

"If Only The Walls Could Talk"

Covid-19 vs. The 1918 Global Flu Pandemic

Michigan's deadliest year: Look back at 1918 flu pandemic

The Bay City Times - Updated Sep 19, 2019; Posted Oct 15, 2018

This October marks the 100th anniversary of the deadliest month in Michigan's deadliest year. The 1918 global flu pandemic that sickened an estimated 500 million worldwide - about a third of the world population at the time - and killed an estimated 50 million people, including more than 650,000 in the United States. More U.S. soldiers died from the flu than from fighting in World War I, which ended in the midst of the pandemic. The 1918 flu outbreak is considered one of the deadliest natural disasters in recorded history. In Michigan, more than 15,000 people died of either influenza or pneumonia between October 1918 and April 1919 - the equivalent of 50,000 people based on the state's current population. The highest death rates occurred among people in their 20s, unlike typical influenza epidemics that tend to hit hardest among young children and senior citizens. "The pandemic was so severe that from 1917 to 1918, life expectancy in the United States fell by about 12 years, to 36.6 years for men and 42.2 years for women," according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The deadly flu strain occurred amidst circumstances that fueled the pandemic. The movement of troops and refugees during World War I spread the disease more quickly and effectively than might have happened otherwise. In both the United States and Europe, the Industrial Revolution had led to increased urbanization, creating public-health issues such as overcrowded housing, air pollution and lack of access to clean water that all contributed to the spread of communicable diseases.

people living in tenements without access to running water and private bathrooms, families just stacked on top of each other. Even outside of influenza, epidemics were common in that era. Hundreds died every year in Michigan from communicable diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, diphtheria, whooping cough and typhoid.

1918 epidemic

The 1918 pandemic had four waves that continued into 1920. The pandemic's origins re-

County	1918 pop.	1917 deaths	1918 deaths	% change in total deaths
Huron	34,508	328	442	35%

Deaths by county in 1917 and 1918

The numbers come from the state's annual reports of births, deaths, marriages and divorces. The 1918 epidemic unfolded as Michigan was transitioning from an agrarian society to an industrial powerhouse. The state's population increased by almost a third between 1910 and 1920, from 2.8 million residents to 3.7 million. Part of that growth was fueled by immigration; 40 percent of Michigan children born in 1918 had at least one foreign-born parent. The state's manufacturing hubs, in particular, were booming. Detroit and Flint more than doubled in size during the decade. The state's other most-populated cities - Grand Rapids, Saginaw, Bay City, Lansing, Kalamazoo and Jackson - saw double-digit growth between 1910 and 1920. Another significant population center was the Upper Peninsula, thanks to the mining industry. Houghton County was the state's third most-populated county in 1918, with an estimated 111,000 residents. The U.P. had 12 percent of the state's population in 1918; today it's 3 percent. By contrast, Ann Arbor was a relatively small city in 1918 - less than half the size of Jackson - and Oakland and Macomb counties were largely rural.

Underlying public health issues

Urbanization also created conditions that contributed to the 1918 flu epidemic. There were these underlying public-health issues -

main unknown; theories on where it started range from Kansas to France. It's been nicknamed the Spanish flu, although historians agree that's a misnomer. WWI troop movements no doubt helped fuel the pandemic. The first wave of the pandemic occurred in the spring of 1918. Officials here and in Europe saw an uptick in influenza cases, but it was a relatively mild form of the disease. By autumn, the virus had morphed into a much more lethal strain, which emerged at several East Coast military bases in September 1918. By the end of the September, the epidemic had spread to Camp Custer, an Army base between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek that housed almost 40,000 soldiers at the time. A quarter of the soldiers came down with the flu. Around the same time, influenza cases were reported among a Navy band traveling through Bay City. From there, the flu spread throughout Michigan, with deadly consequences. By the first week of October, Detroit newspapers were reporting a flu outbreak in that city. There were more than 18,000 cases by mid-November. In Grand Rapids, the first reported victim was Arthur Vandenberg, editor and publisher of the Grand Rapids Herald and who later become a U.S. senator. Bay City's health department complained that "in some instances, entire families are sick and no one will venture into the homes to render assistance." By mid-October, the epidemic was alarming enough that the state Board of Health and

