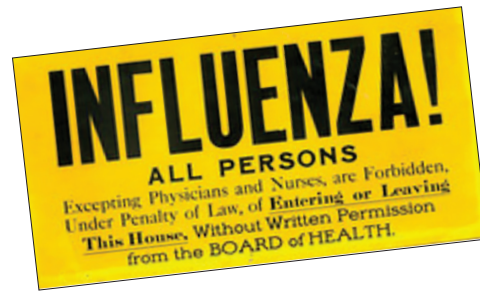




Tales from the Tavern

For Friends of the King and Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum
and Members of the King and Queen County Historical Society

Winter 2020



Inside this issue:

April 26 Historical Society Meeting
CANCELLED, The 1918 Pandemic,
King and Queen County Experience
During the 1918 Pandemic, HOW
DID WE LIVE WITHOUT IT? Toilet
Paper and Paper Towels

Contributors: Cynthia Carter, Nancy
Herman-Thompson
Editor: Biddie Shelor

(804) 785-9558
www.kingandqueenmuseum.org

April 26 Historical Society Meeting CANCELLED

by Cynthia Carter

In light of our responsibility to adhere to public safety guidelines related to the COVID-19 coronavirus, the April 26 meeting of the King and Queen County Historical Society is cancelled. We hope to be able to present the April program that was to focus on the Tavern Museum's 20th anniversary celebration at our regularly scheduled July 26 meeting. We are also tentatively earmarking the October 25 meeting for a "Days of the Past" afternoon of outdoor fun with demonstrations of crafts, cooking, and food preservation with entertainment and refreshments. Stay tuned for updates through the newsletter, postcards, and website about the status of the 2020 quarterly meetings and the timing of "celebration" events.

The 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic is reminiscent of the 1918 "Spanish" Flu Pandemic, the most deadly influenza outbreak experienced by the United States. This issue focuses on its occurrence in Richmond, Virginia with a few glimpses of King and Queen County during that time. Today's pandemic news is an echo of 1918.

The 1918 Pandemic

by Biddie Shelor

Over 100 years ago in 1918 an unknown virus killed millions of people worldwide. The population of the United States of America was approximately 103 million; a quarter of them were infected with influenza and 675,000 died. There was a small outburst in the spring of 1918, but the influenza returned with devastating force in September of 1918 and lasted at least 16 weeks, ending in early 1919. It primarily targeted those between the ages of 20 and 40. Nicknamed the "Spanish Flu" because it was first noted in Spanish newspapers, its origins are unknown. World War I (WWI), which began in 1914, was still raging in Europe. The U.S. had joined the war in 1917 and millions of its men and thousands of its women serving in the military were in close quarters in military camps, on the battlefields, or on naval vessels. Many military installations were located in Virginia. Socializing outside the home was in churches, movie theaters, restaurants, and concert halls. Information flow to the average person was through "word-of-mouth", newspapers, personal letters, and social gatherings. Although the telephone and telegraph were available in cities, few people in rural areas had easy access to them. Radio was still being developed and television did not exist. The average household did not have ready access to motor vehicles and the roads were in poor shape. Personal mobility was limited to walking, or public transportation in the cities

and horse and buggy in the country. Long distance travel was by train and steamboat.

Although newspaper coverage of the 1918 pandemic was very sparse and overshadowed by war news, *The Times Dispatch* newspaper published in Richmond provided a view of developments. The first reported cases of the influenza in Virginia occurred at Ft. Lee near Petersburg and appeared on page 8 of the Sunday, September 13, 1918 issue: "Strange Malady causes Ft. Lee Quarantine - Acute Respiratory Infection Which Threatens to Become an Epidemic Responsible for Order Prohibiting Public Gatherings in the Cantonment." Several days later the newspaper reported that the Ft. Lee hospital was full and that new cases were being treated in special barracks rooms. Soldiers were restricted to base and visitors were prohibited. By the end of September hundreds of cases were reported in Richmond. Dr. Roy Flannagan, Richmond's chief health officer, first promoted an education campaign by distributing pamphlets that advised how to prevent the spread, emphasizing to stay out of crowds. As the virus spread rapidly, he took more drastic action and convinced Richmond city officials to order the closing of all churches, public and private schools, theaters, motion picture houses, dance halls, poolrooms; in essence, all public gatherings. Visitors were forbidden in hospitals. After much discussion, the State Fair was cancelled. However, the door-

Tales from the Tavern

to-door canvassing for the Liberty Loan drive for the war effort was not cancelled.

