

Like Fighting With a Ghost: The 'Spanish Flu' of 1918-1919

FORGOTTEN FOOTNOTE TO THE GREAT WAR

The 'Spanish Flu' was a highly contagious airborne virus that killed upwards of 100 million people worldwide between spring 1918 and summer 1919. Those worst affected were very young children under 5 years old, and previously fit and healthy men and women in their twenties and thirties. More people died of the 'Spanish Flu' in that single year than in the four years of the Black Death in the 14th century. It was a medical disaster for countries already devastated by the huge loss of life suffered in World War 1. However, very little was known about the 'Spanish Flu' until recent years. It remained a catastrophe largely overshadowed by the horrors of the First World War and overlooked by historians for decades.



Soldiers suffering from early cases of influenza in Fort Riley, Kansas in April 1918



The influenza first appeared in spring 1918. Germany, France, Britain and the United States all had media blackouts on any news that might damage morale amongst the war torn populations. In neutral Spain, however, wartime censorship rules allowed for reporting on influenza cases. Although there were many cases elsewhere at this time, it was the Spanish cases that were reported first. This is how the pandemic received the name 'Spanish Flu'.

Much debate surrounds the exact origins of the influenza. At the time many believed it was caused by the use of chemical warfare and poison gas together with the filth of lice and rat-infested trenches of the First World War. Many researchers, especially in the United States, believe it originated in Camp Funston in Fort Riley, Kansas; others suggest somewhere on the English Channel close to where many army camps were based. The immune systems of soldiers returning from the war was extremely low and this may have also contributed to the spread of the influenza.



Seattle police in 1918

Some researchers have also suggested the 'Spanish Flu' originated in China in a rare genetic shift of the typical influenza virus. Unfortunately, there is still no clear evidence as to its origins. Indeed, so little research has been conducted on this pandemic that many countries that suffered huge losses like Africa, China and Russia have no records at all of how many died from the influenza or from the secondary bacterial pneumonia.



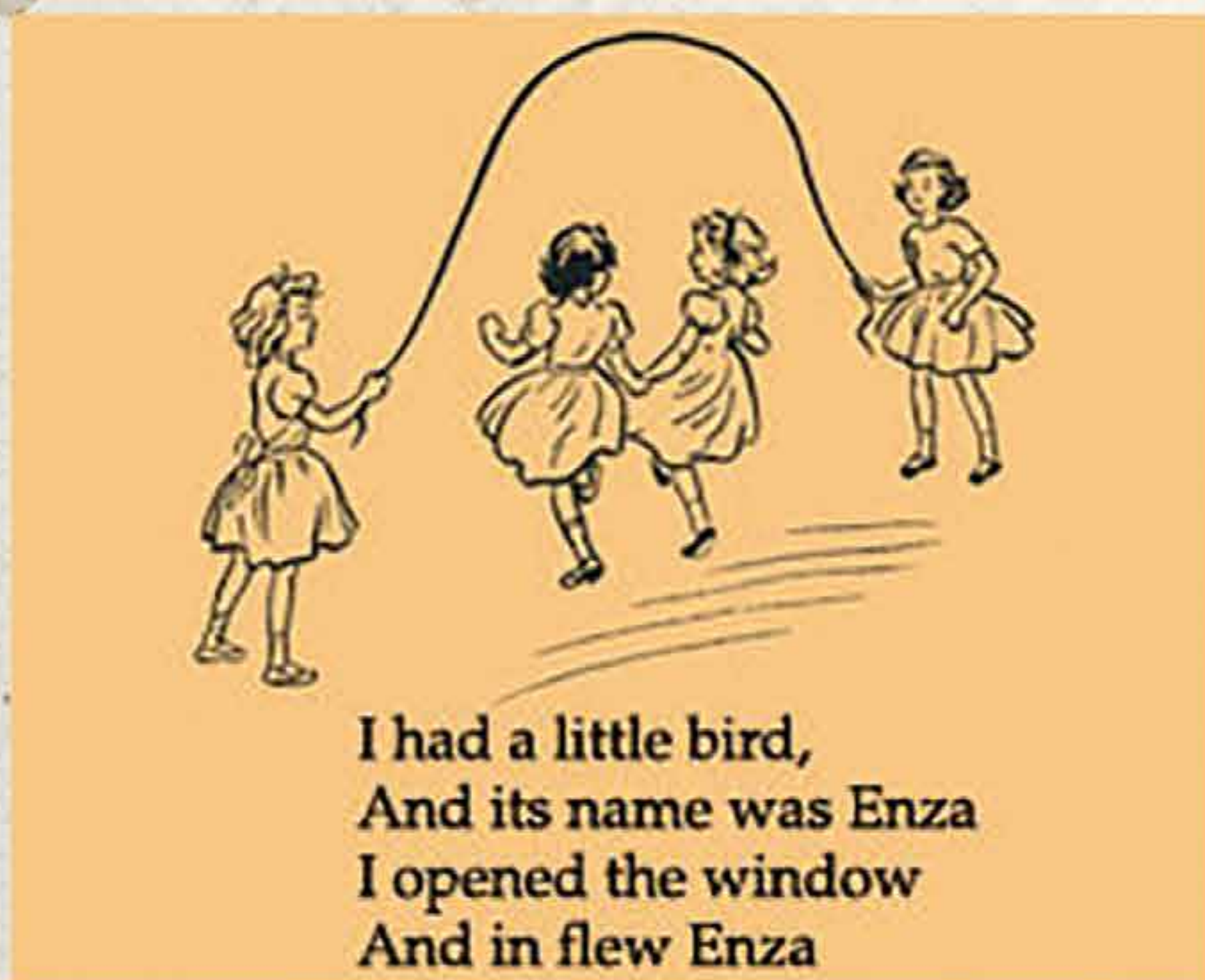
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THE 'SPANISH LADY'S CAMPAIGN OF DESTRUCTION'

The 'Spanish Flu' attacked in three phases. The first phase began in spring 1918. Soldiers were becoming ill with 'la grippe'. Symptoms included sore throats, headaches and a loss of appetite. The influenza was highly contagious but recovery was swift in many cases.



Soldiers were advised to gargle salt and water to combat symptoms



A total of 10,000 deaths were recorded in Britain between June and July but by November, this figure exceeded 70,000. According to the *Cork Examiner* on 28 November 1918, the Registrar-General reported that 5,088 people died in one week across 96 towns in England and Wales. A further 5,916 had died the previous week. Reports like these were common place at the time across continents.

The second onset brought an increasing number of respiratory complications and the severity of the influenza also intensified. Many of those affected suddenly experienced violent coughing fits, suffocation and catastrophic haemorrhaging. Death often came only hours after initial symptoms were presented during this deadlier phase of the pandemic. It became almost impossible for doctors and hospitals to keep accurate records of victims. This can explain why no accurate figures are available for how many died as a result of the 'Spanish Flu'.

During the summer of 1918, the 'Spanish Flu' began to spread rapidly across Europe. In Paris, 1,200 people died in one week alone. Elsewhere in France, 70,000 American troops had to be hospitalised and nearly a third of these troops died from the influenza. The *New York Times* reported that the Kaiser 'has fallen victim to the influenza which has been so prevalent in the German army.....he had gone home from the French front because of an attack of the Spanish grippe'. The Kaiser survived, but in total, at least 400,000 Germans died of the 'Spanish Flu'.

Then a second, more deadly phase began in September 1918. It spread worldwide across trade routes and shipping lines, coinciding with the demobilisation of thousands of soldiers returning home at the end of the First World War. The mass movement of men in armies and aboard naval ships, and the worldwide celebrations for Armistice Day contributed to the influenza's attack, what Catherine Arnold calls the 'Spanish Lady's campaign of destruction'.



'La grippe espagnole' arrives in Belgium, 1918



In early 1919, a third wave of the flu attacked. On 1 March 1919, the *Cork Examiner* reported on the findings at a conference held at the Institute of Hygiene in London the previous day. Nose and throat specialist Sir St. Clair Thomson said that "influenza was undoubtedly 'Splashed!' upon us by coughing and sneezing – even by laughing". According to the *Irish Times* report on the conference, Thomson also advised that "a person who coughed without putting up his hand or sneezed without using a handkerchief should be prosecuted for indecency". Furthermore, all speakers at the conference "emphasised the importance of good food and fresh air".

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A 'MYSTERIOUS MALADY' ARRIVES IN IRELAND



In less than one year, the 'Spanish Flu' infected some 800,000 people in Ireland and killed almost 21,000. This is a significant number when compared to the 27,405 Irishmen who lost their lives over four years of the First World War. Furthermore, as the Local Government Board suggested, it is likely that the actual death toll from the pandemic was higher. As was the case globally, many deaths were uncertified or were attributed to bronchitis and other causes rather than influenza.

In early summer 1918, the *Belfast News Letter* reported that the city had been struck by a "mysterious malady" resembling the influenza. By the end of June there were also newspaper reports that it had reached Tipperary, Cork, Dublin and Derry. Tralee's newspaper *The Liberator* reported on 4 July 1918 that "the scourge that has been upsetting the world from Teheran to London will soon have as many names as it has victims. The names now include – 'French Fever', 'Spanish Disease', 'Headache Sickness', 'Dizzy Dizzy', 'Booly Boshey', and 'Spanische Grippe'."