PIGEON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

 P.O. Box 523 • Pigeon, Michigan 48755
989-453-3242

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Six Regular Meetings:

Second Monday of the month

May - July - Sept. -

Oct. - Nov. - Jan. - Mar. 3:30 p.m.

Board Meetings:

Fourth Monday of the month

All meetings at 3:30 p.m.

Meeting Location:

Woelke Historical Research Center.

Gov. Albert Sleeper issued an order closing all churches and “places of public amusement.” Schools were exempted in the state order, but many local officials made that decision on their own, including officials in Detroit. Schools were also closed in Ann Arbor, and the University Musical Society canceled a concert by the Italian tenor Enrico Caruso. The University of Michigan football team played just five games that fall because of the epidemic and wartime travel restrictions.

A mysterious and horrifying disease

In Michigan and elsewhere, this form of influenza was unlike anything doctors and public-health officials had ever seen before. Particularly horrifying was how quickly it struck young, healthy adults. Also, terrifying, were the disease symptoms. In addition to stuffy noses, sore throats, headaches, coughs, fever and achiness, flu victims experienced blood flowing from their ears, noses and eyes. Moreover, because of oxygen deprivation, the patients’ skin would turn blue or black. When autopsies on flu victims were performed, doctors “were astonished to find that the heart and lungs were double their normal size in weight. They discovered that the influenza virus completely destroyed the lungs of its victims. The doctors noticed that the lungs were filled with a ‘bloody frothing fluid’ instead of air. To complicate matters, this was the era before antibiotics, flu vaccines, mechanical respirators and other effective treatments of influenza and pneumonia. Treatments back then were fairly rudimentary – it was basically keeping the patient propped up so they wouldn’t choke on their own sputum because the pandemic hit “very quickly and very hard, it didn’t discriminate between rich and poor, unlike some epidemics where more affluent people had means to isolate themselves and limit their exposure to disease.

and poor, unlike some epidemics where more affluent people had means to isolate themselves and limit their exposure to disease. It’s estimated about a quarter of Michigan’s population was stricken by the flu, although health records are sketchy on that point. Part of the problem was that influenza was not a mandatory reportable disease, when it was reported, it was sometimes reported as pneumonia. State health records from that era do show that more than 15,000 people died from influenza or pneumonia (including broncho-pneumonia) between October 1918 and April 1919. To put the deaths into perspective, Michigan recorded 544 influenza deaths in 1917 – and none of those victims were in their 20s. Between October and December 1918, there were 6,335 Michigan deaths from influenza – 12 times the number in 1917. The 1918 deaths including 1,996 who were in their 20s, and that doesn’t count the influenza deaths in 1919 or the 6,200 deaths in 1918-19 attributed to pneumonia.

Pandemic’s third and fourth waves

The pandemic ebbed in the summer of 1919, although there were subsequent upticks in influenza in the fall of 1919 and again in the fall of 1920 – the third and fourth waves of the epidemic. In 1919 and again in 1920, state records show about 3,000 people died of influenza, which is more than five times the number in 1917 before the pandemic began. The 2017-18 flu seasons were the deadliest in four decades, according to the CDC. The agency estimates that 80,000 Americans died of flu and its complications that winter. That’s why people should take it seriously when public-health officials push annual flu vaccinations. Even when flu vaccines are not fully effective, they reduce the number of people who get the flu and the severity of the disease among those who are vaccinated and get flu anyway.