There were no effective drugs or vaccines to fight the virus or antibiotics to combat the bacterial infection that caused pneumonia precipitated by the virus. City medical officials divided Richmond into quadrants and assigned doctors and nurses to serve these areas, soliciting

**FLANNAGAN PREPARES
TO COMBAT INFLUENZA**

Visits Camp Lee to Learn How
Army Guards Against Epi-
demic Among Men.

ADVISES EVERY PRECAUTION

Don't Collect in Crowds, Avoid Use
of Street Cars as Far as Possible.
Consider Neighbor as Well as
Self, He Tells Public.

retired medical professionals and medical students to fill the ranks. At least two temporary hospitals were opened using school buildings. Nurses were instructed on how to reuse equipment and what to do if doctors were unavailable.

The Red Cross solicited volunteers to aid in making masks and medical gowns. Households with residents ill from the virus were quarantined in their homes. Soup Kitchens were formed to feed those whose family could not prepare food due to illness or who had no income to obtain food. Public services and private businesses were severely disrupted.

Elsewhere in the country influenza had also spread rapidly, especially in military camps. By the end of September the Federal government had acknowledged the epidemic and allocated money to fight it. The objective was to safeguard the health of the population

**EPIDEMIC FORCES
DRASTIC ACTION**

Schools, Churches and Theaters
Closed by Order of City
Health Officer.

2,000 CASES ARE REPORTED

so that it would not interfere with the higher priority war effort. President Wilson never made an official statement to the country about the epidemic. On October 12 he marched with 25,000 soldiers and sailors in the Liberty

Day Parade in Manhattan. He was focused on the negotiations to end WWI. The state government took no leading role. Dealing with the crisis was left to localities. In *The Times Dispatch* Sunday, October 13 issue there was a column on the continued virulence of influenza in Richmond. The total number of cases to date was estimated at 16,000. There seemed no end to the contagion. The Sunday, October 20 edition noted on the front page that the virus was still raging, but that the rate



Red Cross volunteers make masks. Image courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society

of increase was slowing and there were fewer deaths. Leaders in Richmond and other areas were considering loosening restrictions, especially those regarding attending church. A warning was communicated to beware of "sure cures" for this strain of flu. Nationally a vaccine was being pursued and the outlook was that the pandemic was waning.

In November the city lifted some restrictions and saw a resurgence of cases. However, health care resources were not overpowered. This ran its course by the end of 1918 with some deaths experienced in early 1919. By the end of 1918, Richmond (population 170,000) had experienced 20,841 cases with 946 deaths. The Commonwealth of Virginia with a population of about 2.2 million suffered 12,000 plus deaths due to the virus. In her 2002 University of Richmond masters theses, *The Impact of the 1918-1919 Influenza Epidemic on Virginia*, Stephanie Forrest Barker warned: "The influenza pandemic of 1918 should not be forgotten. In less than a year it spread across the globe, attacking the most productive members of society.

**INFLUENZA SPREAD
UNABATED IN FURY**

Claims Twenty-Eight More in
City—252 New Cases
Are Reported.

In the United States, over a quarter of the population became ill and more than 600,000 individuals died. Virginia struggled to deal with this unprecedented epidemic. State and local officials could do little to halt the spread of the deadly virus." The duration of the pandemic in the U.S. was far less (16 weeks) than the period of U.S. participation in WWI (19 months), but the number of deaths was far greater: the pandemic 675,000 and the war 116,500.

