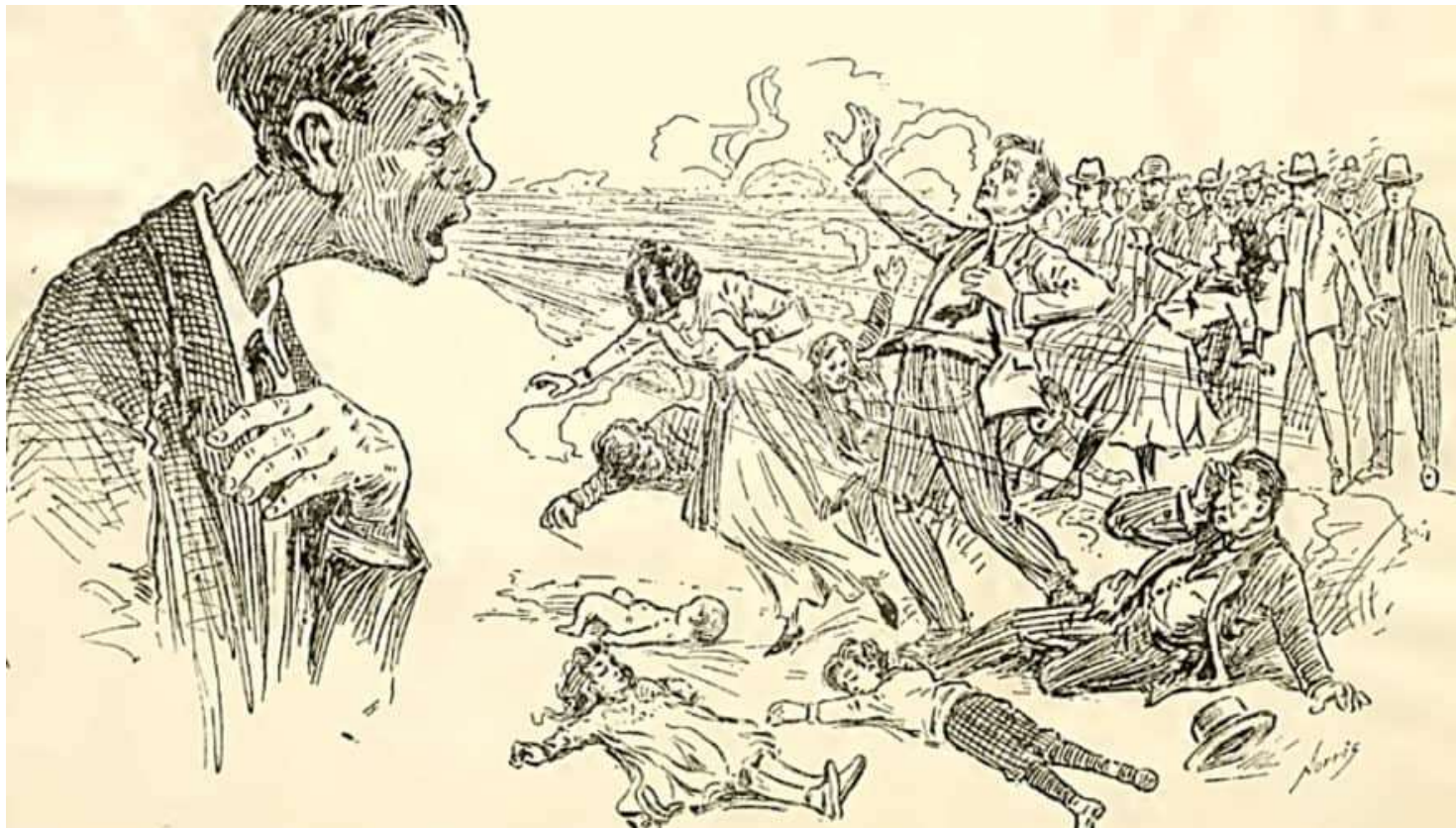


# A surprising history of the 1918-1920 flu at ASU!



## Editorial

### Thanksgiving Day in the Appalachian Training School.

Thanksgiving day, the twenty eighth of November, nineteen-hundred and eighteen, will long be remembered by the faculty and students of the Appalachian Training School. Perhaps the greatest cause of this was the conditions under which the service and festivities were held. The greatest war of the world's history had just ended, the terrible epidemic, Spanish influenza was raging throughout the nation and the country was still in a turmoil over the election which had just taken place.