	Huron County	
Case Status	Confirmed	Probable
Cases	57	8
Deaths	3	0
Updated	7/1/2020	7/1/2020
Source: https://www.michigan.gov/coronavirus/		

Latest developments on corona virus in Michigan

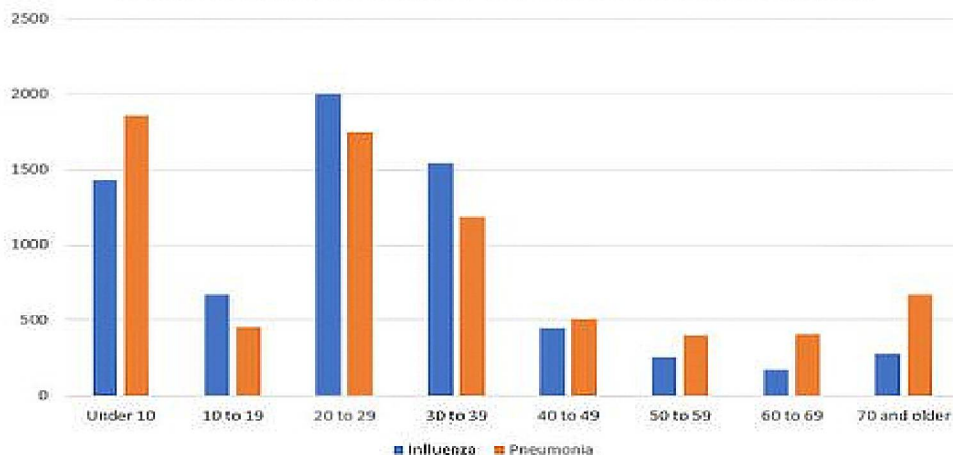
By Andrew Mullin | amullin@mlive.com

State health officials reported 314 new corona virus cases Saturday, June 27, increasing the statewide total to 63,009 cases. Michigan is averaging 267 new cases per day, according to seven-day moving averages. That’s up from 173 a week earlier. On Saturday, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services also reported 19 new deaths caused by COVID-19, bringing the death toll in the state to 5,907 linked to the infectious respiratory illness. The state also identified an additional 6,670 cases as considered “probable,” with 246 more deaths likewise classified as probably linked to COVID-19.

By Roberto Acosta | racosta1@mlive.com

The number of new confirmed COVID-19 cases reported on Sunday, June 28 fell below 300 for the first time in five days. Figures provided by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services show 253 cases, raising the overall total to 63,261 since March. It’s the lowest amount since 221 cases on June 23. Four new COVID-19 deaths were also reported Sunday, pushing the total amount to 5,911. The state’s fatality rate sits at 9.3 percent. Data released on Sundays has typically been lower amid the pandemic as some county health departments do not provide information over the weekend. Michigan is averaging 275 new COVID-19 cases and 7 new deaths per day, per seven-day moving averages. The averages from the prior seven-day period were 183 cases and 11 deaths each day. MDHHS also reports 6,685 probable COVID-19 cases and 246 additional probable deaths. MDHHS also reported 51,009 people have recovered from COVID-19, up from 49,290 last weekend. A person is considered to have recovered from the virus if they are alive 30 days after the onset of COVID-19 symptoms. The number of COVID-19 tests conducted in the state also continues to climb, with the amount of diagnostic tests at more than 1.03 million and serology tests nearing 157,000.

Michigan's 1918 flu and pneumonia deaths by age group



In 1918, Michigan recorded 6,742 deaths attributed to influenza and 7,247 deaths to pneumonia or broncho-pneumonia. Of those deaths, 3,742 occurred among people in their 20s.

Notice

All natives, citizens, denizens or subjects of the German Empire or of the Imperial German government being males of the age of 14 years and upward, who are within the United States, and not actually naturalized as an American citizens, are required to register as alien enemies.

The time fixed for such registration is the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 9th days of February, 1918 inclusive, from 6 a. m. to 8 p. m. on each of said days. The registrant must supply four unmounted photographs of himself, not larger than 3x3 inches in size on thin paper with a light background. Each photograph must be signed by the applicant across the face thereof so as not to obscure the features.