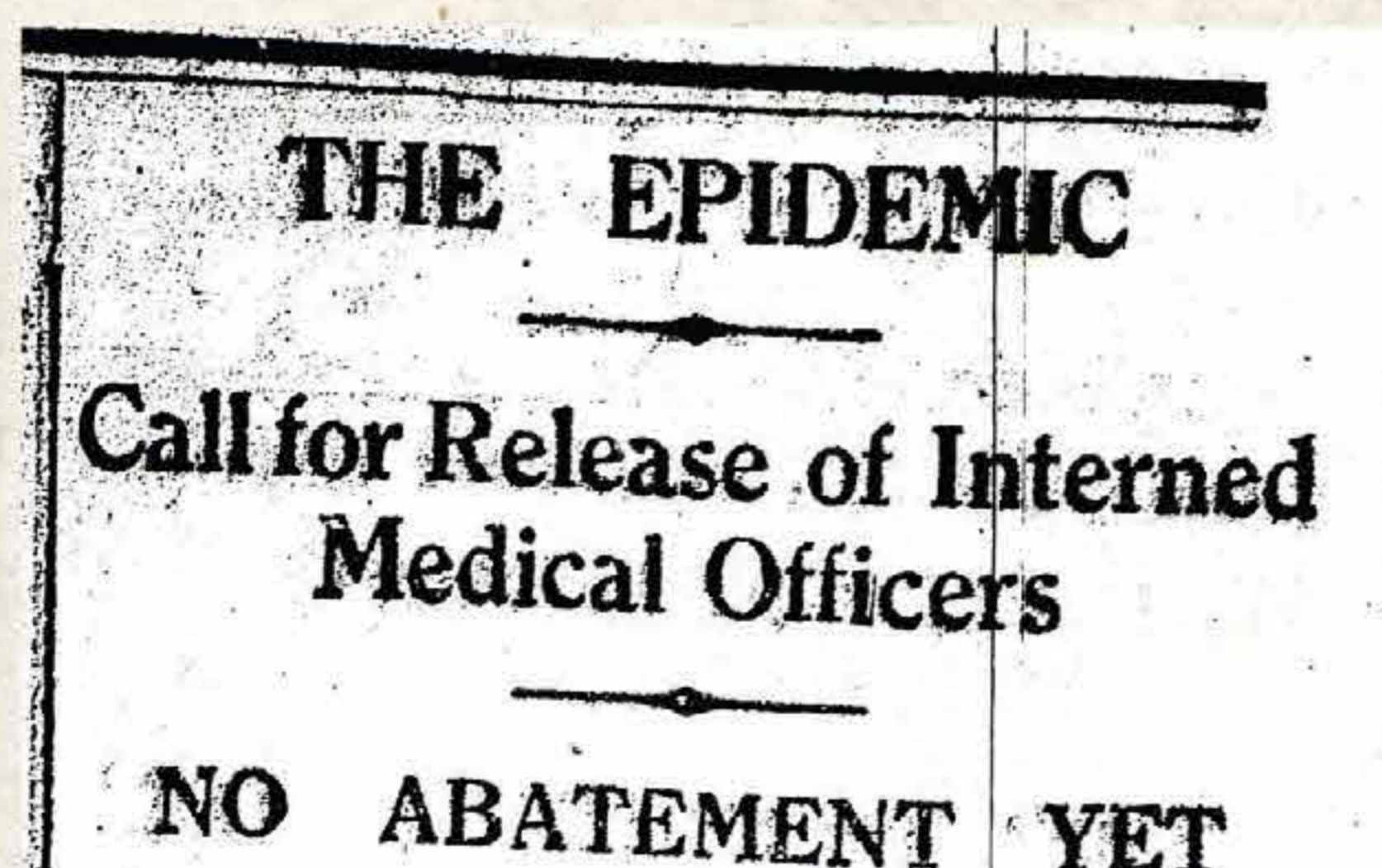
Donegal was very badly affected throughout the entire influenza period. The use of Lough Swilly as a naval base during the war and the treatment of sick soldiers and sailors in local hospitals played a key role in making Donegal "an influenza black spot". One Donegal woman recalled the fear and anxiety that surrounded the disease at the time when she explained that

People had no idea what caused it. It was a terrible, terrible flu and you were told to keep to the side of the road if someone in a house had it. People were very fearful and frightened of it.

The influenza in Ireland was particularly virulent in workhouses and hospitals. On 15 November 1918, Medical Superintendent F.C. Ellison reported from St. Mary's Hospital in Castlebar, County Mayo, that "this institution is, at this moment, passing through a crisis without parallel in its history".



St. Mary's Hospital in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, c.1918



'KEEP OUT OF CROWDED PLACES'

The second wave of influenza attacked between mid-October and December and was most deadly in Ulster and Leinster. On October 28, the *Cork Examiner* reported the warning from Sir Charles Cameron, Superintendent Medical Officer of the Public Health Department of Dublin Corporation to "keep out of crowded places". Cameron also "started the flushing of the whole city with carbolic acid" because areas of the city where petroleum works were situated were free from the epidemic.

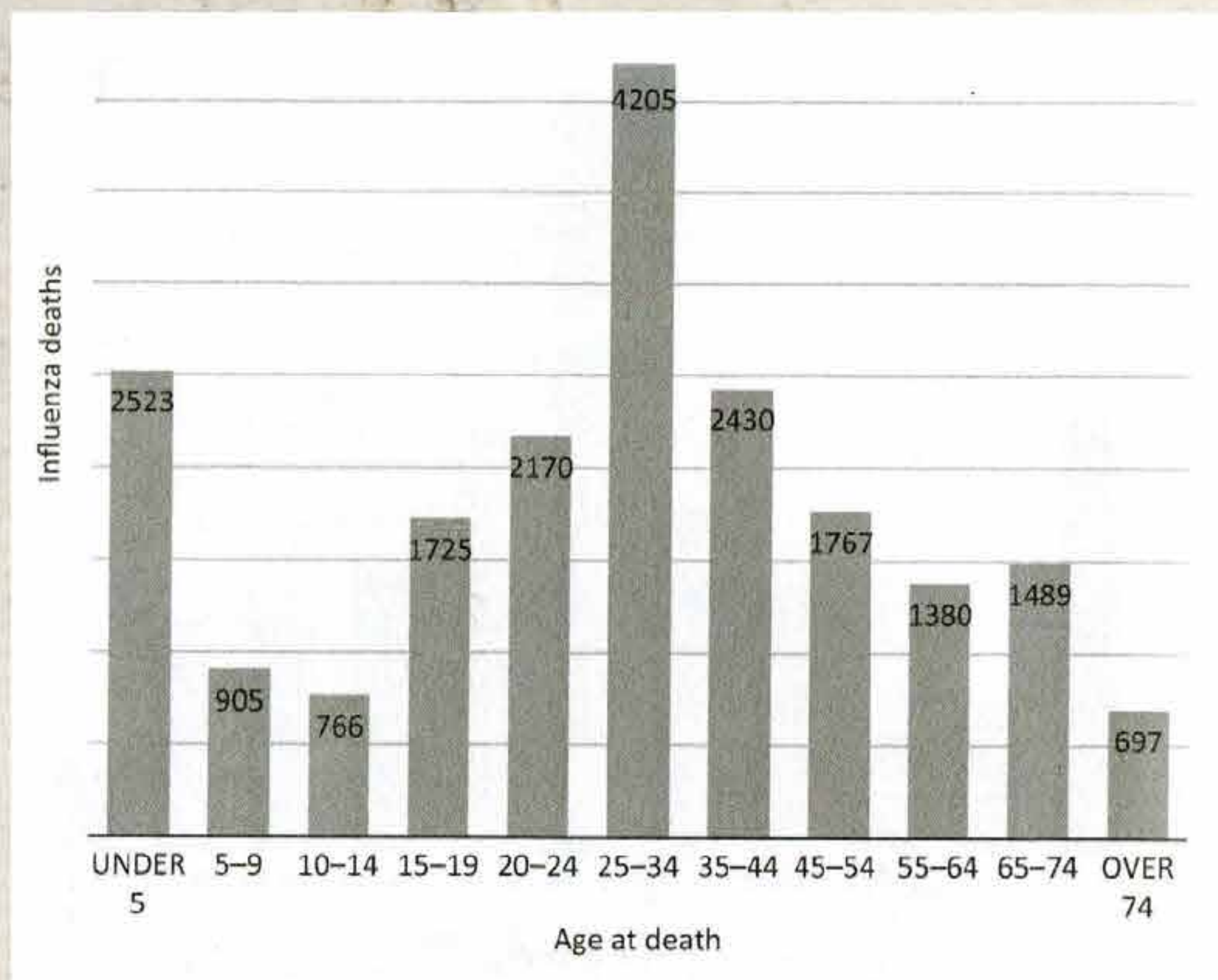
INFLUENZA RAVAGES
Closing of Churches and Theatres Suggested
ALL IRELAND AFFECTED

Like in Dublin, many schools, libraries and other public buildings were closed or asked to close across the country. Court cases were also adjourned, and GAA matches and concerts postponed or cancelled. Some counties, including Clare, did almost escape the epidemic but most of the country was affected. Water and power shortages in Naas during the height of the second wave contributed to a particularly severe local outbreak in this area. The RIC's annual report also noted that in Cavan, "the disease carried off a great many and affected nearly every household".

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'STACKING THE COFFINS'

The influenza "devastated Ireland", writes Dr Ida Milne, "permeated every layer of society and silenced whole communities as it passed through". Tragic stories were commonplace at the time where two or three members of the same family died. The speed at which the influenza took hold was also terrifying. There was often very little time for patients to follow medical advice to rest and many victims who fell ill at noon "were dead by the evening".



Influenza deaths in Ireland by age group, 1918-1919

The *Belfast News Letter* reported on October 25 that "the influenza epidemic was still at this height in Dublin and the number of serious cases ran well into four figures". It was reported that over 20 employees of the works staff of Dublin Corporation "have succumbed to the disease". Another case in Clontarf was described whereby "a father, after burying two sons, returned to his home to find his wife dead". The *Cork Examiner* also reported on October 28 1918 that "during the last eight days there have been 240 internments in Glasnevin Cemetery. In normal times the funerals average 13 a day".

