

TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT – 2009-2012

WWI and the 1918-1919 Influenza *Melissa Szych*

Grade - 8

Length of class period – 90 minutes

Inquiry – (What essential question are students answering, what problem are they solving, or what decision are they making?)

What affect did the 1918-1919 Influenza have on World War I?

Objectives (What content and skills do you expect students to learn from this lesson?)

While integrating Social Studies and Science, students will gain a better understanding of the 1918-1919 Influenza outbreak and its affect on WWI.

Using photos and a personal diary of Army Sergeant Charles L. Johnston, students will get to experience a personal account of Johnston as a Sergeant for the war as well as a medic dealing with the infamous influenza outbreak of 1918-1919.

Students will gain a better understanding on how to use primary source documents and experience how they bring history to life.

Materials (What primary sources or local resources are the basis for this lesson?) – (please attach)

Brief account of the 1918-1919 Influenza outbreak including graphs depicting the timeframe of the spread of disease across the United States

Brief history of Army Sergeant Charles L. Johnston including some of his personal diary entries

Photos from Camp Funston

*All materials can be found at this link: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/tjohnston7/ww1hist/>
However, many pages are copied below in case a link no longer exists.*

Activities (What will you and your students do during the lesson to promote learning?)

Students will be divided into groups of 3 or 4 and each group will be given the materials listed above

Working silently, for about 15 minutes, students will look over the materials while taking notes on what they read and observed.

Then, students will share thoughts within their groups on what they read and observed in the photos.

While discussing, one member of the group will write down all information they collect about the materials to share with the whole group at the end. They may do this by creating an Outline, a T-Chart, etc.

Once all groups are ready, or time is running short, each group will have one presenter share the information they learned

How will you assess what students learned during this lesson?

Observe small group discussions and whole group discussions

Presentations students give about what they learned

Collecting student work

Information below found at: <http://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>

The Influenza Pandemic of 1918

The influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 killed more people than the Great War, known today as World War I (WWI), at somewhere between 20 and 40 million people. It has been cited as the most devastating epidemic in recorded world history. More people died of influenza in a single year than in four-years of the Black Death Bubonic Plague from 1347 to 1351. Known as "Spanish Flu" or "La Grippe" the influenza of 1918-1919 was a global disaster.



The Grim Reaper by Louis Raemaekers

In the fall of 1918 the Great War in Europe was winding down and peace was on the horizon. The Americans had joined in the fight, bringing the Allies closer to victory against the Germans. Deep within the trenches these men lived through some of the most brutal conditions of life, which it seemed could not be any worse. Then, in pockets across the globe, something erupted that seemed as benign as the common cold. The influenza of that season, however, was far more than a cold. In the two years that this scourge ravaged the earth, a fifth of the world's population was infected. The flu was most deadly for people ages 20 to 40. This pattern of morbidity was unusual for influenza which is usually a killer of the elderly and young children. It infected 28% of all Americans (Tice). An estimated 675,000 Americans died of influenza during the pandemic, ten times as many as in the world war. Of the U.S. soldiers who died in Europe, half of them fell to the influenza virus and not to the enemy (Deseret News). An estimated 43,000 servicemen mobilized for WWI died of influenza (Crosby). 1918 would go down as unforgettable year of suffering and death and yet of peace. As noted in the Journal of the American Medical Association final edition of 1918:

"The 1918 has gone: a year momentous as the termination of the most cruel war in the annals of the human race; a year which marked, the end at least for

a time, of man's destruction of man; unfortunately a year in which developed a most fatal infectious disease causing the death of hundreds of thousands of human beings. Medical science for four and one-half years devoted itself to putting men on the firing line and keeping them there. Now it must turn with its whole might to combating the greatest enemy of all--infectious disease," (12/28/1918).



An Emergency Hospital for Influenza Patients

The effect of the influenza epidemic was so severe that the average life span in the US was depressed by 10 years. The influenza virus had a profound virulence, with a mortality rate at 2.5% compared to the previous influenza epidemics, which were less than 0.1%. The death rate for 15 to 34-year-olds of influenza and pneumonia were 20 times higher in 1918 than in previous years (Taubenberger). People were struck with illness on the street and died rapid deaths. One anecdote shared of 1918 was of four women playing bridge together late into the night. Overnight, three of the women died from influenza (Hoagg). Others told stories of people on their way to work suddenly developing the flu and dying within hours (Henig). One physician writes that patients with seemingly ordinary influenza would rapidly "develop the most viscous type of pneumonia that has ever been seen" and later when cyanosis appeared in the patients, "it is simply a struggle for air until they suffocate," (Grist, 1979). Another physician recalls that the influenza patients "died struggling to clear their airways of a blood-tinged froth that sometimes gushed from their nose and mouth," (Starr, 1976). The physicians of the time were helpless against this powerful agent of influenza. In 1918 children would skip rope to the rhyme (Crawford):