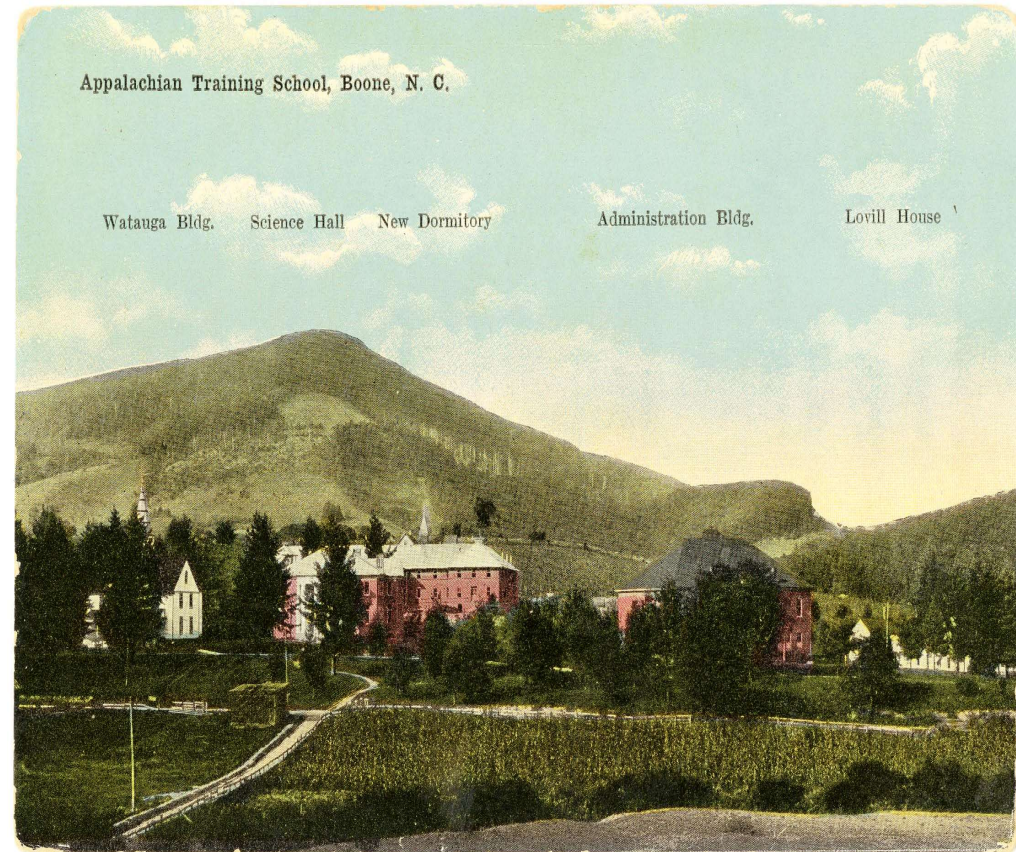


# Watauga Academy 1899



WATAUGA ACADEMY

# ATS 1920



Appalachian Training School, Boone, N. C.

Watauga Bldg. Science Hall New Dormitory Administration Bldg. Lovell House

# Few, if any, photographs of ATS focused on the flu exist

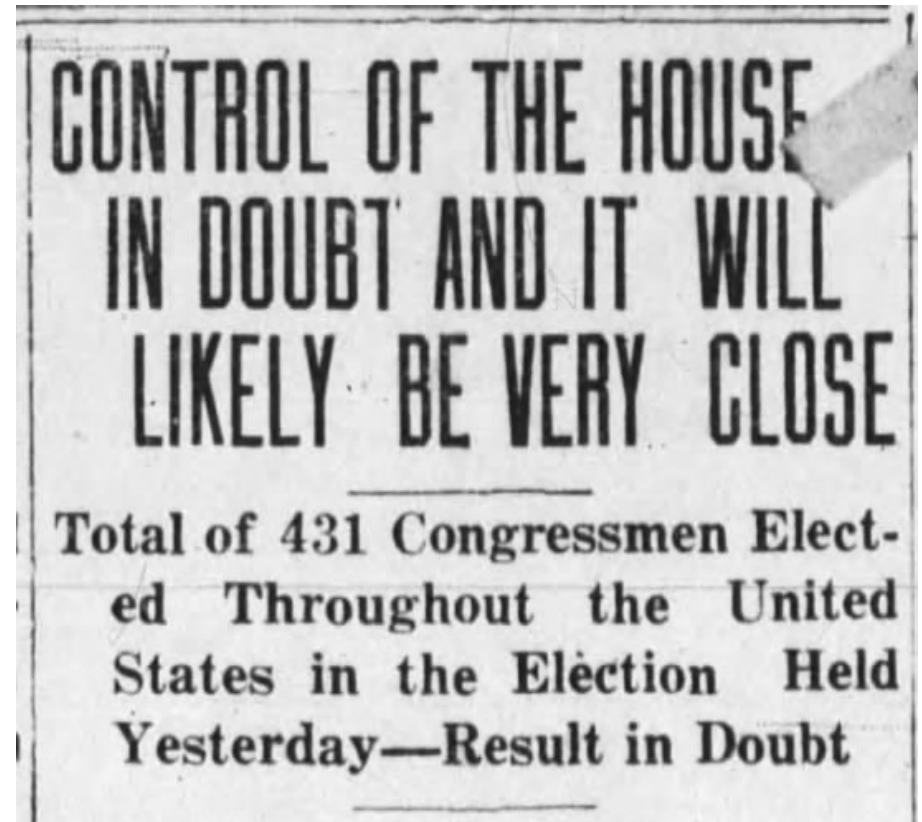
- Yearbook – started in 1922
- Newspaper – started in 1934
- Faculty meeting minutes – any that were taken at this time were burned in the fire of the Administration Building in 1946 along with correspondence and most university related documents/photographs
- Note:
- ATS wanted “positive” photos – not photos of sick students and faculty
- For most people, getting their photograph taken in the 1910s was still a pretty special thing saved for special occasions
- Most people with the flu didn’t want their photograph taken
- Photographers didn’t want to expose themselves to the flu – so VERY FEW photographs of the flu experience in Watauga County exist.