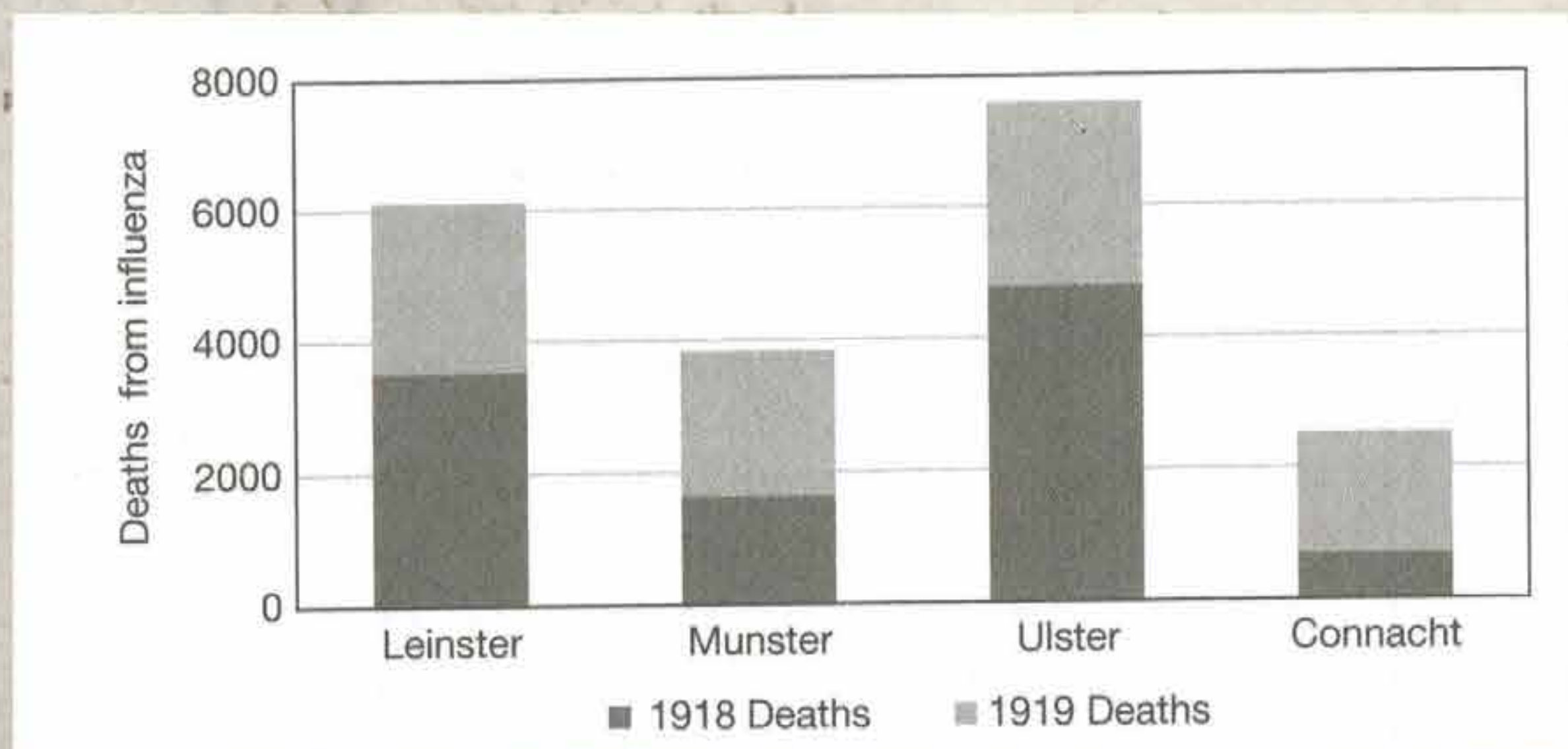
The *Kilkenny People* reported in late October that "there is scarcely a family in the city that has escaped its ravages". The paper also describes how "there are several instances of people suddenly collapsing in the streets on their way to or from work". Furthermore, "the County and Workhouse Infirmaries are crowded with patients suffering from the disease" and "all schools of the city were closed on the recommendation of the Mayor and Corporation".

According to Cúmann na mBan activist Eillís Bean Uí Chonaill,

In November 1918 the flu epidemic or "Black Flu" as it was called, was rife in the city and country alike. Doctors and nurses were taxed to capacity and the death rate was very high. It was not unusual for whole families to be stricken down together.

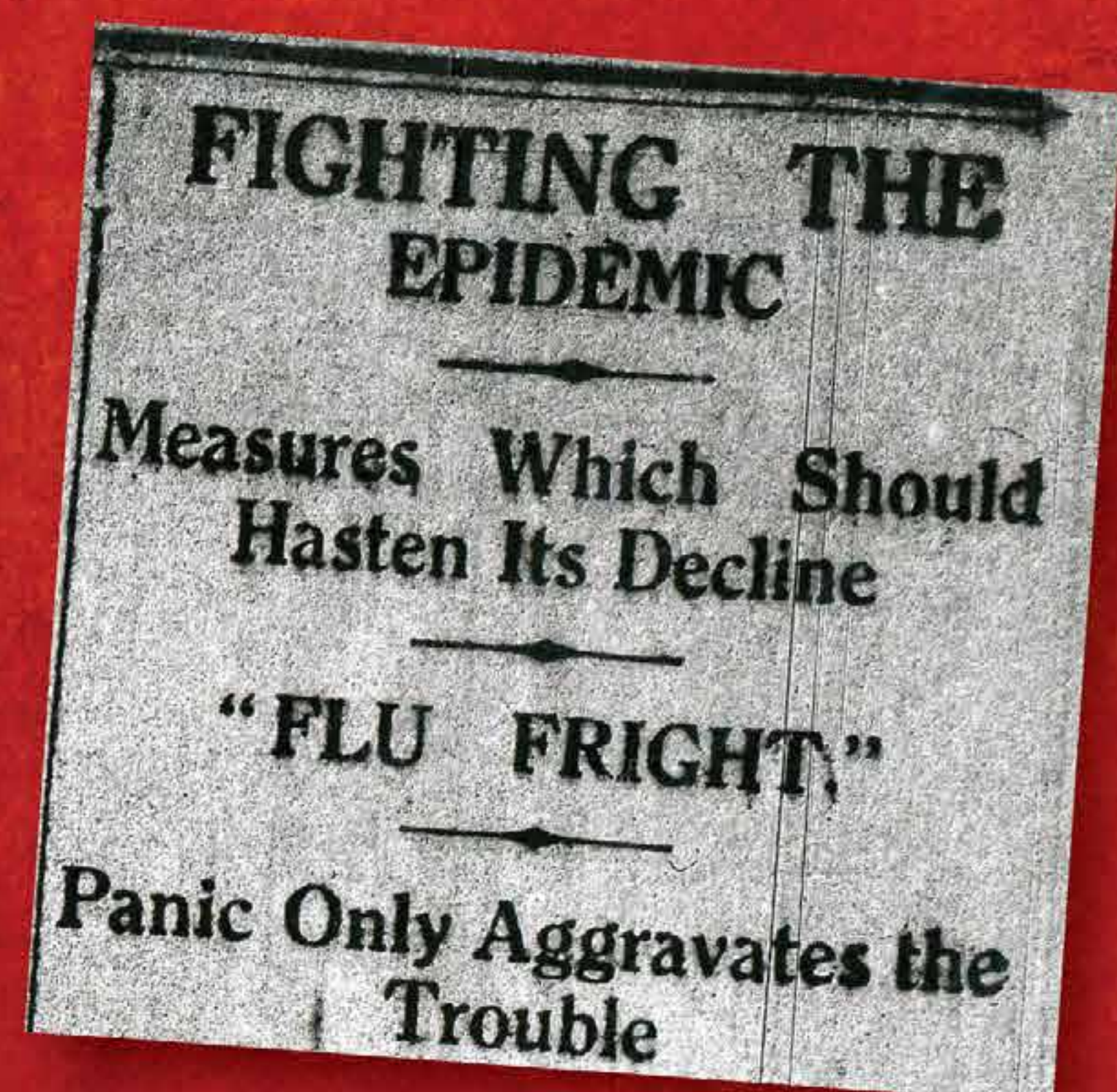
What started as a simple sneeze frequently left entire families on their deathbeds. Healthy young men and women were "dropping like flies" and in one week alone in November 1918, more than 400 "fast but painful" deaths were caused by the influenza in Dublin.

Sean Gibbons, a republican in County Mayo who campaigned throughout the epidemic for the December 1918 General Election, also recorded that 1918 was the year that "carried away quite a lot of people in my own locality".



THE INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC.

On November 28 the *Cork Examiner* provided a detailed account of how the influenza "has been at its worst for the past week in Dungarvan, and several deaths have occurred". These deaths included Captain Whelan "whose sickness developed into pneumonia", a Post Office official, Miss Gretta Maher, "only 24 years of age"; a Miss Beresford and her brother, "both quite young", and a Miss Jessie Moran. The newspaper also reported that schools and technical classes all remained closed and the medical officers are "doing all possible to grapple with the disease, and they now hope that the worst is passed, but it has left a good many homes in mourning".