In nonurban areas where a registrant's place of residence is so located that he receives his mail from two postoffices the registrant may elect which postoffice district he is to register in, but he must immediately notify the other postoffice of his election. The "registration district" shall in a city be deemed to be the police precinct or police district embraced within the local postoffice district.



Do You Recall ?

When the first stone roads were being built in this vicinity? In the early 1900's the first hard surface roads were being built in this area and were a great improvement over the dirt roads that became a mire in wet weather. Now concrete highways and black top roads serve to bring many customers to Pigeon's trading center.

Pigeon Progress
January 23, 1953

AN APPRECIATION

In behalf of the Huron County Historical Society, I wish to express the appreciation of that organization, and I believe, of the public generally, for the wise action taken by the Board of Supervisors last week in arranging for public shore fronts on all sides of our county. It is probably that there are several, and to be hoped that there are many public-spirited citizens of our county who will donate parcels of land of varying size for shore frontage for this purpose. A parcel giving but a few rods of beach is valuable for the people of that locality. Those who can should give, and those who cannot give, should sell to the public at very reasonable prices. It is therefore to be urged that all persons having frontage which they will give or sell at a reasonable price, write at once to Hon. Godfried Gettel, chairman of the Park Trustees for this county. It is to be hoped that lands will be obtained in time to be of use to the public next summer. It is urged that each parcel be made a separate park and when given to the public, be named after the donor. There seems no better way to perpetuate one's name, to do a lasting good to humanity, and to create a monument as enduring as our nation. The Historical Society is interested in who will be the first to give.

Charles D. Thompson.

Progress Advance - January 1, 1918

FARM FOR SALE

160 acres; located 2 1-4 miles south and 3 1-4 miles east of Owendale, 90 acres cleared, 50 acres clay loam and 100 clay and peat, well drained, brick house, basement, barn, seven acres in fruit, good out buildings, fine location. A real bargain at \$10,000.

F.D. WRIGHT, R.F.D., No. 3, Gagetown. 3wk adv;

Progress Advance
January 12, 1916

FOOD HAS JUMPER 72%
Increase During Last Year Has
Been 14 Per Cent.

Washington - Retail prices of food increased 4 per cent from August 15 to September 15; 14 per cent from September, 1917, to September, 1918, and 72 percent from September, 1913, to September, 1918.

The bureau of labor statistics has just announced these figures.

The increases were determined from reports by retail dealers, on 28 articles of food.

Progress Advance
October 25, 1918

HOW SAGINAW FIGHTS THE FLU

In Saginaw only 25 people are allowed in a store at one time as a precaution against the "flu." Policemen stand at the store doors and count the customers as they go in. When 25 are inside no more can pass, till others come out. Saginaw also quarantines against the disease as rigidly as for small pox and as a result there are comparatively but few cases there.

Progress Advance
November 1, 1918

KIDS QUIT. SCHOOL CLOSES.

Up to a week ago there was not many cases of influenza in Pigeon and vicinity, but in the last week the spread of the disease, particularly in the country has been rapid.

In order to safeguard against it it was decided yesterday to close the Pigeon school. The large number of school children who had become affected brought the matter very forcibly to the attention of the authorities. If reports are correct the school board was not disposed to close the school, but when forty pupils refused to attend school yesterday afternoon, it was finally decided to close yesterday afternoon until further notice.

FARM MARKETS

Wheat \$2.05
Oats 77c
Burley \$2.50
Rye \$1.60
Peas \$3.25
June Cloverseed \$14.00
Alsyke \$13.50
Hay No. 1 18.00 \$18.50
Hay No. 2 \$17.50
Beans, Dry \$11.00; wet \$10.50
Eggs 45c and 46 cents
Butter 45 and 42 cents

Progress Advance
January 1, 1918

PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR.