WW 1 soldiers on  
parade, downtown  
Boone



W-S Journal  
11-6-1918

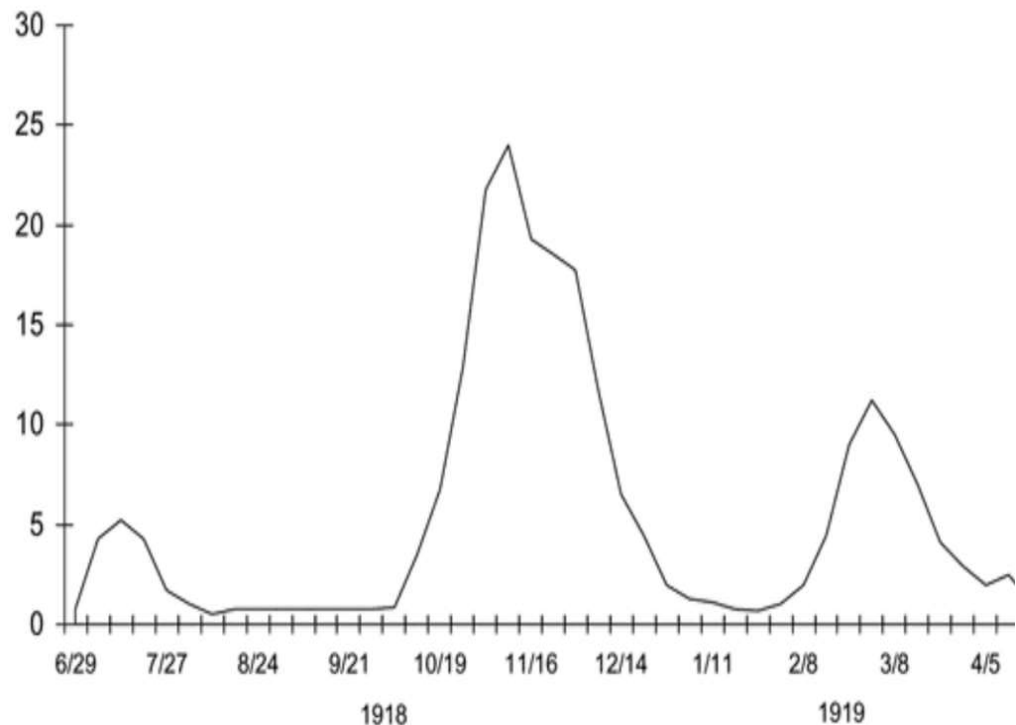


## 1920s health care in the high country



1918-1920 the pandemic came in waves

- 40-50 million deaths world wide
- 500,000 US deaths
- 13,700 deaths in NC
- ?100 deaths in Watauga County



On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1918, Governor Bickel released a press briefing. In it :



The governor noted that the disease was transmitted through “spit swapping,” which included “coughing or sneezing into the air instead of a handkerchief... soiling the hands with spit ... and using common drinking dippers.”

Acknowledging there was no treatment, he ended with, “In conclusion, public officials can do little to protect you. You can do a great deal to protect yourself.”



