

# Guide to the 1918 Influenza Epidemic Collection

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## COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

In a ten-month period in late 1918 to early 1919 more than half a million Americans were reported dead from the flu. An especially virulent strain, this particular virus started as a bird flu that jumped to humans, and by the end of the pandemic more than 40 million people around the world had died. Surprisingly, a disproportionate number of the victims were healthy young adults from the ages of 20 to 40. Sometimes called the Spanish flu because of one of the countries of origin, this pandemic killed more people than World War I.

The effects of this pandemic at a local level are hard to determine. A thoughtful start can be made with newspaper records of the time. This collection is the result of research done by Empire State College student Barbara Hammond in 2001 on the influenza in Tompkins County. This collection contains research materials used by her, including two months of newspaper clippings from the *Ithaca Journal* dating from October 2, 1918 to November 29, 1918; a 1923 New York State Health Department Report on mortality rates in New York, and more. It also contains her final research papers.

Note: An *epidemic* disease is one affecting many people at the same time in a community. A *pandemic* disease is one that has spread over a large area such as a continent or the world. The 1918 flu was a *pandemic*, but since the donor has used the term *epidemic* that term is being maintained in this collection.

## CONTAINER LIST

*Ithaca Journal* newspaper articles and transcriptions concerning  
the flu epidemic in Tompkins County (10/ 2-10/21/1918) Folder 1

*Ithaca Journal* newspaper articles and transcriptions concerning  
the flu epidemic in Tompkins County (10/22- 11/29/1918) Folder 2

New York State Department of Health Report – “A Special Report On the Mortality From Influenza in New York State During the Epidemic of 1918-1919”	Folder 3
Research Paper – Empire State College Tutorial – “The Forgotten Epidemic” by Barbara Hammond	Folder 4
“Spanish Influenza – Tompkins County, Fall 1918”	Folder 5
Biographical information on Willard Straight	Folder 6
Miscellaneous research notes and statistics of Barbara Hammond’s	Folder 7
<i>Flu –The Story of the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918 And the Search for the Virus that Caused it</i> By Gina Kolata, Chapter 1	Folder 8