidemic.2. https://digitalmaine.com/flu_1918/2

Many Affected
Several cases of Spanish Influenza
are reported among the inmates of the
naval prison and the medical force
there are on the jump.

Portsmouth Herald, Sept. 17, 1918

BOARD OF HEALTH CLOSES SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, THEATRES

THE PORTSMOUTH HERALD
First in News — Circulation Greatest

THE HERALD Always in The Lead

VOL. XXXIV, NO. 3 PORTSMOUTH, N. H., WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1918. PRICE TWO CENTS

Portsmouth Herald, Sept. 25, 1918

CLEAR WEATHER
KILLS GRIP GERM

(By Associated Press)
 Boston, Oct. 1.—No further increase in the total number of influenza cases in this city is looked for by the health authorities. Dr. Wm. C. Woodward, Health Commissioner, stated today that the present clear weather was destructive to the influenza germ.

Portsmouth Herald, Oct. 1, 1918

November

December

October 8

Dr. Bristol (Maine Health Commissioner) noted that most of the influenza cases in this state are traceable to people who have gone to Massachusetts, particularly to Camp Devens, and brought the germ of the disease back with them.

October 11 **

It is said that a United States Navy doctor, who is attached to the Kittery navy yard and who resides in Kittery Point has been especially kind during the prevailing epidemic and has rendered valuable service in some desperate cases.

October 15 KITTERY POINT

Liberal contributions including fresh eggs, roast chickens, vegetables, sugar, rice, butter, grape juice, oranges, blanc mange, paraffin paper, Japanese napkins, sea moss, paper cartons for delivery, as well as money, has been received by Mrs. J. C. Robinson for the diet kitchen at Kittery Point. Fresh eggs are especially acceptable as it is almost impossible to buy them.

Miss Elizabeth Payne and Mrs. Josephine Frisbee have been making gauze masks for use in the sick room from gauze contributed liberally by Mrs. Louis Parady, and Mrs. John Howells has been furnishing gauze masks. These may be obtained at Mrs. W.H. Tobey's store and at Mrs. Robinson's.

October 17 RAILROAD MAKING THE CARS SANITARY

The health officials are busy on the sanitary conditions of the cars on the trains running to the navy yard and the shipyards. The railroad officials are cooperating with the health men in the work.

The cars of these trains are cleaned as often as possible in this city, Newburyport, and at the Shattuck ship-

yard. Disinfectant is applied to every car and signs have been placed in the cars against spitting. At the Shattuck yard a man has been assigned to inspect the cars at the expense of the corporation and his word goes in regard to the proper care of the cars.

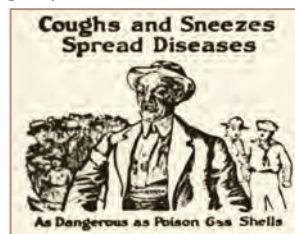
October 18 KITTERY

The Kittery Red Cross acknowledges the receipt of \$5 each from friends, also \$3 and \$1, of the Emergency Fund used during the present epidemic.

The Diet Kitchen of Portsmouth is still furnishing necessary supplies to the sick of Kittery and Eliot, and the need of workers is urgent. Any Kittery women who wish to aid can give their services at 9 or 12 o'clock daily, or can make custards at home and notify Miss Rosamund Thaxter, who will call for them.

October 18 KITTERY POINT **

Mrs. J.C. Robinson, assisted by some other ladies, has established a diet kitchen in her summer home and much food is being prepared and distributed among the sick and suffering in our village. The value of the good work being done by these kindly ladies at this time cannot be overestimated and it is in line with the many other good deeds they have quietly done before. Miss Rosamund Thaxter with her automobile has been most helpful also to the sick and needy in the distribution of Red Cross supplies and food. Kittery Point's own people who can, should send cooked food and other eatables to the diet kitchen, where it will be distributed to those needing help.



U.S. Public Health poster, 1918

November 1 **

KITTERY

Mrs. J.C. Robinson was obliged last week to close the diet kitchen which she has carried on at her home for the past few weeks, being called away to assist at another place where the influenza epidemic was very bad and her services sadly needed. In conducting the diet kitchen here Mrs. Robinson, assisted by many of Kittery Point's well known ladies, has done valuable service in furnishing food for households where there was need and the ones so remembered with nourishing food during sickness will not soon forget it. Miss Rosamund Thaxter and Clinton Chase were most kind with their automobiles for the delivery of food.