*I had a little bird,
Its name was Enza.
I opened the window,
And in-flu-enza.*

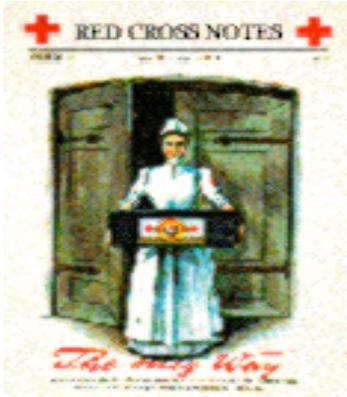
The influenza pandemic circled the globe. Most of humanity felt the effects of this strain of the influenza virus. It spread following the path of its human carriers, along trade routes and shipping lines. Outbreaks swept through North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, Brazil and the South Pacific (Taubenberger). In India the mortality rate was extremely high at around 50 deaths from influenza per 1,000 people (Brown). The Great War, with its mass movements of men in armies and aboard ships, probably aided in its rapid diffusion and attack. The origins of the deadly flu disease were unknown but widely speculated upon. Some of the allies thought of the epidemic as a biological warfare tool of the Germans. Many thought it was a result of the trench warfare, the use of mustard gases and the generated "smoke and fumes" of the war. A national campaign began using the ready rhetoric of war to fight the new enemy of microscopic proportions. A study attempted to reason why the disease had been so devastating in certain localized regions, looking at the climate, the weather and the racial composition of cities. They found humidity to be linked with more severe epidemics as it "fosters the dissemination of the bacteria," (Committee on Atmosphere and Man, 1923). Meanwhile the new sciences of the infectious agents and immunology were racing to come up with a vaccine or therapy to stop the epidemics.



The origins of this influenza variant is not precisely known. It is thought to have originated in China in a rare genetic shift of the influenza virus. The recombination of its surface proteins created a virus novel to almost everyone and a loss of herd immunity. Recently the virus has been reconstructed from the tissue of a dead soldier and is now being genetically characterized. The name of Spanish Flu came from the early affliction and large mortalities in Spain (BMJ,10/19/1918) where it allegedly killed 8 million in May (BMJ, 7/13/1918). However, a first wave of influenza appeared early in the spring of 1918 in Kansas and in military camps throughout the US. Few noticed the epidemic in the midst of the war. Wilson had just given his 14 point address. There was virtually no response or acknowledgment to the epidemics in March and April in the military camps. It was unfortunate that no steps were taken to prepare for the usual recrudescence of the virulent influenza strain in the winter. The lack of action was later criticized when the epidemic could not be ignored in the winter of 1918 (BMJ, 1918). These first epidemics at training camps were a sign of what was coming in greater magnitude in the fall and winter of 1918 to the entire world.

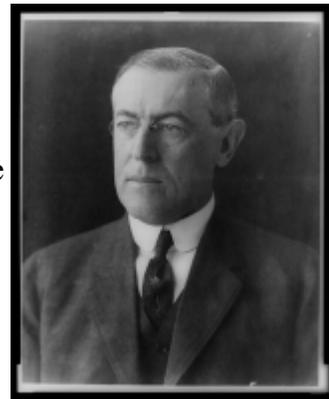
The war brought the virus back into the US for the second wave of the epidemic. It first arrived in Boston in September of 1918 through the port busy with war shipments of machinery and supplies. The war also enabled the virus to spread and diffuse. Men across the nation were mobilizing to join the military and the cause. As they came together, they brought the virus with them and to those they contacted. The virus killed almost 200,00 in October of 1918 alone. In November 11 of 1918 the end of the war enabled a resurgence. As people celebrated Armistice Day with parades and large parties, a complete disaster from the public health standpoint, a rebirth of the epidemic occurred in some cities. The flu that winter was beyond imagination as millions were infected and

thousands died. Just as the war had effected the course of influenza, influenza affected the war. Entire fleets were ill with the disease and men on the front were too sick to fight. The flu was devastating to both sides, killing more men than their own weapons could.