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THE "FLU" AGAIN

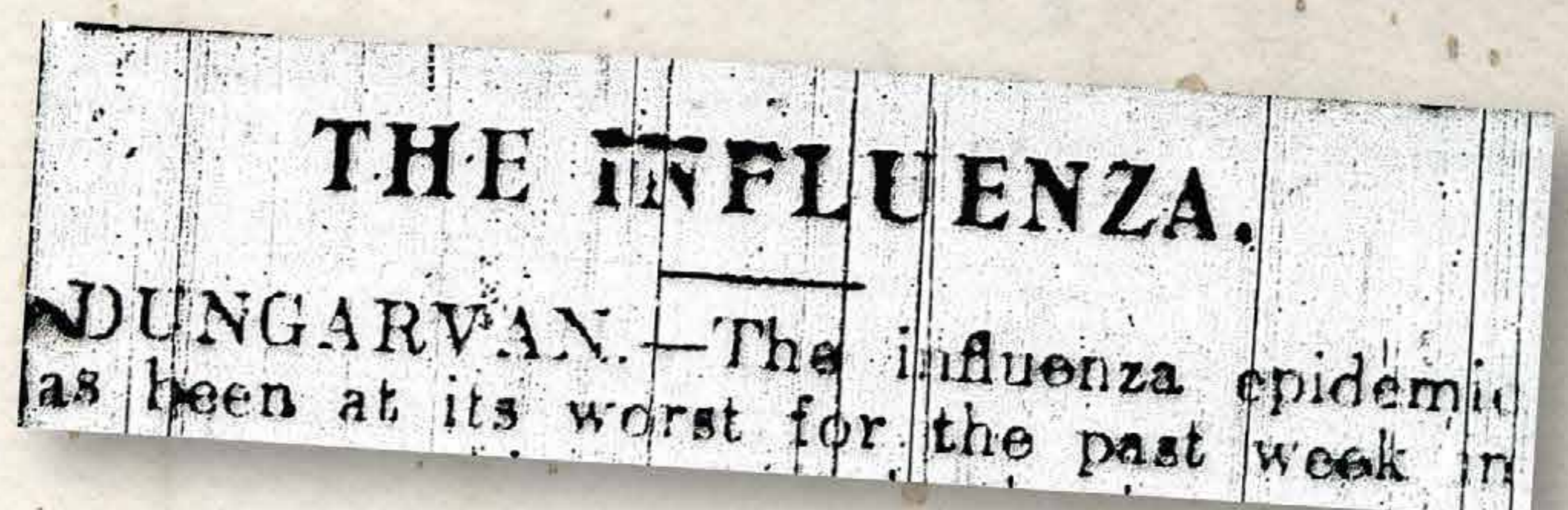
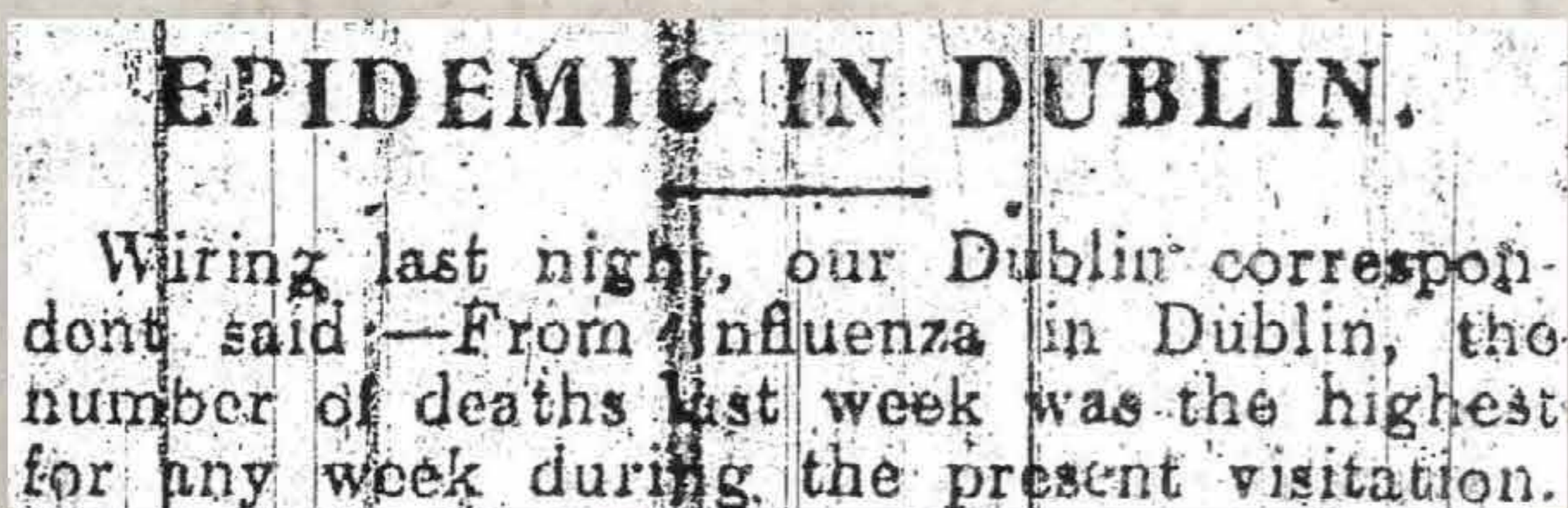
The *Evening Herald* reported on 21 November 1918 that "everything points to the disappearance of the flu epidemic in Dublin". The newspaper detailed that the influenza "is still ravaging some parts of the country" but that in Dublin the increased attendance at theatres and picture houses is an indication of the passing of the flu and the absence of the public alarm which was so intense some weeks ago.



A victory parade in Dublin in early 1919 to celebrate the end of the Great War. Meetings like this helped spread the disease during the third phase of the 'Spanish Flu'.

DEATHS IN DUBLIN.

However, between mid-February and mid-April 1919 another deadly phase affected mostly Dublin as well as western and northern counties like Mayo and Donegal. The *Irish Times* reported on March 1 1919 that the influenza was "spreading through Dublin city like wildfire". Public libraries and technical schools were closed, and parents were asked to "keep their children off the streets". The *Cork Examiner* reported on March 4 1919 that the influenza "will soon be stamped out" but high numbers of deaths were still being recorded in Dublin. The numbers of burials at Glasnevin Cemetery continued to show a daily increase and over 80 burial orders were taken at the Catholic Cemeteries offices, "the highest figure which has been reached in a single day".



During this final phase of the influenza, many deaths and tragic stories were still being recorded across the country. On February 26 The *Irish Times* covered the inquest of a woman named Mrs Frances Phelan aged 27 who lived with her husband, child and sister-in-law on Corporation Street, Dublin. Neighbours had noticed that the family had not been seen for some time and they broke into their rooms and found Mrs Phelan dead in the bed, with her husband, infant son and sister-in-law also lying on the bed seriously ill. Caretaker of Corporation Buildings, John Maguire, said he found the four occupants of the room in one bed, the baby with a comforter in its mouth. The man, woman and baby were removed to Dublin Union Hospital by ambulance, but they did not recover.

The *Leinster Leader* also reported on 15 March 1919 the death of Kildare farmer Patrick Quinn from the influenza. Three days after his funeral his wife and eldest son died, and the following day his daughter died. According to the *Cork Examiner* on 7 April 1919, several more deaths have taken place in parts of North Tipperary, "in some instances two and three members of the same family are down with the malady and the Nenagh Hospital is full with patients".

In many instances, alcohol and bed rest were recommended as the best cure for the 'Spanish Flu' and this is probably why so many people actually survived the epidemic in Ireland. One doctor from Cloyne wrote to the *Irish Independent* urging its readers to

Put the patient to bed once the initial chill and headache set in and give them an ounce of brandy or two of whiskey in a tumbler with hot water, castor oil and sugar. Pile on the blankets and in a few hours you will have a free perspiring skin and a clear evacuation from the bowels.

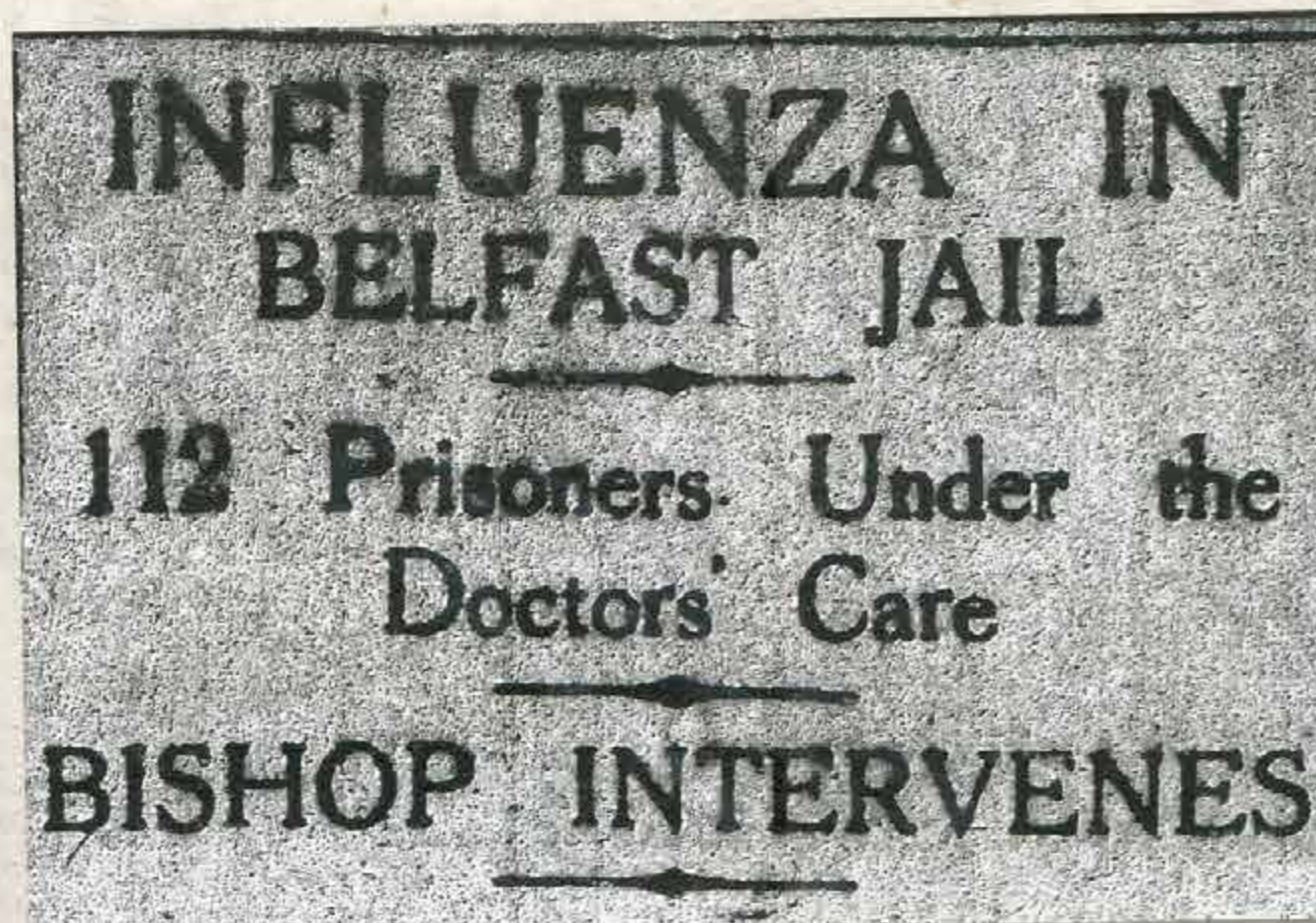
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THE 'SPANISH FLU' AND IRISH REPUBLICAN POLITICS



The outbreak of 'Spanish flu' in Ireland was probably the result of returning soldiers from the war but the epidemic was further spread by the intense political activism and movement of people in the run up to and during the General Election of 1918.

The *Freeman's Journal* reported on 30 October that 112 Sinn Féin prisoners in Belfast Jail had contracted the influenza. The British government were anxious to avoid any negative publicity that would follow prisoner deaths and special treatment and diet were being provided to the prisoners affected. There were no fatalities amongst these prisoners.



The death of Richard Coleman on 9 December bolstered Sinn Féin's allegations of prisoner mistreatment. The timing of Coleman's death was opportune as the General Election was held a week later on 14 December. Newspaper coverage of his death and the great funeral procession through the streets of Dublin brought Sinn Féin valuable publicity.

Over 15,000 mourners followed the funeral procession and many more lined the route, while tri colours draped in black ribbon were displayed everywhere. A firing party of six Volunteers defied Government regulations and police fired three volleys of shots over the grave of the patriot. So great was the crowd that the strong police force declined to seize the arms.