Church services were resumed on Sunday and public schools were reopened having been closed in compliance with an edict of the public health board owing to the epidemic of influenza.



Source: National Archive

November 11 **

At 11AM on November 11, 1918, World War I officially ended with the signing of the armistice with Germany.

November 19 **

Dr. Bristol stated that he firmly believes new legislation is needed by which the State Department is given greater power, and he will urge this upon the legislature that sits in January.

He said "At the present time, the State Department has no authority

that will permit it to assume charge of a situation such as has faced Maine during the past few months.

"All the work that has been done has been in assisting the local boards. A law should be passed that would give the State Department full power to handle an epidemic of any kind without interference from a local board.

"Additionally, a number of physicians and local boards of health have not done their duty in making daily reports of the disease."

Our greatest danger now, declare authorities, is the great American tendency to forget easily and believe the peril is over.

December 3 **

The appalling ravages of Spanish influenza in the country are perhaps best realized by the statement recently made, that more deaths have resulted in a little more than a month from this disease than our whole participation in the battles of the European War.

Our greatest danger now, declare authorities, is the great American tendency to forget easily and believe the peril is over.

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 for the grippe, the ingredients of which are simple and common, but are prepared by special process. This is absolutely harmless even to the baby. Use it and you will say "I had a very light attack." Public demonstration given in any hospital if arranged for.
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TISSUE BUILDER CO.,
 Kittery Depot, Me.

Portsmouth Herald, Oct. 18, 1918

** Biddeford Weekly Journal (Biddeford, Maine)

VOLUNTEER Spotlight

Visitors to the Kittery Historical and Naval Museum may see a dapper tweed-clad gentleman either in the Museum office chatting with Kim Sanborn, or heading up to the collections and library areas on the 2nd floor. Bill Littlefield has been involved in the Museum for over five years and a member of the KHNS for three years. Local historian and friend Don Hands introduced him to the Museum and the compelling history of Kittery and the area. Bill says “I had been by a thousand times, but never inside.”

Retiring after 36 years at UNH (“five at Security, one year delivering mail, and thirty years in the Library....”), Bill took on part-time work at the Albacore Museum, where he is the Historian Associate. In addition, Bill is a guide at Portsmouth’s Historic New England houses and at the Wentworth/Coolidge mansion, and a volunteer at the Navy Yard Museum. After he learned about the Kittery Museum, he began stopping by on Thursday afternoons on his way from the Navy Yard Museum to the Albacore Museum to chat with Kim Sanborn. Those chats led to volunteer work at the Kittery Museum. Bill’s degree in History from UNH and his professional library work made him invaluable in sorting and assessing the Museum’s military library collections to determine

which were or were not germane to Kittery, the Navy Yard, and/or nautical history. Other projects are on hold until we can all safely return to work at the Museum, but will take advantage of Bill’s library expertise and wide knowledge of military and local history.

Bill says “I am not a Mainer. I am one of those, if not ‘from away,’ I am at least from ‘over the bridge’... Exeter, New Hampshire. So I still have brackish, if not quite saltwater in my veins.” Bill is descended from Edmund Littlefield of Wells, Maine, who emigrated from Titchfield in Hampshire, England. “So it appears as though we have not gotten too far in four hundred years, but then again we did not have to. And it seems as if I am moving north—perhaps I will soon be back ‘over the bridge’ and finally a Mainer.”

Asked what he enjoys most about volunteering at the Museum, Bill says it is the people first, then the collections, the objects, and, of course, the stories. He says Kittery “is so much more than plazas and malls—you just have to look (and listen) a little. Every time I stop in I learn a lot—and in a



KHNM Volunteer Bill Littlefield

good way.” Bill says that his work has surprised him with “the continual serendipity—almost every time I come—of a book, paper, pamphlet or object which is of wonder and delight. What more in life does one want?” The Museum is very fortunate that Bill decided to visit us ‘over the bridge.’

