

The American Influenza Epidemic of 1918-1919: A Digital Encyclopedia

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Abstract: The University of Michigan Center for the History of Medicine is in the process of creating an original, open access digital collection of archival and interpretive materials related to the history of the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic in the United States. The project, which the NEH has given a prestigious We the People designation, will include approximately 50,000 pages of original materials that document the experiences of 50 diverse communities in the United States in fall 1918 and winter 1919 when influenza took an estimated 675,000 American lives.

The project is significant in three ways. It will:

- Be the first digital collection to document the social, cultural, public health, and human dimensions of the most devastating infectious health crisis during the post-germ theory era;
- Be the first extensive digital collection to highlight the responses of over 50 American communities to the 1918-1919 pandemic, with attention to multiple social forces, organizations, communities and to the human experiences of death and disease;
- Provide access to an extensive set of interpretative documents, such as city essays, timelines, information boxes, and sidebars that will help guide the reader and serve as templates for self-guided research projects.

The poster will present this original project for the first time to the archival community. Forum participants' feedback is sought and will inform the project moving forward.

About the author:

Julie Judkins is the digital librarian at the Center for the History of Medicine, the historical research unit of the University of Michigan Medical School. She graduated from the University of Michigan's School of Information with a dual master's in Archives & Records Management and Library & Information Services in 2009. Ms. Judkins is a former student officer of the University of Michigan's chapter of the Society of American Archivists and previously held positions at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library and the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.