October - December 1918

# Watauga Democrat      October 10, 1918

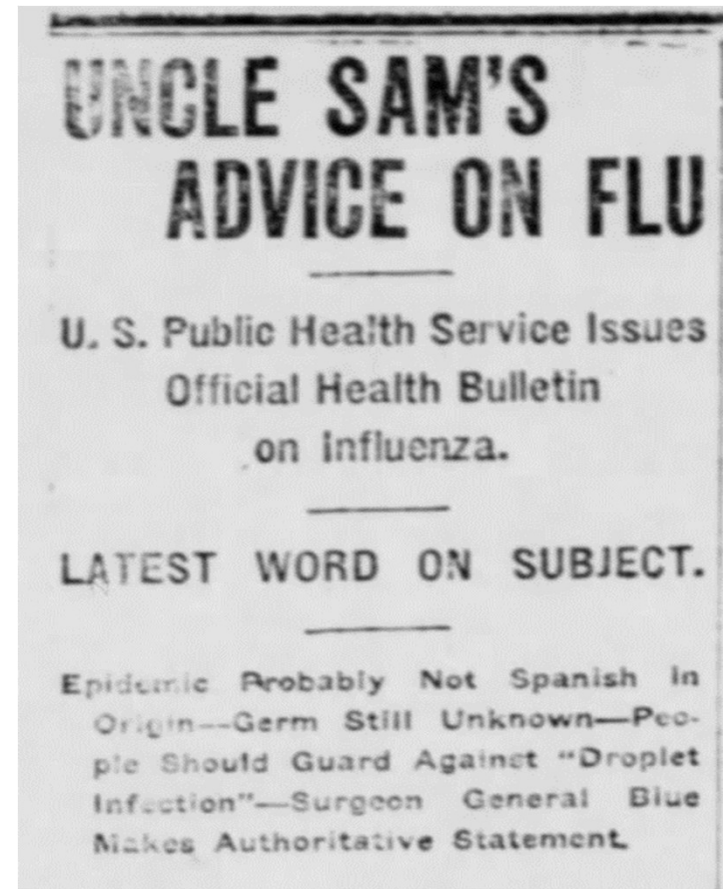
**—SPANISH INFLUENZA** is in Watauga, and all steps possible will be taken to avoid the spread of the disease. Meetings of all sorts are forbidden, even Sunday School and church services in the village are being called off, and steps are being taken to discontinue the public schools of the county. The Training School will be put under quarantine, if it continues. Avoid crowds of all kinds, is the slogan.



“How to treat the flu” W.D.10-10 1918  
Much sounds similar to today’s advice

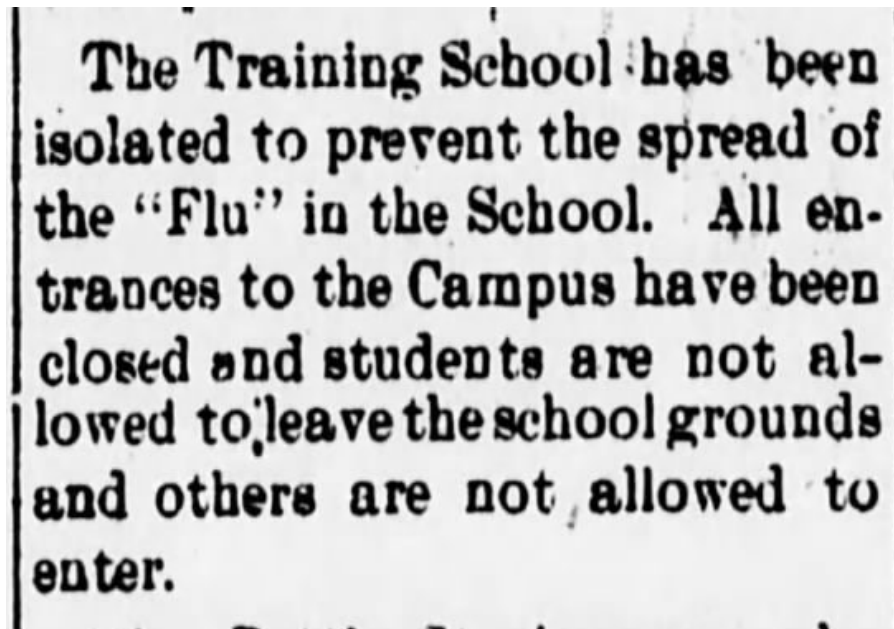
People were advised to stay home, take aspirin and rest.

Caregivers were encouraged to isolate patients in their homes, “wear a strip of cloth across (the) nose and mouth, which is moist with a germicide”.



By mid-October, the Flu was very active in Watauga County, churches and schools were closed. ATS was quarantined

W.D. October 17, 1918



The Training School has been isolated to prevent the spread of the "Flu" in the School. All entrances to the Campus have been closed and students are not allowed to leave the school grounds and others are not allowed to enter.