Whereas it is a matter of common knowledge that the state of Michigan in common with other states of the Union, is facing a serious and imminent danger of an epidemic from the disease commonly known as the Spanish influenza, which is prevalent in practically all communities throughout the state;

And, whereas, said disease is highly contagious and is spread by personal contact with the persons infected therewith, thus creating the necessity of avoiding in so far as possible, all gatherings and meetings whatsoever.

Now, by virtue of the authority vested in me as governor of the state I hereby direct that all churches, theaters, moving picture shows, pool rooms, billiard rooms, lodge rooms and dance halls shall be and remain closed until further proclamation, and that all unnecessary public meetings or gatherings shall be avoided.

All health officers and boards in the various cities and villages and townships of the state shall take such action as is required by law to carry out and insure the careful performance of the terms and conditions hereof.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the great seal of the state to be affixed at the capital in Lansing this 19th day of October, 1918.

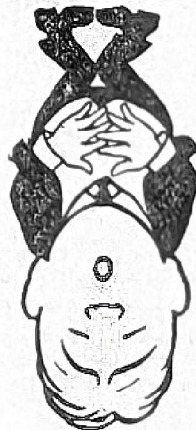
Albert E. Sleeperr,
Governor.

Mrs. Flatbush - "Does your husband come home to his luncheon?"
Mrs. Bensonhurst - "Oh, yes; every day."
"And does he grumble when it's not ready on time?"
"He does not."
"But you don't always have it on time for him, do you?"
"Hardly ever on time."
"And does he grumble when it's not?"
"He certainly does not."
"Why doesn't he grumble, do you suppose?"
"Because I won't let him."

UPSET STOMACH

PAPE'S DIAPEPSIN AT ONCE ENDS
SOURNESS, GASES, ACIDITY,
INDIGESTION.

Undigested food! Lumps of pain; belching gas, acids and sourness. When your stomach is all upset, here is instant relief—No waiting!



The moment you eat a tablet of Pape's Diapepsin all the indigestion pain, dyspepsia misery, the sourness, gases and stomach acidity ends.

Pape's Diapepsin tablets cost little at any drug store but there is no surer or quicker stomach relief known. Adv.

We'd love to see you on our Team!

An individual or business can become a member by contracting any active member or by sending your tax deductible cash or check to Pigeon Historical Society, 59 S. Main St. / P. O. Box 523, Pigeon, MI 48755. Dues are renewed at the annual meeting each year.

Individual Membership: \$20.00 (active member with voting privileges)

Life Membership: \$120.00 (active voting member with lifetime privileges)

Supporting Membership: \$15.00 (non-active supporting member)

Business Membership: \$20.00 or more (contributing member non-voting)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Everyone is welcome to attend our meetings. Be our guest and become a member!

GEM THEATRE

PIGEON

FRIDAY and SATURDAY

MARCH 14 - 15

"The Unknown Man"

Walter Pidgeon, Ann Harding

— also —

"Bandit Queen"

Willard Parker, Barbara Britten

SUNDAY and MONDAY

MARCH 16 - 17

MGM's stirring adventure

**WESTWARD
THE WOMEN**

STARRING

ROBERT TAYLOR DENISE DARCEL

Cartoon

News

Sunday Matinee 3:00

Evening Shows 6:45 - 9:00

TUES. - WED. - THURS.

MARCH 18 - 19 - 20

WARNER BROS. PRESENT

**DISTANT
DRUMS**

TECHNICOLOR

STARRING

**GARY
COOPER**

with MARI ALDON

SCREEN PLAY BY NIVEN BUSCH AND MARTIN RACKIN
DIRECTED BY RAOUL WALSH MUSIC BY MAX STEINER
A UNITED STATES PICTURES PRODUCTION
PRESENTED BY WARNER BROS.

Cartoon

News

— COMING —

**"I'll See You In
My Dreams"**