

Rutgers College During WWI and the 1918 Influenza



“On the Way to War.” New Brunswick, NJ. Undated, ca. September 1917.
Note the entrance to “Old Queens Campus” in the top left of the image.
Pictorial Collection. Special Collections & University Archives, Rutgers
University Libraries.

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June 24, 2020

Rutgers and World War I: Enrollment and the Student Army Training Corps (SATC)

Photograph of the Raising
of Service Flag. ca. 1918.
Rutgers Photograph
Collection, Military
Functions, R.O.T.C.
Folder. Special Collections
& University Archives,
Rutgers University
Libraries.



Fraternity Houses Being Used.

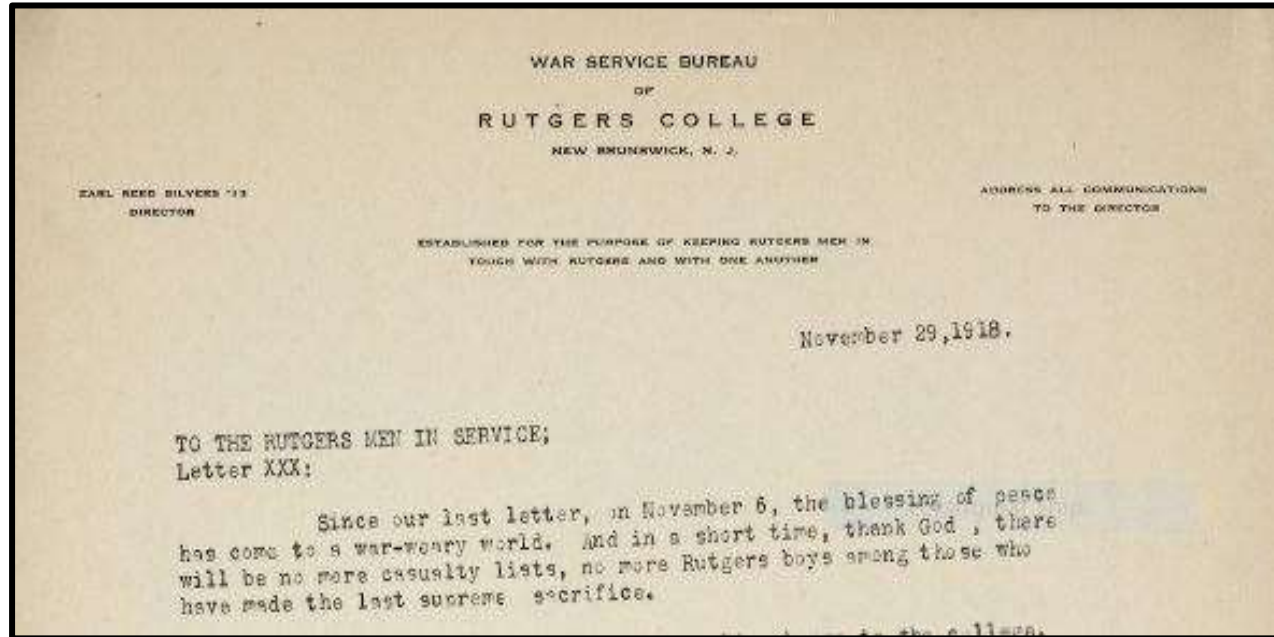
Because all members of the S. A. T. C. must live in their assigned quarters, a great many of the fragment has taken the Delta Phi, the Kappa Sigma and the Beta Theta Pi houses for barracks, but the rest were left at the disposal of the fraternities themselves. The rooms of the Chi Phi, the Pi Kappa Alpha and the Delta Upsilon houses have all been let to officers and men of the Wright-Martin plant. The pool table of the D. U. house has been dis-

manteled and set up in the New Brunswick canteen for the duration of the war. As stated in last week's TARGUM, officers mess at the Chi Phi, and the Delta Kappa Epsilon is quarters for Lieutenants Downs, Finney and Carpenter. The Ivy Club, because of the influenza epidemic, is converted into the infirmary. As yet, nothing has been done with the Lambda Chi Alpha, the Chi Psi, and the Zeta Psi houses, but the Zeta Psi plans to let its lower floor to the Red Cross. The rooms of the Phi Gamma Delta have been rented to students who are not members of the S. A. T. C.

In the fall of 1918, the War Department's Student Army Training Corps (SATC) required the usage of Rutgers College fraternity houses for barrack-style housing and offices.

Source: "Fraternity Houses Being Used." *The Targum*. October 23, 1918.

The War Service Bureau of Rutgers College



**Opening paragraph of the War Service Bureau's
first letter after peace was declared, November
1918.**

Source: Special Collections & University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.

The Influenza of 1918

A.k.a “Spanish Flu,” “the grippe,” “Spanish Influe,” the bug”

- Possibly started in Haskell County, Kansas.
 - Hog farming community+bird migratory pathway= influenza
- Infected Haskell County men → Kansas training camps → other US camps → Europe
 - Not just contained to areas affected by war
- Spain was a neutral country and freely reported on the influenza spread= “Spanish Flu”
 - Media in other countries avoided reporting on the influenza as to not weaken morale
- One of the deadliest epidemics in history- killed as many as 1 in 18

Letter from Elmer G. Bracher to Earl Reed Silvers ('Sil'). Written from a convalescent camp in France. Bracher expressed the bad luck one soldier experienced when contracting the 'flu' upon his return home from war.

France, December 3, 1918

Source: Records of the War Service Bureau. Special Collections & University Archives, Rutgers University Libraries.