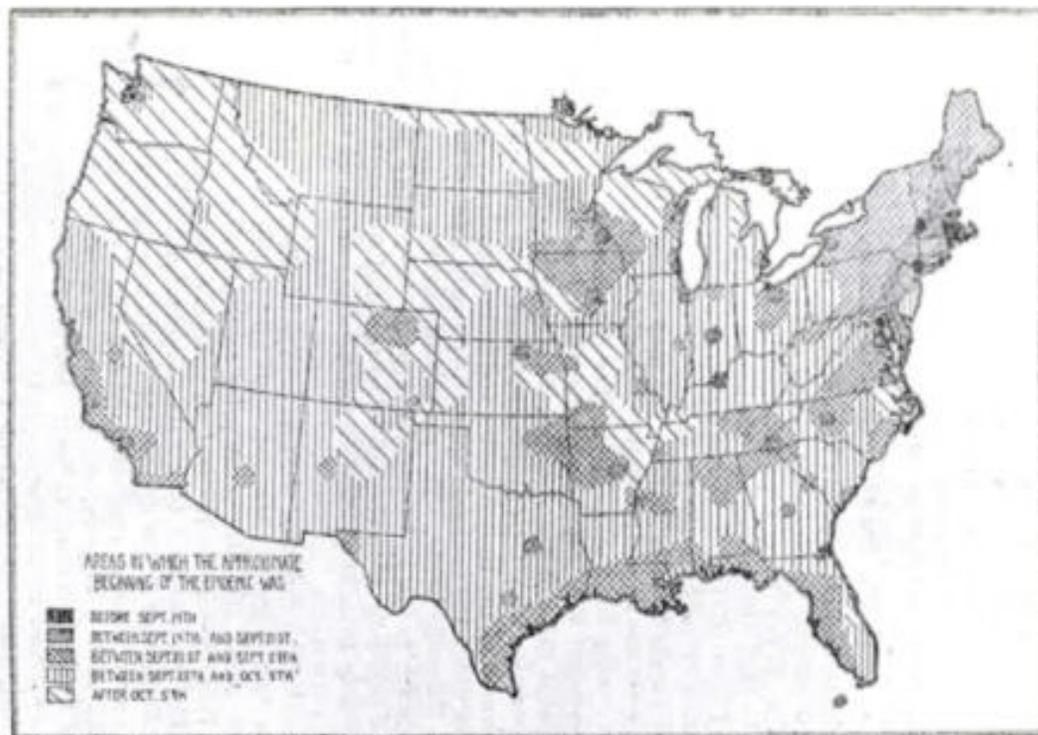
With the military patients coming home from the war with battle wounds and mustard gas burns, hospital facilities and staff were taxed to the limit. This created a shortage of physicians, especially in the civilian sector as many had been lost for service with the military. Since the medical practitioners were away with the troops, only the medical students were left to care for the sick. Third and fourth year classes were closed and the students assigned jobs as interns or nurses (Starr, 1976). One article noted that "depletion has been carried to such an extent that the practitioners are brought very near the breaking point," (BMJ, 11/2/1918). The shortage was further confounded by the added loss of physicians to the epidemic. In the U.S., the Red Cross had to recruit more volunteers to contribute to the new cause at home of fighting the influenza epidemic. To respond with the fullest utilization of nurses, volunteers and medical supplies, the Red Cross created a National Committee on Influenza. It was involved in both military and civilian sectors to mobilize all forces to fight Spanish influenza (Crosby, 1989). In some areas of the US, the nursing shortage was so acute that the Red Cross had to ask local businesses to allow workers to have the day off if they volunteer in the hospitals at night (Deseret News). Emergency hospitals were created to take in the patients from the US and those arriving sick from overseas.

The pandemic affected everyone. With one-quarter of the US and one-fifth of the world infected with the influenza, it was impossible to escape from the illness. Even President Woodrow Wilson suffered from the flu in early 1919 while negotiating the crucial treaty of Versailles to end the World War (Tice). Those who were lucky enough to avoid infection had to deal with the public health ordinances to restrain the spread of the disease. The public health departments distributed gauze masks to be worn in public. Stores could not hold sales, funerals were limited to 15 minutes. Some towns required a signed certificate to enter and railroads would not accept passengers without them. Those who ignored the flu ordinances had to pay steep fines enforced by extra officers (Deseret News). Bodies piled up as the massive deaths of the epidemic ensued. Besides the lack of health care workers and medical supplies, there was a shortage of coffins, morticians and gravediggers (Knox). The conditions in 1918 were not so far removed from the Black Death in the era of the bubonic plague of the Middle Ages.



