Vermont

From a Red Cross Report in 1918:
The latter days of the war were marked by one of the most severe epidemics which ever swept the world, the influenza. While Morristown was extremely fortunate in being comparatively free from its ravages, it greatly affected the activities of those closing weeks of the war. That the loss of life was not greater here was undoubtedly due to the prompt action of the local Board of Health, which closed all places for public meetings, all churches, schools, clubs, etc. on October 2, an action which was taken by the State Board of Health a few days later. At that time there had been only three cases in town and only one death, but Barre, Montpelier, Waterbury, Stowe and Hardwick were severely afflicted and the week following an embargo was laid upon travel to and from these towns, such persons being kept in quarantine for six days. These measures proved to be so effective that after a month the ban was lifted, and schools reopened after all the pupils had been immunized. The latter part of November saw a return of the disease which led to the resumption of the quarantine, which lasted some time longer, and the following January the Red Cross secured the vestry of the Congregational Church and fitted it up as a temporary hospital to care for those victims who could not be cared for at home, and here several patients were housed.

The Vermont author Natalie Kinsey-Warnock who has researched “how it was” in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont during the 1918 pandemic offers this note in the back of her book A Doctor Like Papa.

The 1918-1919 influenza epidemic killed more than 50 million people worldwide. It struck young and old alike, taking children from parents and parents from children. Doctors worked themselves to exhaustion trying to care for all the sick.

My mother remembers hearing Dr. Frank Easton of Craftsbury Commons, Vermont, tell of having so many patients to treat that if there wasn’t smoke coming from the chimney, he knew it was too late and drove on to the next house. He and his son had driven by one such place when his son saw a face in the window.* They went back and found a little girl sitting in the sunshine, trying to keep warm in a cold house. Her parents and brother were dead. She was one of the many orphans the flu epidemic created.

*from As I Recall, a recollections of Dr. Frank Easton, compiled by his daughter, Paula Easton Stannard

More

December 1916, A group of ‘newsies’ stand outside a bank in Barre, Vermont selling newspapers. Without broad access to radios, the American public relied heavily on newspapers for information. [Credit: The Library of Congress]
After Massachusetts, Vermont, along with Connecticut, was the hardest hit of the New England states. On September 27th, 1918, the Public Health Service noted that
“indefinite reports of influenza at many places have been reported.” During the final week of September, there were over 6,000 cases in the state. (In another article I read, it said as high as 23,000 cases total) By October 4th, influenza could be found throughout the state. The largest outbreaks were at Middlebury, St. Johnsbury, Lyndonville, St. Albans, Montpelier, Barre, Randolph and Northfield. Because officials were quickly overwhelmed by the disease, most reports regarding influenza cases and deaths were probably inaccurate. However, it does seem that the disease probably peaked in Vermont during the week of October 12th.

c1904 State Capitol Building in Montpelier, Vermont. Vermont was among the hardest hit states during the epidemic. [Credit: The Library of Congress]
State officials were unable to provide the Public Health Service with any type of record of influenza-related deaths.

Frank Eastman worked for a small power company in Montpelier and Barre. On Friday, Sept. 27th, Eastman wrote that nine of his crew were sick. By the next day, fourteen of his workers were out with influenza. Two weeks later, he soberly recorded the first deaths among his men: "Carpenter Wiley died this morning and the switchboard operator this afternoon."

By November 1st, however, state officials were cautiously optimistic, noting that "the situation was improving." Influenza remained prevalent throughout the state during the winter and spring of 1919. By the summer, the disease had begun to fade in Vermont and across the United States.