

Another perspective on the Spanish Flu: “Never let a good crisis go to waste”

The Bethlehem Gadfly Spanish Flu April 8, 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).

“Never let a good crisis go to waste,” famously said Rahm Emanuel, President Obama’s chief of staff during the 2008 economic crisis.

A lesson never lost on real estate salesmen.

October 1918 — The Spanish Flu was ramping up to feast on Allentown and Bethlehem.

The perfect time to pitch escape from the “crowded city” festering with disease — escape to the “sunshine and open space” at “beautiful Highland Park”!

Safe country livin’ on easy terms.

Look at this deliciously sly pitch. An ad masked as a public service announcement.

Readers are lured in by a short litany of advice about how to avoid the dreaded disease only to find themselves tempted to change their addresses.

You gotta love the enterprise of the Lehigh Real Estate Company!

This Disease is Catching.

Prevent the spread of **Influenza** by using your handkerchief if you have to sneeze, cough or spit. The disease is dangerous. Keep your windows open. Fresh air and sunshine kill the germ. Prevention is better than cure. Get away from the crowded city—live in the sunshine and open at beautiful Highland Park, along the South Bethlehem trolley, 14 minutes to Bethlehem, only 8 minutes to 8th and Hamilton street, 6c fare and cars every ten minutes morning and evening. Lots now selling for cash or on easy payments. Call or write and let us show you. Lehigh Real Estate Co., 102 Penn Counties Trust Building. *

Now Bethlehem historians need to weigh in. Could this be the present Bethlehem Township “Highland Park” in the area of the Community Center on Farmersville Rd.? Doesn’t seem to be if it’s only an 8 minute trolley ride to 8th and Hamilton. Any ideas?