In 1918-19 this deadly influenza pandemic erupted during the final stages of World War I. Nations were already attempting to deal with the effects and costs of the war. Propaganda campaigns and war restrictions and rations had been implemented by

governments. Nationalism pervaded as people accepted government authority. This allowed the public health departments to easily step in and implement their restrictive measures. The war also gave science greater importance as governments relied on scientists, now armed with the new germ theory and the development of antiseptic surgery, to design vaccines and reduce mortalities of disease and battle wounds. Their new technologies could preserve the men on the front and ultimately save the world. These conditions created by World War I, together with the current social attitudes and ideas, led to the relatively calm response of the public and application of scientific ideas. People allowed for strict measures and loss of freedom during the war as they submitted to the needs of the nation ahead of their personal needs. They had accepted the limitations placed with rationing and drafting. The responses of the public health officials reflected the new allegiance to science and the wartime society. The medical and scientific communities had developed new theories and applied them to prevention, diagnostics and treatment of the influenza patients.



Chronological map of the influenza epidemic of 1918. Based on preliminary reports from 376 localities, indicating the approximate date on which the disease reached an epidemic stage.

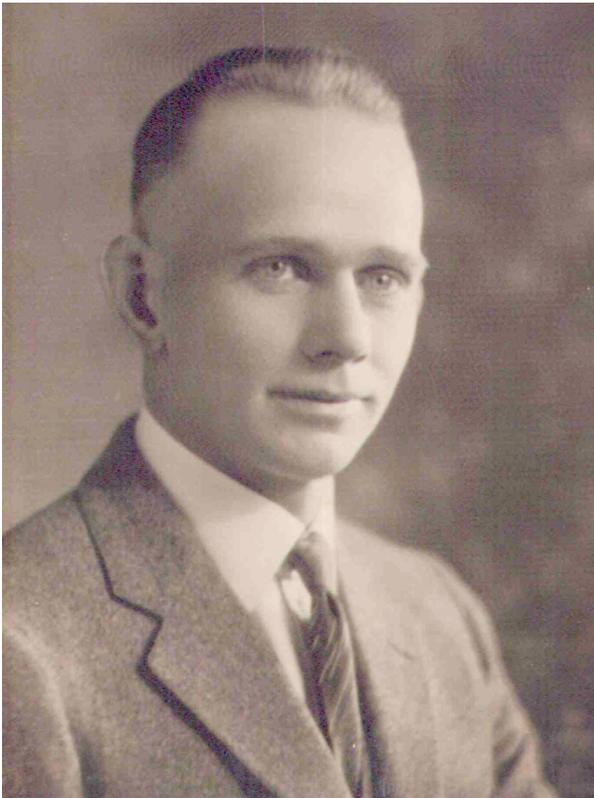
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Life at Camp Funston

Reflections of Army Sergeant Charles L. Johnston

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Charles L. Johnston
1895-1940

Charles L. Johnston was my dad.

He died when I was six months old. In a way, his death was an irony. He served during World War One as a member of Ambulance Company 239, 10th Sanitary Train, at Camp Funston (part of Ft. Riley) Kansas. He nursed soldiers during the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, the worst pandemic in history, and never fell to the disease. Twenty years later, he died of peritonitis from a ruptured appendix.

My mother passed away in 1992. In disposing of her personal effects, my sisters and I came across a bundle of letters my dad had written to my mom while he was in military training. They weren't married then. They were only serious sweethearts. They married in 1919 when he returned from military service, and they subsequently had six children.

But, because my dad described his experiences in detail, and because my mother never threw his letters away, we now have a grassroots window on national and regional history we otherwise

would not have had. It is an account that is too good to keep to myself.

Because of his untimely death, I never got to know him in the real sense. I have always heard my mom and my brother and sisters talk about what a great guy he was, and of course I accepted that. But, after reading his letters, I feel I have come to know him personally.

The Birth of Camp Funston

According to the publication, *Cantonment Life at Camp Funston*, the decision to build Camp Funston was made by the War Department in June 1917. Funston was the largest of sixteen divisional cantonment training camps constructed during World War One. This fact was more

than likely due to its central location (Ft. Riley was initially known as “Ft. Center” because of its closeness to the geographical center of the continent). With a capacity of over 50,000, it was to draw trainees from all the Great Plains states. A committee composed of planning engineers, landscape architects, and representatives of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps met at Fort Riley and selected a large meadow on the Fort Riley government reservation, near the Kansas River (also known as the Kaw River). Construction began July 1, 1917 and the camp was completed December 1 of that year at an approximate cost of \$10,000,000. It covered approximately 2 miles of what was referred to as Pawnee Flats. The camp was named in honor of Major General Frederick Funston, a colorful figure who had distinguished himself in the Phillipines, Cuba, and in the aftermath of the 1906 San Francisco earthquake.

The Zone

Because of the number of trainees anticipated and the desire for convenient location of commercial facilities to meet their commerce and entertainment needs, the Army decided to turn to private business. An enterprising businessman named H. P. Powers purchased Kellyville, a small town on the northern edge of the developing Camp Funston. He then auctioned off lots for the development of stores, theaters and shops. He changed the name of the town to “Army City”.

