

[REDACTED]
Jan. 16, 2001

Prof. Teri Shors
Univ. of Wis.
Oshkosh, WI

I'm sure you will hear many sad stories about the flu epidemic of 1918.

I remember my father-in-law, [REDACTED] tell about he & his brother Al, sleeping in the backyard ^{in a tent I think} because his 6 (I think) sisters & brothers were sick & did die of the flu. Quite a tragedy for the country.

Yours truly,
[REDACTED]

April 27, 2001

Prof. Susan H. McFadden
Department of Psychology
University of Wisconsin Oshkosh
Oshkosh, WI 54901

Dear Prof. McFadden,

Re: 1918 Flu Epidemic

I was in high school in Fox Lake (WI) when I caught the flu. Our family farm was 5 miles from town, so I stayed in Fox Lake with another family during the week. When I became ill my father came into town with a team of horses and a wagon to take me home. I was sick for a long time and almost died, but no one else in the family (or at my "second home" in town) caught the flu. My parents called me a "delicate" child. I had had other serious childhood illnesses. After all these years, I don't remember precautions or treatments. It seems that some schools closed and some meetings were cancelled.

Besides the Flu Epidemic, I recall my sister's illness with scarlet fever several years earlier. She and our mother were quarantined in two rooms of our home (the "parlor" and "parlor bedroom"). The door between the parlor and the rest of the house was sealed to prevent contaminating the main portion of the house. Father took prepared meals and other necessary items to a window and after he had left Mother opened the window to bring in the items. The doctor visited regularly, climbing through a window and chewing on a cigar (as a disinfectant). He kept a jacket (probably a lab coat) in the corn crib. Dr. Brooks wore that coat into ^{the} "sick rooms" and then hung it back to await his next visit. The antiseptic that we used the most was carbolic acid (phenol).

[REDACTED]

P.S. Despite illnesses that caused absences from high school, my mother, Mildred, graduated at age 17 and almost immediately was called to teach a country school (grades 1-8). After teaching two years she had saved enough to pay for her sister, Elda, and her to attend Oshkosh State Normal School for two years. (If you will refer ^{to} the 1924 Quiver, Mother is pictured on page 30 as a commencement speaker. Both Mildred and her younger sister, Elda, appear on page 35 (Senior Class). Mother taught in Stoughton, Kenosha and Kenosha County until retirement in 1968.. Although she had been considered "delicate", Mother had six children and now lives alone in her own home at age 98.

[REDACTED]

Waukesha, Wis.
January 15, 2001

Dear Ms. Skars,

I saw the enclosed article in the Milwaukee Journal and it brought back memories of 1918

I attended Oshkosh Teachers College after graduating from Coonto High School in 1927. I still receive the Alumni news. My mentor was May L. Stewart and we kept in touch until she died.

I have written about the 1918 flu epidemic in one of my own books. It came in winter and was a very traumatic time in the life of our family. My young friend died at that time and I watched from the window as a team of horses with a logging sleigh, carried her body to the cemetery. Men had built a fire at her gravesite to thaw the frozen ground so they could bury her body.

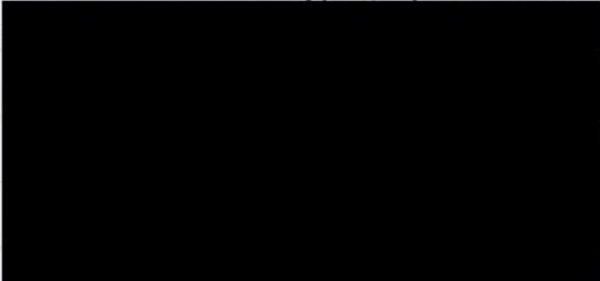
My mother almost died on Christmas Eve that year. She had a near death experience that was so vivid that I never forgot it. She lost all her long hair and was weak for a long time afterwards.

