

Flu: Nurses were in short supply because of World War I

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“Pneumonia set in with Mrs. Gass and her case was hopeless from the beginning,” the Raymond Herald reported. Although “doctors made a hard fight to pull him through it,” Fred Gass died on Oct. 17.

Days after they arrived, their bodies were shipped back to Nebraska. The Oct. 24 edition of the Ord Quizz announced their demise with the headline, “Husband and wife buried in one large grave.”

Have flu; will travel

By mid-October, cases had arisen in Chinook, Naselle, South Bend and Raymond. Community leaders were scrambling to check the spread of the disease by closing schools, churches, theaters and dance halls. State Health Officer T.D. Tuttle wrote a letter urging local leaders to do everything in their power to stop people from congregating.

However, the arrival of the flu prompted even more travel around the region. Teachers went home to spend their “enforced vacations” with family, and some Peninsula residents tried to

hide from the epidemic in more far-flung places like Lebam and Naselle. Wealthy Portland families came to their Peninsula vacation cottages to dodge the growing contagion at home — or to recuperate. Others left home to nurse afflicted family members.

In many cases, they took the illness with them. Harold Stanley Bell, 28, came home from Portland with the flu on Oct. 13, and died in South Bend five days later.

Juanna Johnson’s parents hurried up from Yolo County, California, to care for her and her ailing family. However, they too fell sick and had to send for a granddaughter who lived in Olympia.

Her husband, Ernest, and their two children recovered, but Juanna only grew weaker. She died on Oct. 20. Two other Raymond residents died the same day: baby Helen Zemny, and “prominent citizen” William Lovell, a meat-cutter, painter and father of four.

Due to the ban on public gatherings, Juanna Johnson had only a brief graveside service. Her family fell apart after her death. By 1920, her husband had sent their little daughter Lois to live

with her aunt and uncle in California.

‘That others might live’

As the number of cases grew in mid-October, a group of “Minute Women” met with Dr. George A. Tripp at his South Bend office to make plans for a temporary flu hospital.

With many qualified medical people away at the war, nurses were in short supply, so the Red Cross and the Minute Women recruited stand-ins from their communities. These women likely didn’t consider their actions courageous or heroic, but just like their counterparts on the battlefields of Europe, they took immense risks in service to their fellow Americans.

Among these was Ocean Park resident Dorothy Catherine Olney. The daughter of a Scottish mother and Canadian father, Olney and her sister and three brothers grew up in Ocean Park. She married San Francisco native Lloyd Olney in late 1914, and the couple moved to California. However, when Olney enlisted and was sent to France, she came back to live with her mother, Anna Hood.

In late October, her brother and sister-in-law,

Ernest and Sophie Hood, and their three children fell ill in Megler, and had to take time off from their jobs at Megler Station, a train depot and ferry terminal. As a young woman, Olney had trained to be a nurse at South Bend General Hospital, so she was the obvious choice for nurse. She went to stay with them in Megler.

Within a week, the Hoods were back at the station, looking decidedly worse for wear.

“Ernie looked like a defeated prize fighter after receiving the count and his wife didn’t look much better,” the Observer said on Nov. 8. “They want no more to do with ‘The Flu.’”

They didn’t get their wish. Olney quickly became so ill that she had to return to her parents’ home. The same day the Observer announced the Hoods’ recovery, the Pacific Tribune said Olney had suffered a relapse and was “seriously ill with pneumonia.”

She died on Nov. 9, just four days short of her 24th birthday. Nearly every paper in the county noted her heroism.

According to the Tribune, Olney’s life was “sacrificed that five other influenza victims might live.”



Table with columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (KATU, KOMO, KING, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPVT, KPXD, KCPO, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FAM, FMC, LIFE, ROOT, FS1, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TNT, AMC, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, CNBC, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD) listing their respective programs.

Table for SATURDAY EVENING with columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (KATU, KOMO, KING, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPVT, KPXD, KCPO, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FAM, FMC, LIFE, ROOT, FS1, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TNT, AMC, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, CNBC, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD) listing their respective programs.

Table for SUNDAY EVENING with columns for time slots (6 PM to 11:30) and rows for various TV channels (KATU, KOMO, KING, KOIN, KIRO, KGW, KRCW, KOPB, KPVT, KPXD, KCPO, TBS, KZJO, ESPN, ESPN2, NICK, DISN, FAM, FMC, LIFE, ROOT, FS1, SPIKE, COM, HIST, A&E, TLC, DISC, NGE0, TNT, AMC, USA, FOOD, HGTV, FX, CNN, FNC, CNBC, BRAV, TCM, SYFY, RFD) listing their respective programs.