Although Army City was being developed with private capital, it nonetheless proceeded under the watchful eye and at the pleasure of the U. S. Army. The Army called it the “Zone of Department of Camp Activities and Amusements.” Understandably, the recruits shortened that to “The Zone.” It included three theaters with an average seating capacity of 1900 each, a pool hall with 70 tables, a 40-chair barbershop, a bank, a drug store, clothing stores, bowling alleys, and restaurants. Its storefront business grouping was a forerunner of today's malls. The Zone had a frontage of 2,000 feet...a little over six football fields long. It was a favorite destination for the soldiers and their guests. The finished construction was said to have cost \$1,500,000. Each of the concessionaires paid a percentage of their gross income back to the Camp Exchange.

The Zone was to be short lived, however. The war was over in 1918. With peace, the Army shrunk. Without the built-in commercial support of 50,000 soldiers, the Zone did likewise. In 1922, it officially ceased to exist.

Camp Funston still exists, though not as the large installation it once was. Its main purpose now is temporary housing for military personnel undergoing special training for duty in Iraq.

The Zone Revisited

There is a notable project underway in the department of Anthropology at the University of Arkansas. The Archaeological Remote Sensing Library of Geophysical Imagery is studying the use of non-invasive remote sensing methods combined with new analytical tools to allow recovery of detailed information about subsurface archaeological content. The project is supported by a Department of Defense grant and is centered on using such technologies as ground-penetrating radar to find the outlines of the footings of the buildings and other artifacts that once composed the Zone, as well as examining other sites across the country. Although

highly technical, the project is an interesting twist on the old saying about “gone but not forgotten.” An explanation of the project was done in 2003 on Economist.com. Since the article is now in the archives, a cost is involved in reading it.

Highways

Although a large part of his work dealt with nursing soldiers at the camp hospital during the influenza epidemic, my dad and others from his company were frequently assigned temporary duty with the Motor Convoy Service of the Quartermaster Corps. Because the war effort was requiring great shipments of materials and personnel, train lines were almost overwhelmed with the task. Therefore, the U.S. Army did the next best thing. They supplemented the transportation effort by sending my dad and thousands more by train to automotive centers in the East to pick up new ambulances and convoy trucks. They would then drive them to Camp Holabird in Baltimore, Maryland for shipment overseas. There was no highway system to speak of at that time, and many of his letters tell of the difficulties encountered on the road. (See [historical footnote](#)). Of course, with the roads no better than they were, the trucks were built to take a beating, which, according to some reports, was passed on to the driver. Pete Davies, author of *American Road*, quotes Drake Hokansen, another historian, as saying

"...the combination of solid tires and poor roads would have produced a constant, bone-jolting rattle and shudder. It would have been so bad that if the driver attempted any speed higher than ten miles an hour, it would have taken the sum of his effort just to hang on to the wheel and not be flung from his seat."

A statistic from a PBS documentary narrated by historian [David McCullough](#) puts things in perspective: in 1900, a scant 18 years before, there were less than ten miles of concrete roads in the whole country.

In 1919, a confluence of several parallel developments began to change that picture. World War One was over. Industrial output was retooling from war to peacetime production. Automobiles became more affordable and plentiful. Mechanization that led to the World War One tank gave birth to a new generation of earth moving and construction machines. Perhaps one of the most important events, however, was the occurrence of the first of two transcontinental convoys by the U.S. Army. It started in Washington, D.C. and ended in San Francisco. The official purpose was to test recently developed trucks (some of which had been received too late to actually use in the war), and to see if the juggernaut that had brought the Axis powers to defeat could actually traverse its own country. The unofficial purpose was to draw the attention of the public and policy makers to the crying need for hard surface, all-weather roads with a consistent, accurate, readable signage. Additionally, the planners felt it would provide a tool to garner support for the Townsend Bill, which would provide federal funds for highway construction. After all, it didn't make much sense to own an automobile if you couldn't drive it anywhere. The transcontinental convoy was an event that was no doubt watched with keen interest by such people as Henry Ford (Ford Motor Co.), Harvey Firestone (Firestone Tire & Rubber Co.), and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. (Standard Oil), all of whom stood to gain commercially by the development of the United States highway system. (One of the first stops for the convoy was at the Firestone estate in Ohio).

One of the observers along on that trip was a young lieutenant colonel named Dwight D.

Eisenhower. [The 1919 Transcontinental Convoy](#) recounts how the experience left an indelible mark on Eisenhower, who, 33 years later, became the moving force behind today's Interstate Highway System.

