



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Cooper County Public Health Center

17040 Klinton Drive Boonville, MO 65233

Telephone: (660) 882-2626 ~ Fax: (660) 882-2586

[www.coopercopublichealth.com](http://www.coopercopublichealth.com)

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### **For Immediate Release**

Melanie J. Hutton RN, MSN Administrator

(Boonville, MO) The Cooper County Public Health Center would like to acknowledge Public Health Week. Public Health services officially began in March 1931. Prior to this time public health was provided on a as needed basis that involved Red Cross Nursing. The Pandemic Influenza Outbreak of 1918 was a disaster worldwide. I am including excerpts from the Bunceton Eagle Newspaper during the Pandemic. School and Churches were indeed canceled. So, as we prepare for religious celebrations using social distancing this year please realize this is not the first time our nation's leader has asked the citizens to "Stay Home". I hope you enjoy the stories as much as I did researching them in 2006 as we were asking the citizens to fund a separate tax for the health center. Thanks again to Cooper County families and communities. Many blessings to everyone. Your support is greatly appreciated.

### **Public Health's Role in the 1918 Influenza Outbreak in Cooper County**

as reported by the Bunceton Eagle Newspaper

October 18, 1918

"Influenza cases are still scattered with one death, that of Lee Gander of New Lebanon. Nearly every school is closed in the county. As a precautionary measure, Public gatherings have been prohibited. This is the first time ever there has not been any religious exercises within the county."

"Per S.D. Mauck, the county school superintendent, "School shall not resume if there is any indication of influenza whatsoever." "Run no risks." He also recommended that teachers receive half pay for the time the schools are closed. When schoolwork does resume the schools should be absolutely sanitary and above all have proper ventilation."

November 1, 1918

Otterville – "fifty cases" have been reported. "The situation was dire, and a plea was made to the Federal Government for assistance. A physician from the US Marine hospital, Henry J. Ervis, had to be brought in from St. Louis to help treat the ill. The only active physician left in Cooper County, Dr. Osbourne, is recovering from the influenza himself. Retired physician Dr. Rice is also recovering from the flu. Dr. Fogel of Otterville is currently serving in the US Military."

"There are over fifty cases reported in the community. School is not in session and there are QUARANTINE regulations being observed."

News from the County Seat. "Health Conditions are noted to have been improving. Cases are decreasing and no serious cases have occurred. They are considering lifting the ban on public gatherings at the end of the week and letting school resume on Monday."

"18-year-old Alice Ginsler dies of influenza and is buried in the Walnut Grove Cemetery."

"Dr. A.L. Meredith of Prairie Home, who is now in the Army and stationed at Camp Taylor Kentucky, writes home that the influenza situation has been terrible, and they have had 8,000 cases there and currently 3,500. The death rate has been about 4%."

Per County School Superintendent S.F. Mauck, "There will be no school next week. Another week may mean the saving of lives."

November 15, 1918

"There has been numerous cases in Bunceton, none serious. There are more cases now than there has ever been at anytime. The disease is light in the affliction. There is no quarantine but as a precautionary measure schools and churches remain closed."

November 22, 1918

"Many deaths have been reported in the area. W.T. Asbury of Blackwater died from Influenza. W.H. Wendleton died of typhoid fever. Josephine Schlib died of influenza. Mrs. L.F. Overby of Clarksburg died of influenza. William McClain of Tipton follows father "John" in death of influenza. Viola Siegle also dies of influenza."

"Influenza Situation – "The disease is occurring at a slower rate. School will start back next week but still no church services."

"Bunceton has been without school and church services for six weeks."

"Otterville is worse. Last Monday school reopened. Many new cases developed. One death, Anna Edwards age 20, was only sick two days before she died. There are now 100 cases. All schools of the district are closed."

"Tipton schools are reopened with four deaths from influenza. In Clarksburg it seems that the crest of the disease has past. No bans have been lifted. Pilot Grove is almost free of influenza. School is in session. Fewer cases are occurring in Bunceton. In Boonville, the ban has been lifted. School and church services have resumed. There has been one death of influenza, that of Joseph Burger. On Monday, the ban on moving picture shows had been lifted but was put back in place on Wednesday."

December 6, 1918

"Influenza continues to cause deaths in Tipton area. In Bunceton, the disease has never assumed the virulent form. It is felt that is due to taking quick precautions and closing school and churches before the disease had the chance to make any real head way. As a continued precaution, there is a ban on businesses. A few cases of influenza remain in the area."

"Dr. Elliott of Bunceton says, "The situation over his area is improving, and that no one should relax in the effort to prevent the spread of disease. Lack of attention and exposure in various ways, physicians agree, is the prevalent cause for the high rate of fatalities attending the disease. They recommend that you should stay in bed at least three days after you feel well enough to get up."

"Cases of influenza are increasing in Boonville. None appear very serious. There have been a few deaths but none in the past several days. Schools are closed until further notice. At least until the end of the year. Picture shows and amusements where people gather have been placed under ban until further orders."

December 13, 1918

"Influenza is worse than ever in Prairie Home than any point in Cooper County. There have been many serious cases. There have been two deaths. Herbert H. Byler age 11 and Joe Meyer son of Ben Men Meyer. This is the second son Mr. and Mrs. Meyer have lost to influenza in the past two months. Son Henry L. Meyer died in Starkville, Mississippi in an Army Camp on October 10."

December 20, 1918

"Floyd Swanstone who lived near Clark's Fork store died of influenza. Roy William Hundley formerly of Prairie Home, three weeks ago, died in Kansas City of influenza. Death of Porter Marcum of Hughesville, grandson of Mrs. Juno Ritchie east of Vermont, also victim of influenza. Death of a young wife, Mrs. Sam C. Roe – farmer near Belair. Ed M. Jewett of Boonville died of influenza. Reverend and Mrs. E. Conway, formerly of Blackwater, lose three children to influenza in Liberty, Missouri."