The American Influenza Epidemic of 1918: A Digital Encyclopedia is a current project of The Center for the History of Medicine, a unit of the University of Michigan Medical School.

Founded in 1990, the mission of the Center for the History of Medicine is to conduct scholarly research on the history, culture and philosophy of medicine, to instruct and collaborate with our students, colleagues, and the broader community on these topics. In the past twenty years, the digital humanities has emerged as a new field of study that is consisting with past events and, thus, help inform public health and medical policies.

RESEARCH TEAM

Howard Markel, M.D., Ph.D., Director is the George E. Wantz Professor of the History of Medicine, Professor of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, Professor of History, Professor of Psychiatry, and Professor of Health Management and Policy (School of Public Health). The author or editor of 8 books including nine distinct versions of the landmark text, The Rise and Fall of Influenza. He is a National Library of Medicine Health Information National Forum (HINIF) Scholar and a Distinguished Service Professor.

Alexandra Minna Stern, Ph.D., Associate Director is the Meade Director of the Center for the History of Medicine and Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, History, and American Culture at the University of Michigan. Her book, entitled Exotic Nature: Faults and Frontiers of Biotic Breeding in Modern America (University of California Press) won the 2006 Arthur Vehslauer Prize from the Medical Care Section of the American Public Health Association for the outstanding book in scholarly contribution to the History of Public Health in America.

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ABOUT THE PROJECT

The American Influenza Epidemic of 1918: A Digital Encyclopedia is an initiative by The Center for the History of Medicine (CHM), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH). The NEH awarded the project a prestigious魏的项目 designation for its efforts to strengthen the teaching, study, and understanding of American history. The digital encyclopedia is powered by the Scholarly Publishing Office of the University of Michigan Library and the Digital Library eXchange Service (DLXS).

In 2003, CHM was contacted by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) and asked to conduct a study of "escape communities," or places that offered refuge to people who were infected with the Spanish influenza virus. The project was intended to help better understand how individuals and society responded to a health crisis of extraordinary magnitude. In addition, this digital encyclopedia will be of great value for public health, and human dimensions of the most devastating infectious diseases, such as swine or avian influenza pandemic. The digital encyclopedia will 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 service as templates for self-guided research projects.

Specifically, our digital collection will include:

• Original archival materials collected at over 142 archival repositories across the United States. These materials include:
  - Letters and correspondence
  - Minutes of organizations and groups
  - Official proclamations and orders
  - Reports of agencies and charities
  - Diaries and recollections
  - Photographs
  - Historical charts
  - Ephemera

• All available municipal annual health and other reports from 50 of the most populous cities in the United States (1917-1922)

• Every available U.S. state and federal report on influenza (1917-1922)

• U.S. Census mortality data and local and state case incidence data, September 1918-March 1919

• The corpus of published medical, public health, and popular literature on the 1918 influenza pandemic in the United States (1918-1928)

• Excerpts related to influenza from different newspapers from the selected cities, categorized by circulation, readership, and political affiliation

• Original archival materials collected at over 142 archival repositories.

The majority of these materials will be scanned from high-quality photos made from the original repository collections.

Our digital encyclopedia will provide access to the epicenter of the 1918 influenza pandemic, as well as a wide range of interpretive resources to provide historical context, as well as to explain the science of viruses. The project will be searchable through a format-specific interface that will take full advantage of the possibilities offered by the text. All materials will be searchable through an integrated interface that allows searching any combination of formats.

METADATA

All text images will be tagged with keywords and key-phrases from a controlled vocabulary resulting in a modified TET header at the item level. Images (photographs, drawings, maps, etc) will be tagged using the Dublin Core metadata set.

All of the digitized materials will have the full range of search capabilities offered by the OpenText search engine. These include simple word and phrase searching of all text (as well as a variety of advanced search possibilities) with search restrictions as made possible by the data. Each format will be available to a variety of displays and navigation tools appropriate to that format, such as browsing and zooming tools for continuous tone images and multiple views (KJV, close-up, zoom, and full-screen) for document search results. Each format will be searchable through a format-specific interface that will take full advantage of the possibilities offered by the text. In addition, all materials will be searchable through an integrated interface that allows searching any combination of formats.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Eryclopedia will make available, for the first time, a wealth of materials that have great appeal to scholars in fields such as American history. American studies, history of medicine, women's and gender studies, ethnic studies, African American studies, science and technology studies, and cultural and literary history. Scholars will be able to explore how the 1918 influenza epidemic impacted many communities and sub-communities in the early twentieth-century. United States and to understand on a fine-grained level how individuals and society responded to a health crisis of extraordinary magnitude. In addition, this digital encyclopedia will be of great value for social scientists and public health practitioners who wish to determine if any lessons from 1918 might be applied to the advent of newly emerging infectious diseases, such as swine or avian influenza.

The digital collection will be the first to document exhaustively the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic on one nation. It will be valuable to scholars and generate a great deal of human interest.

The Eryclopedia will be unique in three ways:

1) It will be the first digital collection to document the social, cultural, public health, and human dimensions of the most devastating infectious health crisis to occur in the world during the past 500 years.

2) It will be the first extensive digital collection to highlight the responses of over 50 differing American communities to the 1918-1919 pandemic, with attention to multiple social forms, organizations, communities and to the human experiences of death and disease.

3) Our digital collection will 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.