Communications

In 1918, there were approximately 10 million Bell System telephones in service in the United States. Those were mainly in the urban areas with higher population. Army men didn't always have the luxury of being able to walk up to a pay phone and call home. This need for the Army man to communicate with family gave rise to another of the major war support efforts. Regardless of where Army men found themselves located, the Y.M.C.A. would have a local facility, stocked with writing stationery and pens, where the men could sit and write letters home. Probably 95 percent of Dad's letters were written on Y.M.C.A. stationery. According to the publication *Cantonment Life at Camp Funston*, one million sheets of stationery per month were required to meet the demand. [Becky Staley](#), whose [grandfather](#) also served in World War One, has written an excellent thumbnail sketch of the role of the [Y.M.C.A.](#) in the war effort. In addition, Becky's grandfather, as well as my father, had only good things to say about another organization that was key to the war effort. Read Becky's essay on the [Red Cross](#).

The Influenza Pandemic

History documents the 1918 influenza epidemic starting in Spring 1918. However, Dad's letters make no mention of it until the end of September. Molly Billings, in her excellent site on the [1918 Influenza Pandemic](#) explains why:

"...A first wave of influenza appeared early in the spring of 1918 in Kansas and in military camps throughout the US. Few noticed the epidemic in the midst of the war. Wilson had just given his 14 point address. There was virtually no response or acknowledgement to the epidemics in March and April in the military camps. It was unfortunate that no steps were taken to prepare for the usual recrudescence of the virulent influenza strain in the winter. The lack of action was later criticized when the epidemic could not be ignored in the winter of 1918."

[The Manhattan Mercury](#), a daily newspaper in Manhattan, Kansas, published an interesting account of how the pandemic affected Ft. Riley and the surrounding areas. Read [Pandemic](#).

Lauran Neergaard of the Associated Press has chronicled further research by the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology into the character of the [1918 flu virus](#).

The Enlistment

Dad joined the Army May 29, 1918 at Pawnee, Oklahoma and was discharged January 23, 1919. As much as he wanted to, he never saw combat duty. The 10th Division was just ready to be shipped when the Armistice was signed. That he did *not* see combat duty was perhaps fortunate in a couple of ways: 1.) If he had, I might not be here, and 2.) There is much documentation available on World War One combat from other sources. Dad's letters round out that documentation by showing what was going on stateside in support of the war effort.

I have organized the letters chronologically, and have edited for spelling and grammar and

eliminated small talk about friends and family members except where to do so would eliminate what I consider important reflections on the military and Dad's relationship to it. I also have included some photos that Dad or his friends took from time to time.

Please note that the appearance of this material online in no way lessens the author's rights to it. It can be distributed unaltered in part or whole, for non-profit purposes only, as long as proper credit is given to the author.

Information above found at: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/tjohnston7/ww1hist/>

Diary Entries of Army Sergeant Charles L. Johnston

Fully diaries can be found at: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/tjohnston7/ww1hist/index1.html>

Here are a few in case the link is lost:

Sunday, September 29, 1918
Camp Funston, Kansas

Dear 'Cile,

I haven't heard from you for a month of Sundays, but just can't wait till I hear from you every time before I write. This has been a very long day indeed to me, for we are quarantined in for the time being. Have been for two days. We are held up because "influenza," or some such a name, is in camp. It is some such a thing as pneumonia, and they seem to think it is pretty bad. It is at least bad enough to beat us out of our passes. For our commander promised us every one a very short pass home before the 15th of next month. But as there are so many cases of the disease in camp now, I expect to make my home in Funston for some time. He says that we may all go home before we leave here, for a short pass.

I have gotten done with my gas school at last and taken a little bit of every kind of gas. So Monday morning, I start giving the rest of the boys a few pointers. I am just rearing to get started at anything new, for the program sure was getting old to me. Well honey, they are serving supper now, so I guess I will close the noise and go look the menu over. Oodles of love.

Yours always,

Charles L.

October 6, 1918
Camp Funston, Kansas

Good morning my dear.

I am writing you a line or so while I am on the job. It's about 3 a.m. and all the poor old boys are resting very well. I am sure some nurse, believe me. Don't even get sleepy on the job. I have been working nights for about three days now, from 7 to 7 and fight the flies the whole day long while trying to sleep. I thought I was getting along on very little sleep when I was home, but this has the world cheated. There are 15 or so of the fellows to be put back to duty today, but they will fill the place up as soon as the beds are vacant.

Lots of them go to the base hospital every day and quite a number of them are "checking in" but there is bound to be as there are between 6 and 7,000 cases in the camp. I sure wish that they would all get well, for I am rearing to come home, believe me.

