

The Flu starts to hit the fan

[The Bethlehem Gadfly](#) [Spanish Flu](#) April 1, 2020

👉 Latest in a series of posts on the Spanish Flu 👈

For perspective on our current coronavirus situation, we are following the entrance of the 1918 Spanish Influenza, that paragon of pandemics, into the minds and bodies of Lehigh Valley residents who got their news through the Morning Call (the files of the Bethlehem Globe are closed to us at the moment).

On September 27, 1918, exactly two weeks after the news that the Spanish Flu had “arrived” in the U.S., the story lands solidly among major war stories on p. 1 of the *Morning Call*. Four Associated Press releases are now grouped in one article rather than oddly and randomly distributed individually as they had been. News about a major outbreak among students at Middlebury College — with one death and, for the very first time, a named victim — indicates to our local reading public that the disease has traveled outside the military camps and will be real for them. And Boston initiates the first attempt to thwart the spread by closing “all theatres, moving picture shows, dance halls, and ‘other unnecessary places of public assembly’.” The Flu moves quickly, with fully 50,000 cases in Boston in this two-week period (in contrast to about 40,000 in the past two weeks in the New York area).



INFLUENZA SPREAD
KEEPS ON UNABATED;
DRAFT CALL CANCELLED

(By Associated Press.)

Washington, Sept. 26.—Because of epidemics of Spanish influenza in army camps, Provost Marshal Crowder tonight cancelled calls for the entrainment between October 7 and 11 of 142,000 draft registrants.

During the twenty-four hours ended at noon today, 6,139 new cases of influenza in army camps had been reported to the office of the Surgeon General of the Army. One hundred and seven deaths, resulting chiefly from pneumonia, following influenza, and 723 new cases of pneumonia also were reported.

Burlington, Vt., Sept. 26—Measures for preventing, if possible the spread of influenza among soldiers at Fort Ethan Allen were considered at a conference of government officials and state health authorities today.

Sixty students at Middlebury College are under treatment for influenza. The first death occurred today, the victim being Charles H. Thompson, of Maplewood, N. J.

Camp Dix, N. J., Sept. 26—Thirty-six soldiers have died here of Spanish influenza or of pneumonia, following that disease in the last twenty-four hours, it was announced tonight. In the same time 806 new cases were discovered, 252 of which were so serious as to require hospital treatment.

Since the epidemic broke out here 5,727 cases have been reported and 182 soldiers have died. In 423 of the 5,727 cases pneumonia followed Spanish influenza.

Boston, Sept. 26—There are fully 50,000 cases of influenza in Massachusetts in the judgment of Bernard W. Carey, epidemiologist for the state department of health.

The number of new cases during the 24 hour period ended at noon today, Dr. Cary said, was 2,143. Deaths reported for the period were 76. These figures, however, did not include this city where 50 deaths from influenza-pneumonia reported during the period from 10 o'clock last night to noon today, the largest total for a similar period since influenza became prevalent.

All theatres, moving picture shows, dance halls "and other unnecessary places of public assembly" in this city were ordered closed from midnight tonight until October 6 at a meeting today of the Emergency Health Committee.