From the Digital Watauga Website  
([digitalwatauga.org](http://digitalwatauga.org))

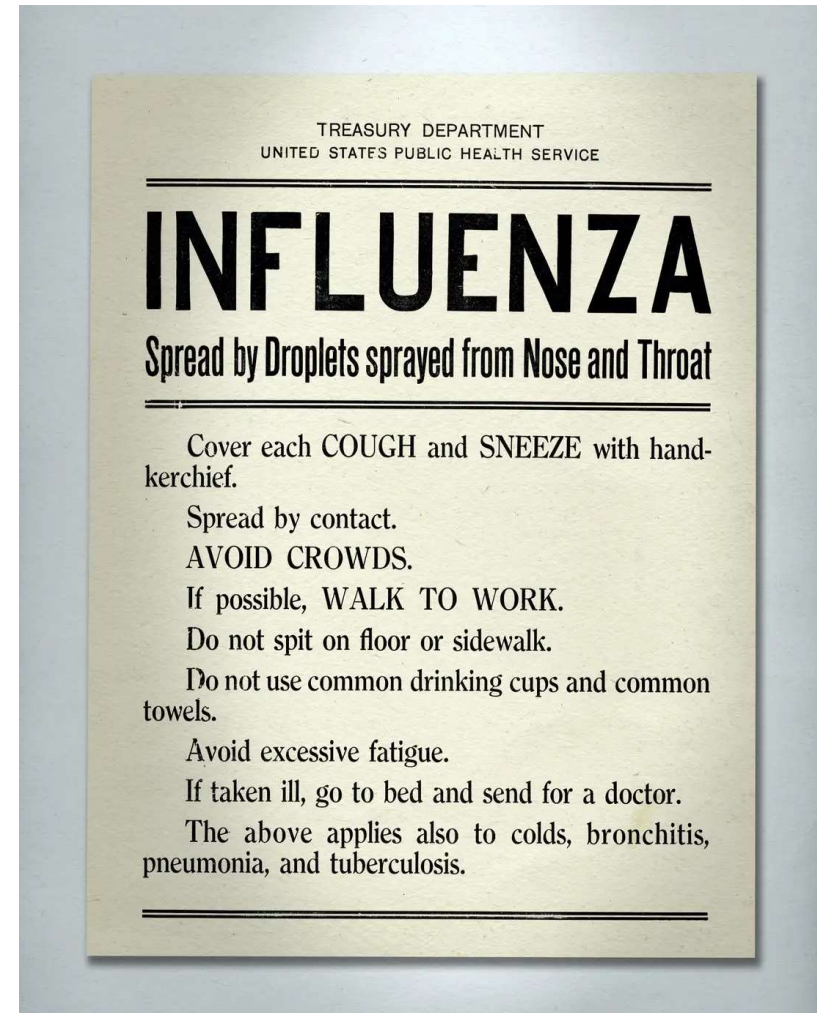
- A fourth story [in the W.D. Oct. 24, 1918 issue] reported that many of the boarding students at Appalachian Training School had fled for their homes because of the influenza risk, although some had “bravely remained and waited on those who were sick.”

Not all people isolated, which  
helped spread the disease W.D.  
12-19-18, p.3

**—The influenza is getting very prevalent in Meat Camp township, whole families being stricken with the disease. The malady was spread as a result of a protracted meeting which was in progress at Meat Camp church some days ago. Another argument against gatherings of any kind, religious or otherwise, while this fell disease is abroad in the land.**



# Influenza Prevention Posters



Many bogus “remedies” were touted

## **STATE BOARD OF HEALTH OPPOSES USE OF WHISKEY**

**Refuses to Authorize Ship-  
men of Rum to Winston-  
Salem Hospital.**

RALEIGH, N. C., Oct. 25.—The state board of health today again went on record as opposed to the use of whiskey in the treatment of influenza

## **SULPHUR IN SHOES IS A GOOD PREVENTIVE**

**SAID TO BE ABSOLUTE BAR TO  
INFLUENZA.**

**Georgia Doctor Recommends “Gar-  
gle” Method Used by an Ashe-  
ville Colored Woman.**



From the journal of A.J. Green Dec 31, 1918

Dec. 31  
School opens for the Spring  
term. Owing to the influenza  
we have no new students.  
It is arranged for students  
to go into quarantine for seventy-  
two hours - have present them - be  
admitted to school.

# Spring 1919

The flu seemed to disappear after February

W.D. 1-13-1919



Property of Appalachian State University.