One of the boys played wise and got sick while he was home, his mother being ill. He is down with pneumonia, so will have a prolonged visit while home. Think I will try that when I come, eh! I guess they have this influenza dope in most every camp in the U.S., but I feel perfectly safe right here with it all the time. I feel fine and dandy and eat like a starved hog. I think I will forget all I ever knew about drill and all the other Army dope, for we have to run this just like we see fit, and as about 30 of the boys of our Company are in the hospital now, we are shorthanded for nurses. You better come up and take a job. We have 5 lady nurses, but only one works at night, so you can get on the same shift as I am.

Sure wish I was there to spend the Sunday with you. I expect, in fact I know, that we will work today the same as any other day, for there is no one else to do the work. I never did know that a sick fellow was so hard to wait on before. These birds almost chase you to death after water or pills or something else all the time. They all have high fever and kick the covers off as fast as one can cover them. When the fever gets too high, we must give them sponge baths to run down the temperature. Each of our men has about 20 patients, so you see we are pretty busy rookies. I guess that I didn't know any of those boys that died, which you wrote of.

Well sweetheart chick, I have spilled about all the gossip that I can think of with this dead for sleep head of mine. Goodnight, honey. Write me a big fat letter.

Always your man,

Charles L.

October 8, 1918
Camp Funston, Kansas

My Dear Lucille Marie,

It is raining tonight just enough to make me have the lonesome jimmies. I am still playing the part of a "dry nurse" ha ha Some name us boys have invented for a gentleman nurse, eh. The roof of our hospital has been leaking in several places and we have been having some time keeping the poor devils dry. The lightening burned our lights all out at once, and we had a h--- of a time. It was a real hard electric storm for a while. They are keeping our beds all filled with new patients as fast as we send the old ones "home well" or to the hospital, half dead. There haven't been so many cases the last 48 hours. I sure hope that they all get well soon, for I am sure getting tired of the job. Don't like to stay up every night the best in the world. We put 6 more of our boys in bed today. We are getting real short handed.

There has been a squad of airplanes here for several days, making demonstration flights. They sure do pull off some good stunts. Would love for you to see some of the show. Do they still sail over Cleveland on those trips yet? There aren't any stationed here, but they come in quite frequently.

Say honey, I wish you could have been here last night to hear the noise. Some way, (by a bogus telegram, I guess) the news got out that the Germans had given up and surrendered. This word came just a few minutes before "taps" or bedtime, and the cheering began over at headquarters and it wasn't 5 minutes till they were yelling all over the camp till you couldn't hear yourself think. They even had some of the Company bands out tooting their horns.

The M.P.s had a deuce of a time quieting things down before midnight, but it was real funny to listen to and just to see how quick the word spread all over the camp. Though it was all in vain, I guess, for the paper didn't say much about it today. Us boys had our special train already ordered, to take us home. ha ha Well, they just now brought 8 more sick ones in, so will have to go put them to bed.

Hello again. We have all those sick birds tucked into their beds. It sounds almost like a minstrel to hear them snoring and jabbering in their sleep. They drill for awhile, squads right or left, and then they are back home again, loving their sweethearts almost to death. We get to hear lots of secrets that they don't intend to tell. It's sure funny to listen to them. A fellow was dreaming a while ago and fell out of bed and let a squawk out of him that almost scared us to death. He sure looked foolish when we picked him up.

Well sweet chicken, I will close for now, as you know that news is scarce. About all I can think of is how good I love you and you already know that. Oodles of love.

Your (Dry Nurse),

Charles L.

October 12, 1918
Camp Funston, Kansas

Dearest 'Cile,

Here I am still here yet, and feeling like a three year old. I guess old fluzy hasn't a thing on me. Our sick boys are coming along fairly good. We sent some (over 40 of them) back to their company this evening. We also sent about half a dozen to the base with pneumonia.

The trouble with them is, they won't stay in bed as much as they should, and it's hard to watch them all at once. I never did know that a sick person was so much trouble before. ha ha I think we will have this place empty by Sunday. Then it will be something else to do I suppose. Almost as bad as a woman's work--never done.

We hear all kinds of latrine talk every day now as to where we are going to move from here. And when. Sure is lots of fun to start a lie of some kind and see how quick it is in circulation. The last three days, I guess we have been scheduled to every camp in the U.S. and a few outside. Yesterday we were to go to Detroit, Michigan and get our new motors and ship to Hoboken, N.J. But today, we changed the plans. We will start for Camp Kerney, Colorado on the 15th of this

month. ha ha How's that listen when half of our men are in the base hospital?