Spotlight on Collections



Where Is It?

These photographs were taken by Douglas Armsden around 1957. The house, now gone, was built in Kittery between 1730 and 1740 by Capt. John Shapleigh. Do you know where it was located? Answer on page 8.

Gauze Masks

From *Oxford (Maine) Democrat*,
October 15, 1918

This letter is explanatory of the gauze mask, the use of which is urged by the state department of health as a protection against the infection of influenza and the group of other diseases spread by the droplets or particles of infectious matter ejected from the air passages. For a long while the surgeon has been wearing the gauze mask to protect the field of operation from any infectious germs that might be given off from his own mouth or nose; but there is now a wide movement to give physicians, nurses and other attendants and the associates with the sick, the protection which this device gives by holding back the infection which otherwise might be breathed in.

Volunteer Opportunities

Although the opening day of the Museum may be uncertain, opportunities still exist for volunteers.

FRONT DESK DOCENT:

To greet visitors, collect admission fees, answer visitor questions, see that exhibits and videos are working properly, and help make the Museum a welcoming place.

DIGITIZING RECORDS:

Enter data from paper accession logs using museum software. Training will be provided.

These positions would require a minimum commitment of two hours per week at the Museum.

If interested, contact
Kim Sanborn at
kitterymuseum@netzero.net

The results following the use of this protective measure have been so remarkable that those members of the medical profession who have been observers have been deeply impressed. For instance, at Camp Grant, Rockford, Ill., there was early this year, as in many other military camps, a great prevalence of disease spread by respiratory infection until the general use was made of the gauze mask. There have been many cases of infection of those who were exposed, but after the use of the mask became general, the system may be said to have been efficient in 95 per cent of the exposures to scarlet fever and is 100 per cent of the exposure to measles, so the surgeon of the camp reports.



Bettmann Archive/Getty Images

MAKING THE MASKS

- From gauze (often called cheese cloth in the dry goods stores), one yard wide, not of fine mesh and preferably woven from thread somewhat fluffy, cut on the selvage edge a piece 43 inches long. Cutting again on the selvage, divide the piece into 4 strips 9 inches wide.
- Fold each strip into halves, then into thirds, thus making six thicknesses of gauze. Turn in the raw edges and stitch the four sides. The mask now measures 7 by 8 inches.
- Put in three pleats on each of the 7 inch ends, the lower to be deeper than the other two to make room for the chin. When finished the pleated ends should be hardly more than 3 inches wide. Attach to each extreme corner a piece of tape one-fourth to one-half inch wide and 14 inches long. One pair of tapes tie around the head above the ears and the other around the neck. This style of mask fits the face better and is preferable to the kind earlier made by Red Cross workers without the pleats.
- Each person using these masks should have a supply so that he may change them frequently—after two or three hours' use. The used masks are ready for using again as soon as they are sterilized by boiling for five minutes and then dried."

NURSES WANTED.

Fourteen hundred (1400) men at the Bath shipyards have influenza and there are many cases at Kittery. On account of the lack of nurses, these men are not receiving proper attention.

Will You Help Care for Them?

Any man or woman volunteering to help care for these sufferers will receive nurses pay and travelling expenses.

If you are willing to assist, please notify us at once.

PUBLIC SAFETY COM.
Sanford Red Cross

Sanford (Maine) Tribune, October 4, 1918



Kittery Historical and Naval Museum
 200 Rogers Road
 Kittery, ME 03904



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**Proud to support
 the Kittery
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Answer to Where Is It? (p. 6): The hand-written text on the photo's back reads: "Ruins of the Shapleigh House built between 1730 and 1740 by Capt. John Shapleigh. It is still standing though in a dilapidated condition across the [Manson] road from the Shapleigh School in North Kittery. Capt. Shapleigh's father was killed by the Indians. The house has descended through Capt. John, Nicholas, Dennis F., Charles F., to Dr. Edward Everett Shapleigh of Kittery, the present [1957] owner. The last occupant was Chas. F. Shapleigh who died in 1906." Dr. E.E. Shapleigh (1868–1959) was practicing in Kittery during the time of the 1918 influenza pandemic.