Vote for Sinn Fein

**AND SHOW THE WORLD THAT IRELAND
IS NOT A PART OF ENGLAND.**

DUILLEOG PHOIBLIOCHTA SINN FEINEACH, 1918

However, a number of Sinn Féin activists did succumb to the 'Spanish Flu' while imprisoned in England. Six prisoners at Usk Prison in Wales had fallen victim to the epidemic.

Sinn Féin referred to Coleman's tragedy in their election posters and the landslide election of the Sinn Féin candidates followed.



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THE FLU HAS NOW EXTENDED TO CORK!

The USS Dixie reported one of the earliest cases of the 'Spanish Flu' in Ireland while docked in Cobh, Co. Cork, in May 1918. However, few deaths were reported in Cork that summer. By the autumn Cork city was on high alert for an attack of the influenza that had ravaged many other parts of the country. On 26 October newspapers reported the first instances of the epidemic in the city and the *Freeman's Journal* announced that "the flu has now extended to Cork!"

*A view of
Cork city
in the early
1900s*



The *Cork Examiner* reported on 28 October that the influenza had "got a grip in many parts of the city with a large number of people being affected and confined to bed". The Cork Workhouse recorded that 22 patients were receiving treatment and that there had been 4 deaths from the influenza. Likewise, the Cork Fever Hospital reported 2 deaths and a further 4 cases being treated.



The USS Dixie

THE MYSTERY DISEASE

The sickness which has become known as the Spanish influenza, and which has stricken many, continues to spread amongst the citizens of Cork. The number of persons so affected rises daily, and the Corporation ambulance is almost continually conveying influenza patients to the various hospitals. The Cork District Hospital, it is stated, is unable to cope with the demands made on it due to that peculiar ~~transmission~~, and many deaths are reported.

By the end of October, all schools in the city and suburbs, the Palace theatre, the Carnegie Free Library and other circulating libraries across the city and county had closed. The Electric Light and Tramway Company was also disinfecting trams every evening. The epidemic was mild at first, though, and it would be mid-November before the true impact of the influenza would be felt across the city and county. During a meeting of the Public Health Committee on 12th November it became obvious that the situation had worsened. According to the PHC report, over 500 cases had been reported by the Dispensary Medical Officers since the committee's last meeting and that "15 deaths took place in the city and 11 deaths in Cork barracks...it is estimated that 1,000 cases have occurred in the city since the epidemic began". By now the Public Health Committee recommended that clothes belonging to victims and any premises affected should be disinfected, and that churches should - "keep the doors and windows of their churches open during the Devine Service and at night also". Also during the month of November an increasing number of doctors, nurses and medical staff had taken ill and needed to be replaced.

INFLUENZA TOLL INCREASES AS EPIDEMIC CONTINUES TO SPREAD

It became evident that the influenza had spread to other parts of the county within weeks of arriving in the city. Macroom reported that the epidemic "was assuming a very serious nature", while in Fermoy 73 cases were being treated in Fermoy Hospital. Within days of it arriving in the town, it had spread to neighbouring Kilworth, Dripsey, Youghal and Skibbereen also reported influenza cases. By the time the PHC met again on 26 November, however, there were signs that the epidemic was on the decline in Cork. 117 cases had been reported since the last report, and thirty deaths were recorded, 17 civilians and 13 military. The report announced that the disease was officially on the decline and no longer presenting as an epidemic. Equally, the *Skibbereen Eagle* reported on 7 December that "no fresh cases have been reported for some days" in Cork. By February 1919, however, the influenza would return again, "awakening the people of Cork from a false sense of security".

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A 'SOMEWHAT DISCONCERTING' INFLUENZA

On 17 February 1919 the *Cork Examiner* reported that the influenza "has again made its appearance in Cork...to an extent that is somewhat disconcerting". New cases of entire families being affected were recorded and deaths occurred "in not a few instances". The Cork Fever Hospital reported a large number of serious cases and at the Cork District Hospital "upwards of 42 patients affected with the disease have been treated during the week".

THE FATAL INFLUENZA SCOURGE

Views of Sir Charles Cameron.

SCHOOLS A SOURCE OF INFECTION.

The *Cork Examiner* also reported that day that 50 new cases of influenza had been recorded in Kilmallock Hospital, most of which came from the Charleville district. Three deaths in the same family also occurred that week in February in Ballingaddy and two young men from Charleville died in hospital. Medical Officer Dr Thomas Kennedy reported that several influenza cases had been admitted to the Youghal Workhouse Hospital. In early March, the Cork Fever Hospital, the South Infirmary and the Cork District Hospital continued to report new cases of influenza and "there seemed to be no great change in the condition of things".

ALL SHOWS, CHURCHES
ARE ORDERED CLOSED
TO FIGHT EPIDEMIC

FRESH OUTBREAKS.

Over the coming weeks the situation worsened. At a Public Health Committee meeting on 20 February Medical Officer of Health Dr D D Donovan reported that, based on records from dispensary medical officers, the "influenza was on the increase all over the city" and he requested that septic pneumonia be made a temporary notifiable disease as it is a "very fatal and infectious complication of the influenza". Donovan explained that "a sudden emergency has arisen" and recommended that "managers of all theatres cinemas and schools should be requested to close down for a period of three weeks". It was noted in the meeting that in America the influenza has been recognised as a notifiable disease, shorter mass services have been organised and the clergy ask members of the public to leave church if they are suffering from colds. It was also mentioned that in Cork "the tram cars here should not be overcrowded; at times they are simply packed with passengers inside".

During the past fortnight 80 dangerous cases have been admitted to the Cork Fever Hospital.

Twenty deaths have been recorded at the Cork District Hospital.

All schools and public places of amusement remain closed. In the military quarters the epidemic is particularly severe. The "out-of-bounds" regulations are very strict.

At the meeting of the PHC on March 11, Dr Donovan recorded that 720 cases were reported in Cork since February 17, averaging 42 new cases every day. However, he also acknowledged that since March 4 the daily average had dropped from 42 to 14. Chairman, JJ Horgan requested that Dr Donovan allow the schools to be re-opened and "the city allowed to take its normal course because these regulations should only be kept in operation the shortest possible time as hardships were inflicted by them". Dr Donovan replied that he would ask for a special meeting "in about four days time to deal with these matters" and he was subsequently given plenary powers by Alderman Kelleher to notify when restrictions could be lifted.

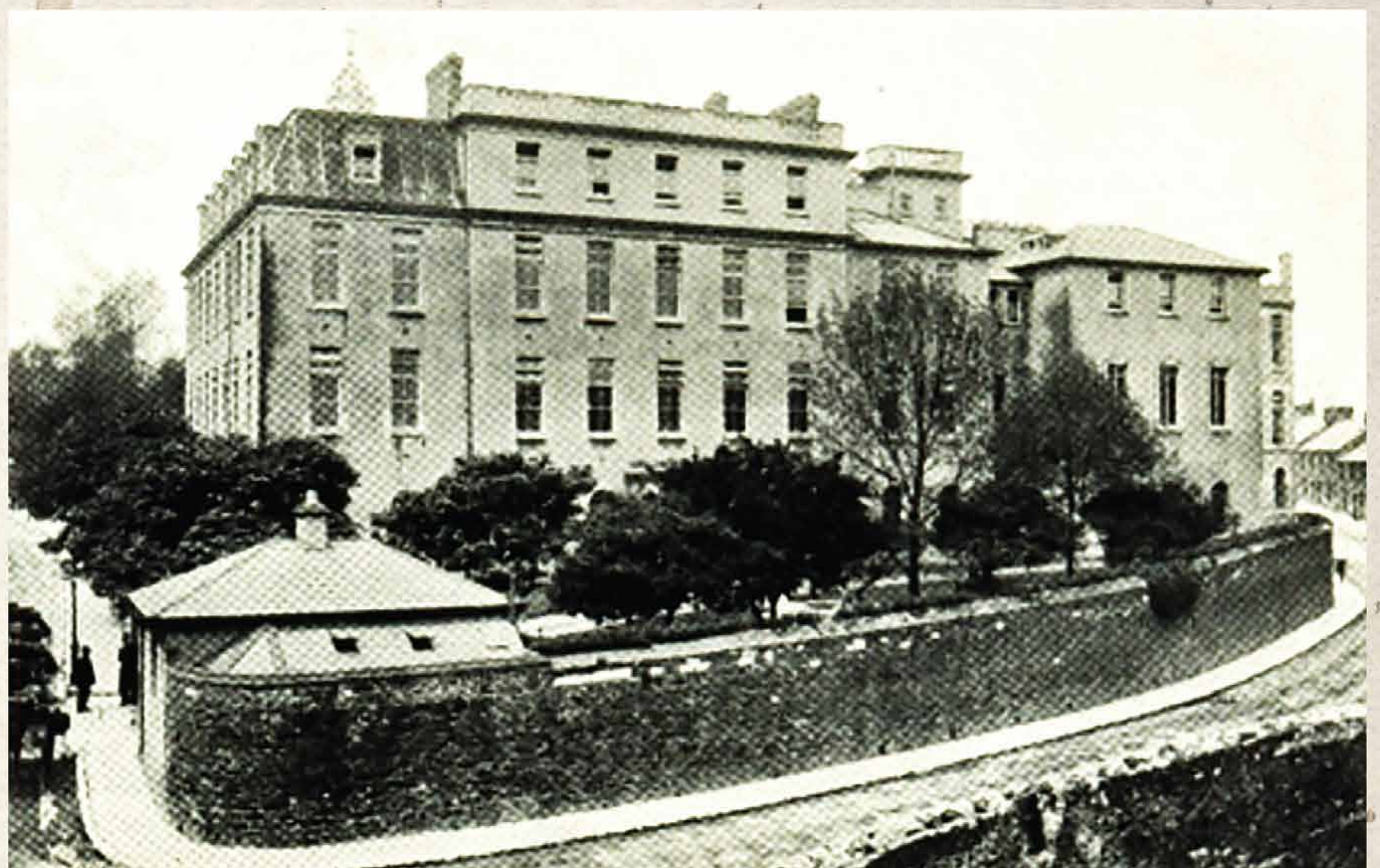
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The despair and anxiety that impacted on Cork people between October 1918 and March 1919 was slow to lift with the passing of the influenza. One particular article in the *Skibbereen Eagle* Described St Patrick's Day of 1919 as 'the most quiet on record'. It went on to state "there was little of the holiday air about the persons who filled the theatres ...Cork will take its pleasures somewhat sadly for a little time". Furthermore, Cork at this time was described as a "pleasure-less city, a place where people struggled fiercely with depression and melancholy".