The influenza has been raging in the Training School during the past week, most of the teachers and students being attacked by it, at this writing, however, the situation is much improved and it is hoped that the trouble will soon be over. Conditions in the town are improved also at present.

Letter to the public from ATS faculty that was published in newspapers across the state in January 1919

### Appalachian Training School Taking No More Students.

Owing to the fact that the influenza situation is still very serious, the faculty of the Appalachian Training School, by the authority of the State Board of Health, feels compelled to make the following new regulations in regard to the School:

1. That, as we have as many as we can take care of under existing circumstances, from this date we can receive no more students for these closing months, except those we have already written to come.

2. That likewise from this date no student will be allowed to go home and return until after the quarantine shall have been lifted and we do not know when the State Board of Health will authorize this to be done.

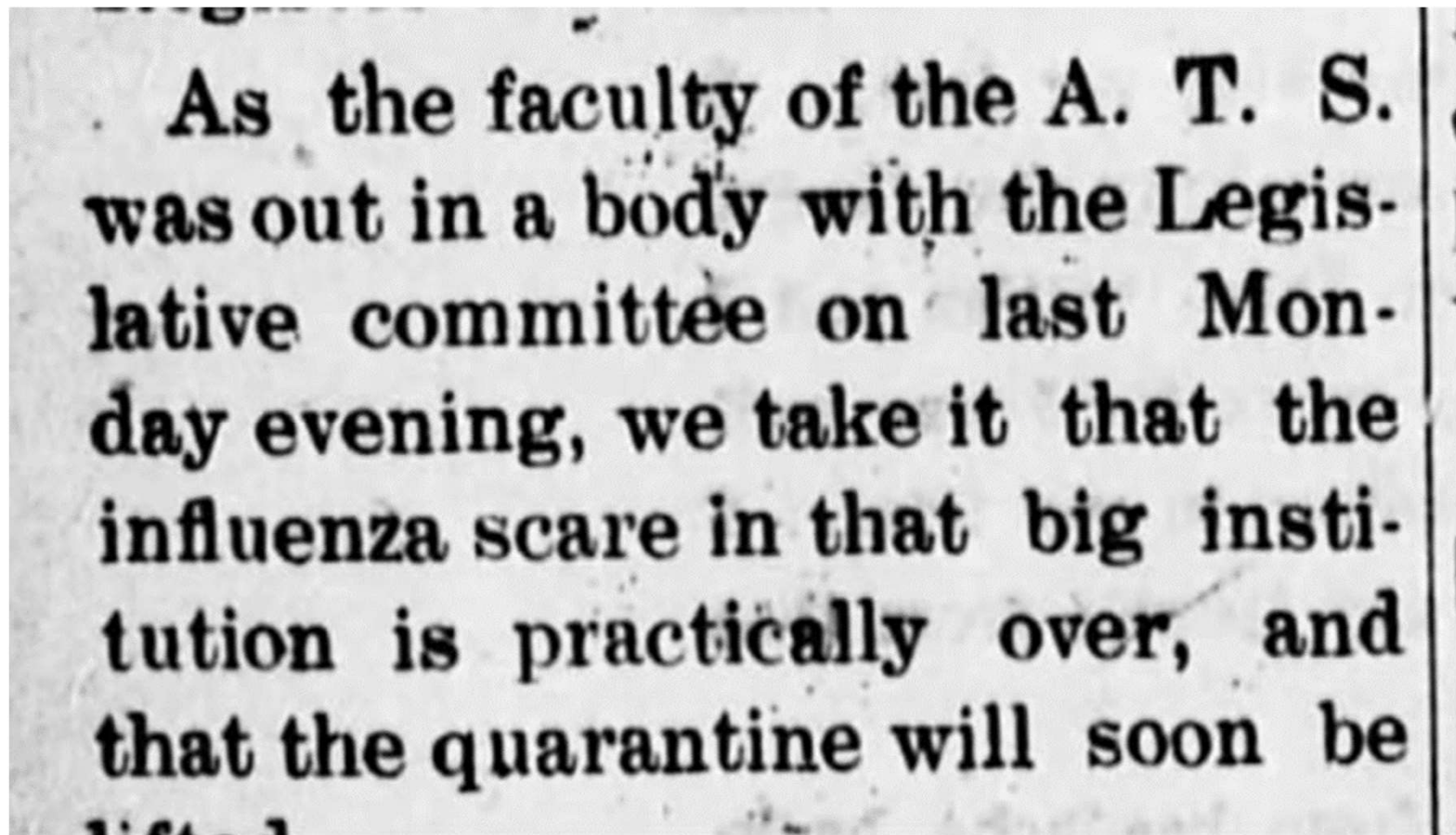
We desire to assure our friends that we deeply regret this necessary step, but our responsibility for the welfare of the present student body, who have stood so

loyally by the school, and hence our obligation to them and their parents compel us to take this action. Many schools have been closed and very many students are being deprived of the privilege of attending school. Our school and our students are both fortunate in that we are among the free schools that are among the few schools that are running, and one of the very few that are free from influenza at the present time. The State Board of Health has heartily commended our course in taking its advice. Of course, our friends everywhere will understand that we take this step with no invidious distinctions toward any, but the best of feelings for all,

THE FACULTY.