Convalescent Camp,
Hospital Center, Savenay.
December 3, 1918/

Dear Sil;

Just received your letter dated November 2nd. the other day and as usual was very glad to hear from you. Had written to you on the twenty-ninth, giving you a bawling out for having stopped writing, but I guess that I'll have to take it all back. Wasnt that hard luck about Jill Jackson? He had all the chances in the world off connecting with a contagious disease during the months that he was over here and then to go home and catch the 'flu'. It certainly was too bad. It was news about "Dutch Elmer and Dick Barr kicking in". So Walt is in England with a hole in his leg. All I can say is that he is lucky that it wasnt some where else. What ever became of "Duck" Farley? Did he ever come across or is he still in the States? Before I forget it, Sil, I want to tell you that I received the college letter of November 6th. in the same mail as your letter. The college letter was might interesting and contained a whole lot of news. What are they going to do about the college now that the war is over? Is it still to be a war college or will it go back to the old regime? Guess that I cant ask you any more questions, Sil, and as I havent any news I think that this note had better come to a close.

In the Bonds

Pi-an

The 1918 Influenza and Rutgers College

- Most US colleges and universities affected in the fall of 1918
- Rutgers saw heaviest activities between September and November
- Demarest- 75 students affected, 4 total student deaths
- Students treated at the Ivy Club-turned-infirmary or New Brunswick hospitals

Source: "College Infirmary Proves Its Usefulness." *The Targum*. October 23, 1918.

College Infirmary Proves Its Usefulness.

The college infirmary is rendering invaluable service during the present epidemic. Its success speaks well for those connected with its management. Mrs. de Regt is the executive head. The nursing is carried on under the direction of Miss Hill, who is assisted in this work by Mrs. Maloney. Dr. Smith and Dr. Runyon, who are acting as college physicians, attend and prescribe for the patients.

The problem of providing meals threatened to be a serious one, but it has been solved through the co-operation of friends of the college. The meat and vegetables are cooked at the infirmary; while fruits, preserves, jams and jellies are contributed by those interested in the college welfare.

The present organization is a temporary one, to meet the existing situation, but there is every indication that the infirmary will continue as a college institution.

Cancellations and Closures

Women's College Closed.

SPANISH INFLUENZA PREVALENT.

The Women's College closed Wednesday, Oct. 2, because of the many cases of grippe and Spanish Influenza which developed. The Dean and nearly half of the student body are victims of the disease in some form or other. If conditions permit, college work will be renewed on Wednesday, October 21, 1918.

Source: "Women's College Closed."
The Targum. October 9, 1918.

Lafayette Game Cancelled.

Again we are having trouble with our football schedule. Lafayette is under a strict quarantine on account of an outbreak of Spanish influenza, and consequently they were forced to cancel the game which was to have been played this Saturday. Manager Horsford is trying hard to fill up the open date on short notice, and by the time that this comes from press we hope that some arrangements will have been made. Lafayette, no doubt, regrets this cancellation as much as do we, as she is hungry for vengeance after her decisive defeat last year.

Source: "Lafayette Game Cancelled." *The Targum*.
October 9, 1918.

Notice published in the *Targum* advising students on how to avoid the influenza, October 16, 1918.

Spanish Influenza.

There is no cause for alarm over the fact that there are several cases of Spanish Influenza in the student body, for the percentage of cases is far below the percentage elsewhere. Most of the college cases are being taken care of either at the infirmary, or at the city hospitals, although a few have been sent home.

Any student who feels that he is developing any of the symptoms of influenza; namely, a fever, sneezing, a bad cold or cough, sore throat, pain in the chest, general weakness or chills, should report immediately to his company commander and obtain permission to see the college physician. A little care at this time will well repay you, otherwise you may be laid up for weeks, and possibly develop pneumonia.

There are certain precautions which every one should observe in order to avoid catching and spreading the disease. It is transmitted by coughing and sneezing. If you have to cough or sneeze, cover your mouth with your handkerchief. Avoid those who cough or sneeze persistently, and do not spend any more time than necessary in crowded rooms.

Do not expose yourself to colds, as a cold is often the first stage of the "flu." If we all observe these precautions, the epidemic will soon be a thing of the past.

Symptoms

- Fever
 - Sneezing
- Bad cough or cold
- Sore throat
 - Pain in the chest
 - General weakness or chill

Precautions

- Cover one's mouth with a handkerchief when coughing or sneezing
- Do not spend any more time than necessary in crowded rooms
- Try to avoid exposure to colds, as a cold is often the first stage of the "flu"

I now must write a line or two,
As all good poets sometimes do.
Of all sickness, I am glad
“Influ” I have never had.
I never mind a chimney “flue,”
Or an army cot, just broke in two;
But of all the birds that ever fly,
This “flu” bird simply takes my eye.
So take a bath, and never doubt
The “flu” will get you,
If you don’t watch out.

Well, here’s where I get off.

LEW TENANT.

Poem submitted to
the *Targumdrups* by
“Lew Tenant”

Source: *Targum*,
October 30, 1918

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"Fraternity Houses Being Used." *The Targum*. October 23, 1918. <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/63506/JPEG/read/#page/74/mode/2up>.

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Poem from "Targumdrops." *The Targum*. October 30 , 1918. <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/63506/JPEG/read/#page/92/mode/2up>.

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"Spanish Influenza." *The Targum*. October 16, 1918. <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/63506/JPEG/read/#page/60/mode/2up>.

"Women's College Reopens With 51 Students." *The Targum*. October 30, 1918. <https://rucore.libraries.rutgers.edu/rutgers-lib/63506/JPEG/read/#page/90/mode/2up>.