INFLUENZA IN CORK.

Yesterday a slight wane in the influenza outbreak in the city was noticeable, but also

The loss of a number of important members of society also impacted on the despair across the city during this time. The death of Cork priest, Rev. Finbarr Crowley, was reported in the *Cork Examiner* on March 4 1919. He had been based in the parish of Westbury-on-Trim in Bristol for the previous five years and "his piety and gentle nature made for him a host of friends" there. He died under "pathetic circumstances", having returned to Cork to visit his relatives. He was "in the best of health and while here he contracted the terrible malady which is so prevalent at present". He died in his sister's home at 49 Barracks Street on March 3.



The North Infirmary, 1918

DEATH OF CORK PRIEST.

Sincere regret will be felt at the announcement of the death of Rev Finbarr Crowley, C.C., which occurred at the residence of his sister, 49 Barrack Street, Cork,

Also on 4 March 1919, the *Cork Examiner* reported the death of a newly ordained priest, Fr Rice who had contracted the influenza the previous October and died weeks before his mission to Broken Hill in Australia. On March 10 the *Irish Times* reported the death of Dr John Higgins, resident surgeon of the North Infirmary and a week earlier the same newspaper reported the death of local hero Constable William O'Connor, R.I.C of Togher "who was publically presented a few days ago with the certificate on vellum of the Royal Humane Society, and a cheque for £10 from the Carnegie Hero Fund for the rescue of a soldier from drowning".

CORK FEVER HOSPITAL AND HOUSE OF RECOVERY

APPEAL.

Some positive narratives surfaced during this time providing reports of the generosity of medical professionals who jeopardised their own health, and instances of financial assistance from individuals to institutions treating influenza patients. There was a call for those "fortunate enough to have escaped the Flu to send a subscription to Cork's Fever Hospital which finds itself in a large debt of £2,000". Furthermore, the role of the Cumann na mBan and the Women's National Health Association in nursing and educating the public on preventative measures was commended when the *Cork Examiner* had reported in November that "these groups have been doing very good work".

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None of us should succumb to a silly epidemic...

WRITERS WHO DIED OF THE 'SPANISH FLU'

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE (1880-1918)



Born in Rome of Polish descent and raised in France, poet, novelist, playwright and journalist Apollinaire was very much part of the Parisian artistic scene at the turn of the century. He was famous for his experimental verse and support for avant-garde art movements. He joined the French army and fought on the Western Front. He suffered severe shrapnel wounds to his head in 1916 and was invalided out of the army as a result. Weakened by his terrible injuries he fell victim to the Spanish Flu on November 9, 1918 and is buried in Pere Lachaise cemetery in Paris.

His final poetry collection, *Calligrammes*, was written in the year of his death and published posthumously. His other notable works include: *Le bestiaire ou cortège d'Orphée*, *Les mamelles de Tirésias*, *Les peintres Cubistes*, *méditations esthétiques*, *Les exploits d'un jeune Don Juan* and *Les onze mille verges*.

MARGIT KAFFKA (1880-1918)



Poet and novelist, Kaffka is considered to be Hungary's first major woman writer and one of the main contributors to the progressive literary journal *Nyugat* (The West). One of her best known works and considered to be one of the great works of Hungarian feminist literature, *Colours and years* (*Színek és évek*), originally published in 1912, was only translated into English in 2015.

Her husband, a medical doctor, was drafted to work in a military hospital during World War 1. After returning to Budapest in 1918 part of his work involved performing autopsies on flu victims. She was well aware of the risks involved. Nevertheless in a letter she writes –

"If we can survive the war none of us should succumb to a silly epidemic....No more army, hospital, rural isolation, bug infested messy rooms, constant journeys in overcrowded trains. There will be peace and order. And work." However, after suffering headaches she became very ill with influenza and died on Dec 1, 1918, her young son László dying the next day.

EDMOND ROSTAND (1868-1918)



Dramatist Rostand was born in Marseille, France and is best known for his play *Cyrano de Bergerac*. Not of robust health Rostand suffered from pleurisy for most of his adult life. He volunteered for service in World War 1 but was refused on health grounds. He moved to the French Basque country to seek a cure for his illness but when the flu epidemic struck he succumbed and died on December 2, 1918. His other famous works

include *L'Aiglon*, *Chantecler*, *Les deux Pierrots* and *Les Romanesques*. Sarah Bernhardt acted in *L'Aiglon*.

IVAN CANKAR (1876-1918)



Compared to Kafka and Joyce, Slovenia's Ivan Cankar became, in his lifetime, Slovenia's foremost novelist and playwright, having penned more than 30 books. Politically active, he was a member of the Marxist Yugoslav Social Democratic Party. Although he was drafted into the Austro-Hungarian army in 1917, he was demobilised because of poor health. His first published work *Erotika* was denounced by the Bishop of Ljubljana who bought as many copies as he could and burned them. His last collection of short stories, published posthumously in

1920, depicts the horrors of World War 1. There are questions over the cause of his death – it is said that he was pushed down a stairs and beaten up by three Serbs for his political views (he was opposed to union with Serbia) but it is generally accepted that he died on December 11 from pneumonia after contracting the flu.

Other notable people who died of the Spanish Flu included Austrian artists Gustave Klimt and Egon Schiele (and his wife), American film star Harold Lockwood, Fred Trump, Donald Trump's grandfather (born Friedrich Trumpf in Germany), German political economist Max Weber and Louis Botha (prime minister of South Africa).

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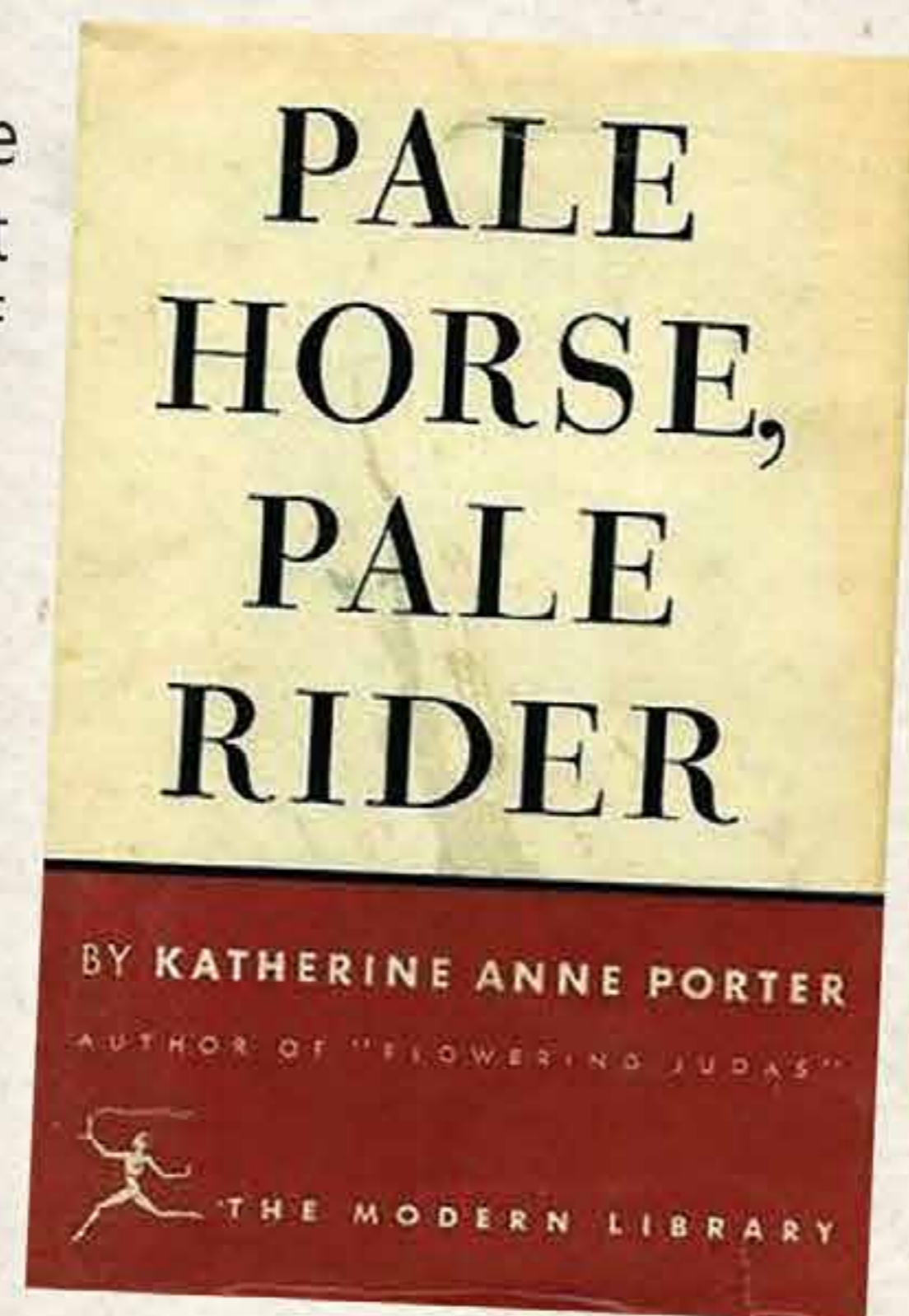
THE 'SPANISH FLU' IN LITERATURE AND MEMORY



Katherine Anne Porter (1890-1980) was an American journalist, writer and political activist. Her award-winning trilogy of short novels *Pale Horse, Pale Rider* was inspired by Porter's own near-fatal struggle with the epidemic. Miranda, the central character, is chasing death in a nightmare. Ironically when she wakes up, she finds a world just as horrifying as her nightmare - the influenza epidemic is taking over the country amidst the struggle of

World War I. Her nightmare intertwines life and death, as exemplified by 'death' (the pale rider) approaching her - "Ah, I have seen this fellow before, I know this man if I could place him. He is no stranger to me". This intermingling of memory and death sheds light on the spread of influenza becoming a full blown pandemic during this time.

