

FRIENDSHIP MUSEUM

Maine Bicentennial Edition 1820-2020

Friendship was not spared the effects of the pandemic. Though it does not appear that there were any deaths directly related to the virus, several anecdotal reports in the Courier Gazette about Friendship cite **Dr. Hahn** treating patients who were very ill, including cases of “pneumonia,” and at least four cases of influenza were noted. One two-year-old girl from Port Clyde who died from influenza was buried in the family cemetery plot in East Friendship. It has been reported that Dr. Hahn encouraged the townsfolk to take precautions, including hand washing, laundering bedding frequently, and opening windows to let in fresh air. The October 18 Courier Gazette reported that Friendship “schools and meetings are closed for a time.” Town School Superintendent Harry Hull, in the 1919 Friendship Annual Report, tersely declared that the “epidemic has made continuous work and progress impossible, but in spite of the prevailing sickness, the schools have done as much work as in normal years.”



Update on The Annex

Despite summer closure, fall has brought new progress on renovating The Annex.....

.....Please check for Museum news on our website and our faceBook page, and stay safe—Bob N.

Pandemic in 1918 vs 2020

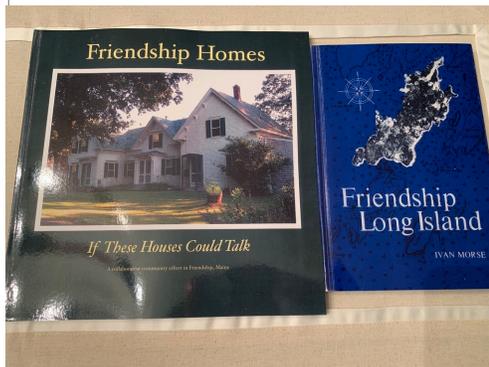
Our current battle against the spread of Covid-19 is not the first time that Friendship has faced a deadly pandemic. In the early fall of 1918, influenza devastated Fort Devens in Massachusetts, spread to Boson, and then raced up the coast to Maine. In late September, the Courier Gazette reported no cases. Within two weeks, Rockland had more than 250 cases and three deaths, so overwhelming the health system that the Narragansett Hotel was converted into an emergency hospital. Schools, churches, and



to take for Covid 19. One While patients ill with Camden advised that

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pandemic lasted in the time suggests that the of 1918. Rockland deaths. Many victims milder cases and was undercounted, since doctor, particularly in a suffered 4,500 deaths, state in the armed forces.

restaurants were closed and all public meetings ceased.

Relying on advice from the U.S. Surgeon General, notices appeared in the *Courier Gazette* to take most of the familiar precautions we are urged notable exception was the need for quarantine. suspected influenza were isolated, one doctor in general quarantine would not help, “because the germ associated with the disease is distributed everywhere.” At the same time, doctors warned against contact with infected people and to avoid those who were coughing and sneezing. Articles in the *Courier Gazette* reported that influenza was caused by a bacterium that had been identified in the late 19th century by a Dr. Pfeiffer, though there were no antibiotics to treat diseases in 1918. It was later proved that the bacteria that caused pneumonia and other conditions seen in influenza patients were secondary effects of influenza. It was not until 1933 that the virus that caused influenza was identified. Indeed, doctors could not literally see the virus until 1940, when the electron microscope was invented.

As virulent as the disease was in the Midcoast, its worst effects lasted only a few weeks. By early November, new cases stopped appearing, according to the *Courier Gazette*. Schools, churches, and public facilities reopened. It is likely that the same was true in Friendship. Though the United States into May 1919, news reporting of the Midcoast was spared the worst effects after the fall reported 1,230 cases of influenza in 1918-19, with 77 died quickly from the disease, but most people had survived. It is likely that the actual number of cases many people would have recovered without seeing a small town like Friendship. Maine as a whole with another 500 Mainers dying while serving out of