King and Queen County Experience During the 1918 Pandemic

In 1918 the population of King and Queen County was 9226 and spread somewhat evenly over 3 magisterial districts in the long narrow county. People were fairly

Tales from the Tavern

isolated, about 29 people per square mile. There were few doctors and they administered to the sick in home offices or in the patient's home. Nursing was primarily the responsibility of family members. The closest hospitals were long distances away. People resorted to home remedies. Neighbors helped each other during hard times. King and Queen County reported 148 deaths in 1918; 43 deaths attributed to influenza and pneumonia which was greater than the 15 deaths of county military personnel in WWI. Other than the statistics above there is little written about the county's experience with the epidemic.

However, museum volunteers and newspaper clippings provided the following glimpses of life events in the county during the pandemic. Linda Barnes said, "My mother and her entire family, which included her parents, two younger sisters, and her baby brother, were infected with the virus. Mother's grandmother, who had survived the virus earlier, took up residence with mother's family and cooked, cleaned, and waited on all the sick. Mother's grandfather came daily, from Crouch to Ino, to do the outside chores, draw water, and empty the chamber pots. He never entered the house, but left the eggs, milk, and water on the back porch. All the family survived the flu due to the nursing care of their grandmother. Mother's best friend, who was 5 at the time, died of the flu. Mother remarked that the headache she suffered was the worst headache she ever had in her life." Dr. A. W. Lewis, III noted, "My aunt Blanche Lewis related that grandfather, Dr. A. W. Lewis, had his practice at his home, Norwood, in the Bruington community. During the epidemic, carriages would be lined up the full length of his driveway and onto the public road with their occupants waiting to be seen." Reverend Robert B. Brown conveyed that his grandmother, Lucy Roy Harvey Brown, age 23, died of influenza, leaving a husband and 5 children, 4 boys and a 3 month old girl. Immediately and for some years afterward the women of the Owenton community cooked and performed household chores in support of the family. He also said that First Mount Olive Baptist Church buried 8 members in one week during the epidemic.

Some happy events did occur. At Bruington Baptist Church, on October 5 at 11 o'clock Miss Emily Gwathmey Ryland, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Newton Ryland of King and Queen County, was married to Joseph Hall Moore, Jr., of Richmond, son of the late Mr. and Mrs. E. D. Moore, and nephew of Dr. J. Hall Moore. On October 27, 1918, Ellen White's mother, Aleen Brooken, was born at Mount Elba near Walkerton, home of Atwood C. Walker. Ellen noted that her mother's survival may have been due to the care of that family.

HOW DID WE LIVE WITHOUT IT?

by Nancy Herman-Thompson

With the panic buying of paper products now occurring, we wonder how we lived without toilet paper and paper towels? Here's a short history:

Toilet Paper - it took a while to catch-on

The first modern commercially available toilet paper in the United States was introduced in 1857 by Joseph Gayetty and known as "Gayetty's Medicated Paper." It was sold in boxes of flat sheets and made from hemp-based paper and infused with aloe and sold as a medical product. It was on the market for thirty plus years but very expensive and not popular. Americans already had a cheap source of paper to use – the Sears Roebuck catalog arrived free in the mail, and pages from the Old Farmer's Almanac were found in most outhouses. The Almanac was even produced with a hole punched in the corner, making it easy to hang. Some families reported having a bucket of corncobs too. In 1879, brothers Clarence and E. Irvin Scott founded the Scott Paper Company in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and were producing a toilet paper product for hotels and drugstores. By 1890, the company popularized the concept of perforated toilet paper on a roll. But the subject of toilet paper was taboo in the Victorian 1890's and publications wouldn't advertise it nor retailers display the product. The Scott brothers gave their corporate customers incentive to buy by customizing the packaging. So, for example, the Waldorf Hotel in New York offered "Waldorf" toilet paper in its bathrooms. Soon Scott was producing private label brands for over 2,000 companies. In 1903, Scott Paper finally decided to stop the private label marketing and branded their product as Scott Tissue. To diffuse any lingering taboo backlash, they advertised their toilet paper as a medical product to help stop the spread of dysentery, typhoid and cholera. By 1925, Scott was the leading TP company in the world. Their product became so popular, the Scott Paper Company didn't have to lay off a single worker during the Depression. As time passed, toilet tissues slowly became an American staple. But widespread acceptance of the product didn't occur until a new technology demanded it – indoor plumbing. Another big advancement in the industry came in 1928 when the Hoberg Paper Company of Green Bay, Wisconsin introduced Charmin toilet paper, gave it a feminine logo and advertised its softness instead of its purpose. The product was extremely successful and toilet paper quickly became a necessity instead of a luxury. But while toilet paper was popular, advancements were slow in coming. As late as 1935, the Northern Tissue Company boasted that their toilet paper was "splinter free."