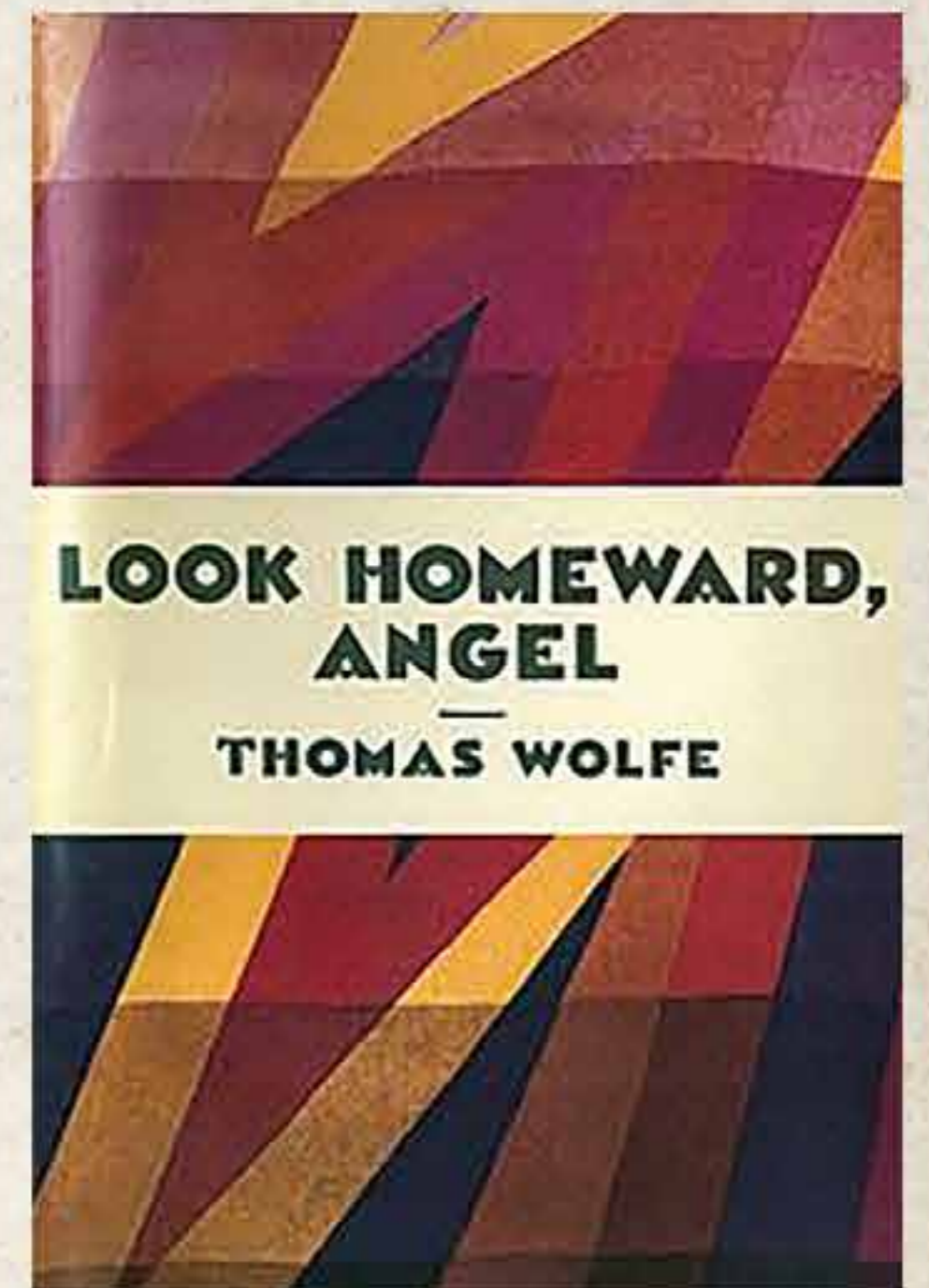
Katherine Anne Porter – Pale Horse, Pale Rider (1939)



Thomas Wolfe was a student at the University of North Carolina in 1918 when he got a telegram, asking him to return home immediately. His 26-year-old brother Benjamin Harrison Wolfe was ill with the flu. Wolfe tells the thinly fictionalized story in chapter 35 of his novel, *Look Homeward, Angel*. He writes that the stand-in for his brother, a character also named Ben, lay in his bed, the outline of his body "bitterly twisted below

the covers, in an attitude of struggle and torture." Ben's sallow complexion had turned grey and his body gasped for air. "And the sound of this gasping – loud, hoarse, rapid, unbelievable, filling the room, and every moment in it – gave to the scene its final note of horror."

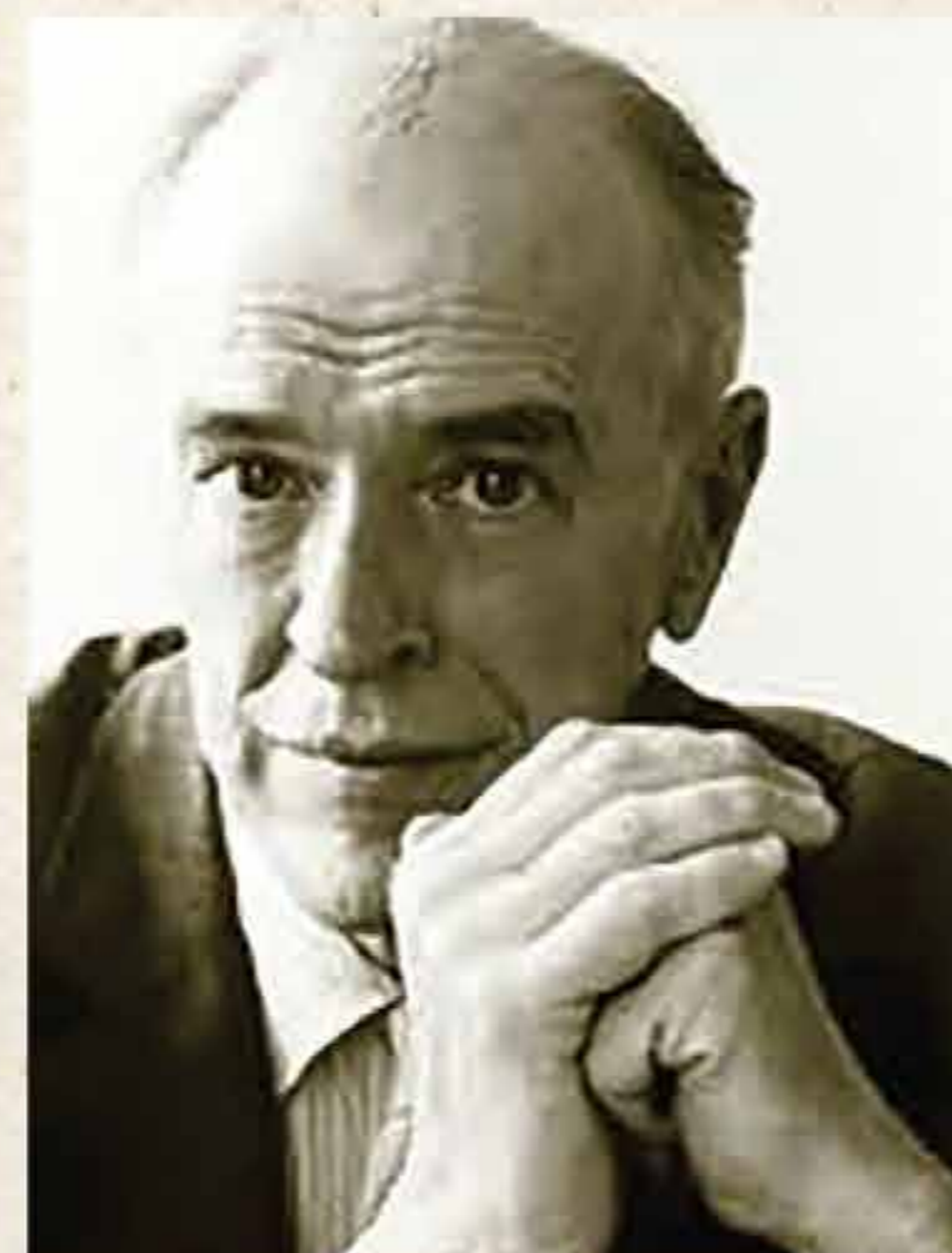
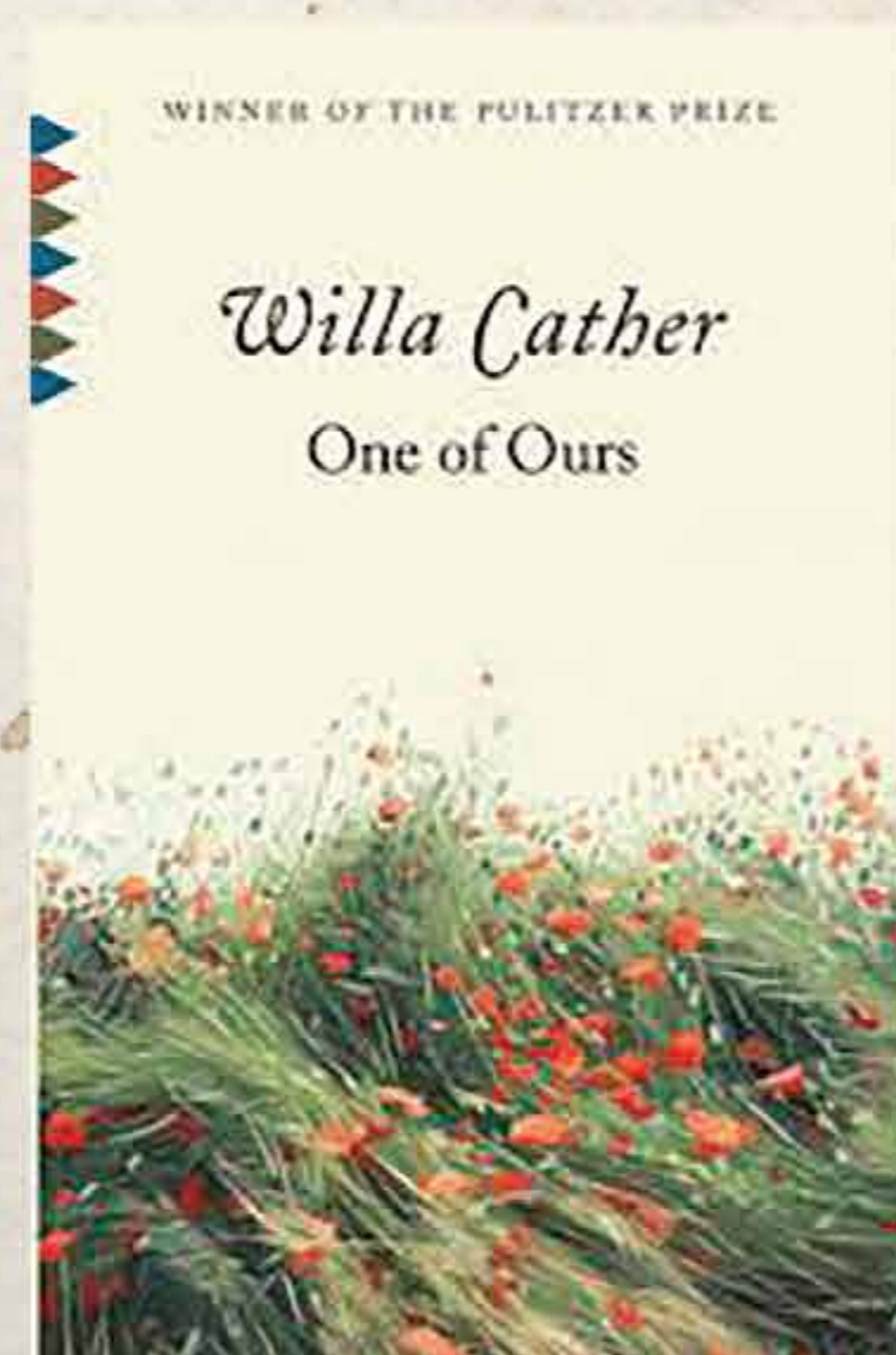
Thomas Wolfe – Look Homeward, Angel (1929)