February 20, 1919. The pandemic appeared over at ASU in the spring of 1919



As the faculty of the A. T. S. was out in a body with the Legislative committee on last Monday evening, we take it that the influenza scare in that big institution is practically over, and that the quarantine will soon be lifted.

# Spring 2020

Another wave of influenza hit ATS students and  
faculty

1920 Nurse Stella McCartney comes to Boone



The flu came back in spring 1920 – from the journal of A.J. Green student and then faculty

Feb. 14.  
Miss McCartney has been giving a number of boys and girls instructions on caring for the sick. It was announced today that all the sick were better.

Feb. 27.  
Miss<sup>Mc</sup>Cartney, who had gone to nurse M. Linnery's family, sick with influenza, was brought to Loville Home tonight sick with the disease herself. The quarantine still remains in force, as there are some cases still in school and several in town.



W.D. February 19, 1920

MAR • 60



### Training School Items.

Watauga is in the grip of a pretty severe snow storm since Saturday the 14th. It is clear today and colder, the thermometer standing at from 2 to 4 above zero, with the wind blowing a gale.

The influenza situation has caused some anxiety in Boone and compelled the town authorities to quarantine the Training School stop all crowds from assembling, and discontinue all picture shows and Sunday School and Church services till conditions improve.

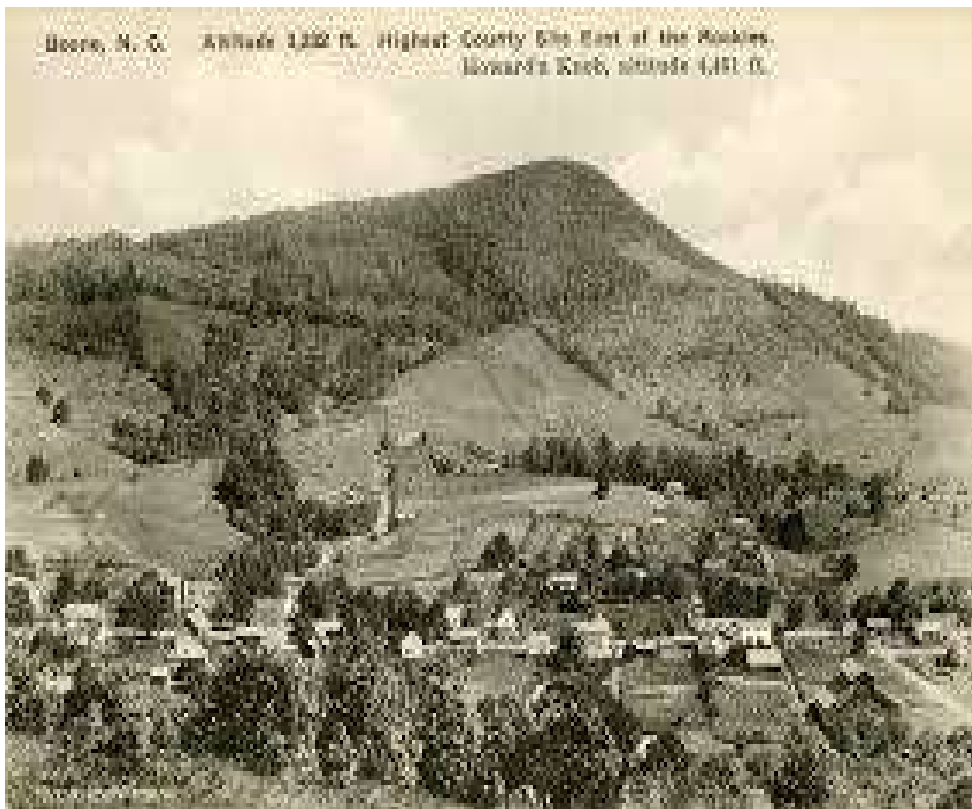
## Watauga Democrat March 4, 1920



counts they were better.