My grandparents were getting old but they helped us as much as they could, but could not come in for fear of getting this terrible disease. They did bring a nurse from Coonto to care for us. She did care for us but it wasn't an easy time

She claimed she had to drink brandy every day in order to avoid the flu. Christmas came that year and gifts were put on our front porch.

I would be willing to share my memories with you if it would help you with your project. I will be 91 years old but my memories of that fearful time in history are very clear.

I now reside at Linden Heights retirement facility in Waubesa. I too, would be interested in hearing of this memorable time in the small crossroads village near Oconto. There was no medical help for us and people just stayed inside to try to keep well.



My memories of the 1918 flu epidemic

I had just read about the 1918-19 flu epidemic so I thought I would put my memories down too, before they "slip my mind" as I am over 95 years old but still have memories of olden times.

It was the latter part of 1918 that the flu hit our family. So many people died at that time, sometimes more than one in a family.

Six in our family were down at the same time. Only my oldest sister, who was 17 years old, was there to take care of all of us. The doctor from Daggett, Dr. Landsborough, would come out to our farm, which was seven miles from town, to bring us medicine. I can still

remember how bitter that stuff was. He would pat my sister on the back and say, "Keep up the good work, they all need you."

So the full load of chores fell on her shoulders. I don't remember all the details but I can't understand how she did it all. Those days we did not have electricity or running water in the house so that had to be carried in from the well which was quite a distance from the house. We had wood burning stoves so a neighbor came over to carry wood to the open porch so that was some help for my sister.

The cows were kept in a one-story log barn with the hay barn connected to it but you had to go outside to go from one barn to the other.

The horse barn was a little farther away with the "little house" behind that. It was a very cold winter with a lot of snow. We had six or seven cows to milk twice a day--by hand. They had to be let out to drink water which had to be pumped--by hand. After putting them back in the barn, they had to be fed. The hay was carried by armfuls from the hay barn to the cow and horse barns. Must have taken many trips.

Oh yes, there were the barns to clean too - shovel the manure out the back doors. We also had pigs and chickens so that was some more extra work.

When the milking was done, there was always the separating as we only sold

cream -- milk was not sold in those days. That job alone was quite strenuous -- turning that crank for a long time.

I just don't know how my sister managed to do everything -- all the chores besides taking care of all the sick ones. But she must have taken good care of all of us as we all survived.

FORGET THE HORSES
TO

TO WHOM ITS CONCERNED

STEPHENS MI
' FEB 3. 2000

I HAD READ WHERE SOME ONE WAS INVESTIGATING ABOUT THE 1918 FLU EPIDEMIC.

I WAS BORN AND RAISED IN DAGGETT MI.

HAD THIS WRITING IN THE PAPER A FEW YEAR BACK.

I READ A BOOK THAT WAS WRITTEN OF THAT TIME.

EVEN WHERE 3 CHILDREN IN ONE FAMILY DIED.

ALSO ABOUT A WOMAN WHO WAS EXPECTING AND DIED, THEY CUT HER OPEN AND TOOK THE BABY OUT, AND IT LIVED. MANY OTHER STORIES.

BUT WE ALL SURVIVED. MY SISTER WHO TOOK CARE OF US WILL BE 100 YEARS OLD IN MARCH.

BY THE WAY I AM OVER 94 YRS NOW

HOPE THIS GETS TO THE RIGHT PLACE.

I have had mild flu a few times over my 92 years. About 15 or more years ago I had my first flu shot in early fall. In December of that year I had a severe case but nothing like 1918. In ^{1999 fall} ~~2000~~ my doctor persuaded me to have my second flu shot. In early February 2000 I had mild flu for 3 days but had after effects until May. So now I'm not having any more. Update on the cottage cheese! - Since 1986 when I was widowed I've eaten cottage cheese at my evening meal!

I do not recall my 4 year old brother or my father having the 1918 flu. If so then it wasn't severe or I'd have noticed.

Good luck with your project.

Sincerely