Willa Cather won the 1923 Pulitzer Prize for her novel, *One of Ours*. The novel tells the life story of Claude Wheeler from the farmlands of his native Nebraska to the battlefields of France in the First World War and Cather details an outbreak of the influenza aboard The Anchises during Claude's journey to France. Medical inspections take longer than normal on the third morning of the voyage

and Claude is told by a doctor to give a number of sick soldiers "hot tea, and pile army blankets on them. Make them sweat if you can...there are a number of sick men this morning, and the only other physician on board is the sickest of the lot". Very quickly the doctor concedes that "a scourge of influenza had broken out on board, of a peculiarly bloody and malignant type".

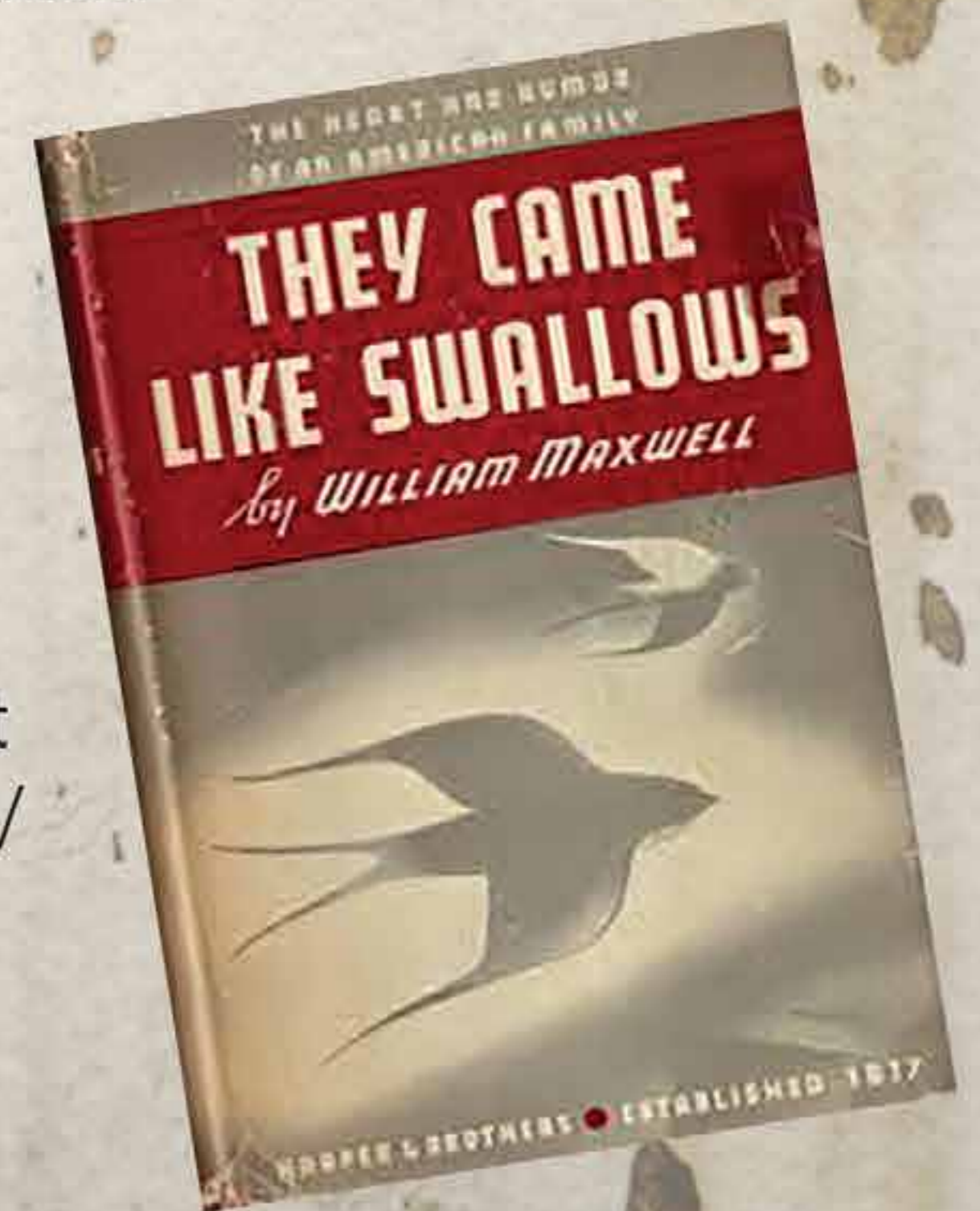
Willa Cather – One of Ours (1922)



The devastation of the 'Spanish flu' on ordinary family life is central to William Maxwell's 1937 novel *They Came Like Swallows*. A husband and two sons must come to terms with the death of loving wife and mother, Elizabeth, who is taken from them by the influenza in 1918. The tragedy is depicted with immense sadness and delicacy across three narratives as the family struggle with a guilt and sense of loss that is almost

unbearable. *They Came Like Swallows* may be partly semi-autobiographical because Maxwell's own mother died of the influenza in 1918. The title and epigraph of the novel come from W.B. Yeats' poem "Coole Park, 1929" – 'They came like swallows and like swallows went / And yet a woman's powerful character / Could keep a swallow to its first intent...'

William Maxwell – They Came Like Swallows (1937)



Like Fighting With a Ghost: The 'Spanish Flu' of 1918-1919

Don't kiss your sweetheart!

AND OTHER WORDS OF CAUTION....



To Prevent Influenza!

- Do not take any person's breath.
- Keep the mouth and teeth clean.
- Avoid those that cough and sneeze.
- Don't visit poorly ventilated places.
- Keep warm, get fresh air and sunshine.
- Don't use common drinking cups, towels, etc.
- Cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze.
- Avoid Worry, Fear and Fatigue.
- Stay at home if you have a cold.
- Walk to your work or office.
- In sick rooms wear a gauze mask like in illustration.

Preventing Spanish Influenza Is Better than Curing It



Keep your nasal passages, throat, and lungs in a perfectly antiseptic condition by the use of the **Branston Violet Ray Ozone Generator**. No germs can exist where this is used.

Use it in your home. Install it in your office and factory.

Keep your employees healthy and efficient.

Call or phone for a Free Demonstration.

Showing Model 29 in use. Several other models to choose from

Manufactured by

THE CHAS. A. BRANSTON CO.
355 Yonge Street, Toronto
Phones Main 1211 and 1212

DON'T DO THESE THINGS!

Don't kiss your sweetheart while "Spanish flu" or pneumonia plague is on!

You might kill her—or him, by passing a deadly germ along.

Kissing Spreads "Flu"

Don't sneeze or cough in anybody's face. Use your handkerchief to cover nose and mouth.

DO THESE THINGS!

"Spanish flu" is staging a "come-back."

Medical authorities fear it will attack 40 per cent of the people.

Doctors and nurses everywhere are overtaxed in the fight.

They need the help of every person in the community in preventive measures.

STOP! FLU EPIDEMIC

MEDICAL Expert opinion says it is absolutely necessary to eat the very best MEAT as a preventative of the FLU. You should, therefore, get your Supply from **FALCON**, who buys the best BEEF and MUTTON that can be got in the Market. My Meat cannot be excelled, while my Prices defy Competition.

LAMB, VEAL, POULTRY and PORK

SUPPLIED WHEN IN SEASON. BEST CONNEMARA BLACK FACED WEATHER MOUNTAIN MUTTON when available.

All Orders receive careful attention under my own personal Supervision. Prompt Delivery in City and Suburbs.

AGENT FOR THE GALWAY SALMON FISHERIES.



Why catch their Influenza?

YOU need not! Just carry Formamint with you and suck these delicious tablets whenever you are in danger of being infected by other people.

"Suck at least four or five a day"—so says Dr. Hopkirk in his standard work "Influenza"—for "in Formamint we possess the best means of preventing the infective processes which, if neglected, may lead to serious complications."

Seeing that such complications often lead to Pneumonia, Bronchitis, and other dangerous diseases, it is surely worth while to protect yourself by this safe, certain, and inexpensive means. "Protect the children, too, for their delicate little organisms are very exposed to germ attack. Be careful, however, not to confuse Formamint with so-called formalin tablets, but see that it bears the name of the sole manufacturer, Gifford, Ltd. (British Proprietors of Sarsaparil, 12, Chancery Street, London, W.C.1. (Chairman: The Vaccination Board)."

"Attack the germs before they attack you!"

Formamint
THE GERM KILLING THROAT TABLET