Tales from the Tavern



The Great TP Shortage of '73. Some of you may remember this: Energy crisis and fuel shortages were headlines. On December 19, 1973, late-night comedian Johnny Carson joked about a potential toilet paper shortage, and people took him seriously, buying up all

of the local supplies. Carson went on the next night, apologizing for causing a scare, but in some places, the shortage continued for weeks.

Paper Towels - an accidental invention

In 1907, Arthur Scott, son of E. Irvin Scott of Scott Paper Company, and President of the company, received notice that an entire railroad car full of paper unloaded at the plant for toilet paper manufacture had been rolled too thick for toilet tissue and would have to be destroyed. He recalled hearing about a teacher in the local school system that had given her students a small piece of soft paper to use after washing their hands and keep them from using the communal cloth roller towels of washrooms of the time and spreading disease. Mr. Scott ordered the thick paper perforated into small towel-size sheets and sold them as disposable paper towels, the kind you pull out of metal dispensers in public washrooms. Named

“Sani-Towels” to emphasize their hygienic advantages over germ-filled cloth towels, they sold the paper towels to hotels, restaurants and railroad stations for use in their washrooms. In 1931, Scott introduced perforated paper towels on a roll for kitchen cleaning. They were 18” long and 13” wide. As housewives were used to re-washing kitchen rags and cloth towels, it took many years before paper towels replaced cloth towels for kitchen use. Other companies started to manufacture similar products. Enter the power of advertising and the messages that presented not only the product but the satisfaction of the user. Coupons were used in the ‘30’s and ‘40’s and by the 1950’s, the message showed a housewife who clearly kept an impeccable home by using paper towels. Sales continued to climb. By the late 1950’s with the beginning of ‘supermarkets’, and by 1965, when 2-ply towels were introduced, paper towels had entered our modern life to stay.

This Carton containing Roll of 150 Towels costs 35c. (West of Mississippi River or in Canada, 50c.)

You deliberately expose your children to disease when you allow them to use the same towel at school that sixty or seventy other pupils use. Avoid this danger by providing them with a few

Scott Tissue Towels

"Use like a blotter."

Scott Tissue Towels provide a clean towel for the little ones at every wash—they are inexpensive and should be provided for the pupils by the schools. Why not mention it to the teacher or principal? In the meantime supply the child yourself with a few to take to school each day.

150 Towels cost 35c—Fixtures, 25c to \$1

If your dealer hasn't Scott Tissue Towels in stock, SEND US \$2 FOR 6 ROLLS AND FIXTURE (if west of Mississippi River or in Canada, send \$2.50), and we'll deliver them, charges prepaid.

Send for free story, "Mrs. Marvin's Motto."

SCOTT PAPER CO. 623 Glenwood Avenue Philadelphia

Makers of "Sani-Tissue" and "Waldorf" Toilet Papers, "SaniKombs" and other Sanitary paper products.

King and Queen Courthouse Tavern Museum
PO Box 129
King and Queen C.H., VA 23085-0129

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Aylett VA 23009
Permit No. 4