We got some big wool socks, wristlets, and helmets today, so let old man winter come ahead. I sleep with my sweater on most of the time. Guess I will have to sleep with my helmet on too as the flies almost torment me to death. I just presented one of my patients with a deliciously large dose of salts. I told him I had some good hot lemonade and you should have seen him nab it. They are awful hard to wake up when they know you have medicine for them. I put a thermometer in a big fellow's mouth the other night and he went to sleep and bit the thing off, and I guess swallowed the mercury, for I couldn't find it. Must have been what he needed, for we turned him free tonight.

Things are pretty quiet tonight. I think I will take an empty bunk and saw me off a little snooze after while. The dry nurses are all out to the cook tent shooting craps. The Captain is in the game, too, and the M.P. is watching. Some lineup, eh? Every time a motorcycle comes along, they all hide for fear it's the officer of the day (O.D.). They would be liable to be courtmartialed if he caught them. That's what makes it fun, I guess.

Well little sweetheart, I will say goodnight till another night. Give all the home folks my regards and a heap of big love to you, honey girl.

Yours,

Charles L.

(Undated)
Camp Funston, Kansas

Dearest 'Cile,

It has been about one hundred years since I have had a good chat with my love. I received your letter today and was awfully glad. Wish I could get about a dozen a day from you.

I am still keeping the fluzzy boys company. We only have about seventy five patients now and hope to get rid of them pretty soon. There have been no new ones in for several days now, and the ones that are here are about as well as ever, it seems to me. I don't know how they are coming in the other hospitals though. The quarantine has shown no chances of being raised yet. Seems a long time to be caged up like this. Haven't been to town since the folks were up here. Sure am anxious for things to quiet down a bit so I can climb the C.O.'s frame for that long talked of pass.

There have been hundreds of boys taken A.W.O.L. since quarantined, but they all get off pretty light to what the "Medics" do. Looks like they figure we don't give a D. about home. Oh yes, they did turn the boy loose that I was telling you about being in the guardhouse for running away and getting married. His wife had a talk with the Major and he didn't have the heart not to listen. So you see, if I have to run away and come home, you may have to talk to the old boy yourself. ha ha Could you do it?

The big card game is sure booming now. They have a box of pajamas turned over on its side for a table and greenbacks and silver piled a foot deep on top. The M.P. is inside too tonight, for it's pretty cool outside, on his post. The moon is showing almost as bright as day. The guards can easily see a fellow slipping around tonight and he better have a pass.

It sure doesn't look like the war could last much longer now, does it? Don't really think it will be worthwhile for me to go across now as the worst must already be over. Guess I will send the President a telegram to hurry and dismiss Funston, for I'm darned homesick to see my little sweetheart. Can't stand it very much longer if they don't move me farther away than this.

Well, my honey girl, I am about out of paper and news. I must ring off for this morning. Worlds of love and kisses.

Charles L.

December 10, 1918
Columbus, Ohio

My dear little woman,

Uncle Sam must have an awful grudge at us poor fellows or he would get us out of Columbus anyway. I dislike the place more and more every day. It's so foggy every day that you can hardly breathe without choking. I think most of the boys will be in the hospital pretty soon, for six of them are out there already. Flu I think is the trouble, or very bad cold. I am afraid that my pal Zeke is going to be taken out there too. I have been doctoring him to beat the band the last two days. I sneaked him in a little too much liquor last night and I wish you could have seen the fun. He got out of bed and made all the boys dance with him (at 1 a.m.). Now they have a dozen guards on the place and search every fellow that comes in. So I will have to find some other way to fight the flu. ha ha

Oh say, I guess you know by my gentle tone of voice that I have gotten some of your letters. Yes, I got that letter that I looked so hard for at Cambridge and two more from Frederick. They were sent to Baltimore, but were a day too late for me and were forwarded here. Gee, but they sure did save my life for I was about dead for a letter, believe me.

I am still sort of counting on being home for Christmas, though I don't know a thing to make me believe it. Just a hunch, you know. Our officers don't know but what we may be kept in the Motor service all winter. I met a fellow the other night down at the Hotel Columbus and I got to talking and asking him questions and it was 3 a.m. before we thought of the time. He had a leg shot off by shell and could sure tell some exciting tales as he had 18 months on the front.

Things were rather exciting down town last night. I saw four good fist fights and a little battle with revolvers but some black eyes and skinned heads were about all the damages done. I have been a little hostile once or twice but haven't gotten scarred up a bit yet.

Well, honey mine, be very careful with that cold you have. I'll continue the story till another day at least, and hope all the folks are feeling o.k. Heaps of love.

Always and ever yours,

Charles L.