Miss McCartney, who had gone to nurse Mr. Linney's family was brought to Lovill Home on Friday night sick with influenza, and two young ladies from the school who had gone to assist in nursing the same family, came to the Home Sunday possibly sick with the same disease. They are Misses Agnes Garland and Katie Holsouser. Until these cases are taken the situation has improved very much, there being only one case in school.

Boone circa 1910



W.D. 3-11-1920

### **Training School Items.**

The Quarantine has been so modified in town that students from the town may attend the Training School if there is no influenza in their homes. There are still quite a number of cases in town and several new cases at Lovill Home among the young ladies. Conner Tate, the young man who has been the worst case thus far, is getting on well and is now able to sit up. The town and school are blest in that thus far there have been no deaths.

From the journal of A.J. Greene

- March 13, 1920 – Influenza has almost stopped classroom work, many being sick with it and most of these not sick being required to wait on the sick – a truly heroic spirit is being shown by many of the students, going where they can be of help to the sick even at the risk of contracting the disease.



March 25, 1920, p.4

The influenza situation at the Training School has much improved, there being only one new case within the past week. The doctor now think that it has run its course, about all are better who were sick, and it is now believed that very soon all will be ready to go into the work for the closing weeks of the term. Miss McCartney, who has been sick at Lovill Home, has started out on her work for the county. Too

her work for the county. Too high commendation cannot be given to the students for their helpfulness in caring for the sick ones, some of them going to families outside of the School as there was need and heroically devoting themselves to caring for the families at the risk of contracting the disease themselves which many of them did. Many of them deserve to be mentioned by name, but that would be making invidious distinction.

The flu as remembered in  
ATS/ASU publications



From the student magazine Spring, 1920

"Calliopean Literary Society"

During the fall term the Calliopean Literary Society has accomplished much, considering the fact that a great number have been kept out on account of Spanish influenza. But regardless of this the few remaining ones have kept the home fires burning by buying a Liberty Bond during the Fourth Liberty Loan Campaign. The Society also gave a program to the entire school and at other times gave some interesting programs to members of the faculty. The prospects are that the Society will do more and better work the next term than ever before.

Lucy Sullivan '20.

## From the Rhododendron, 1922 class history

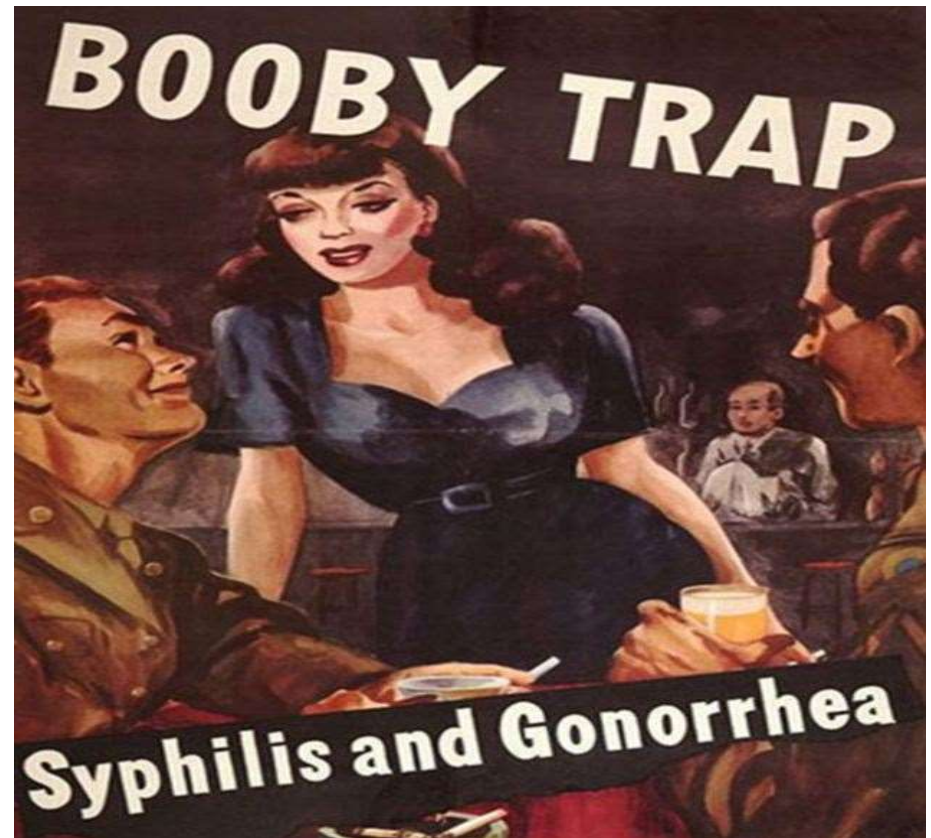
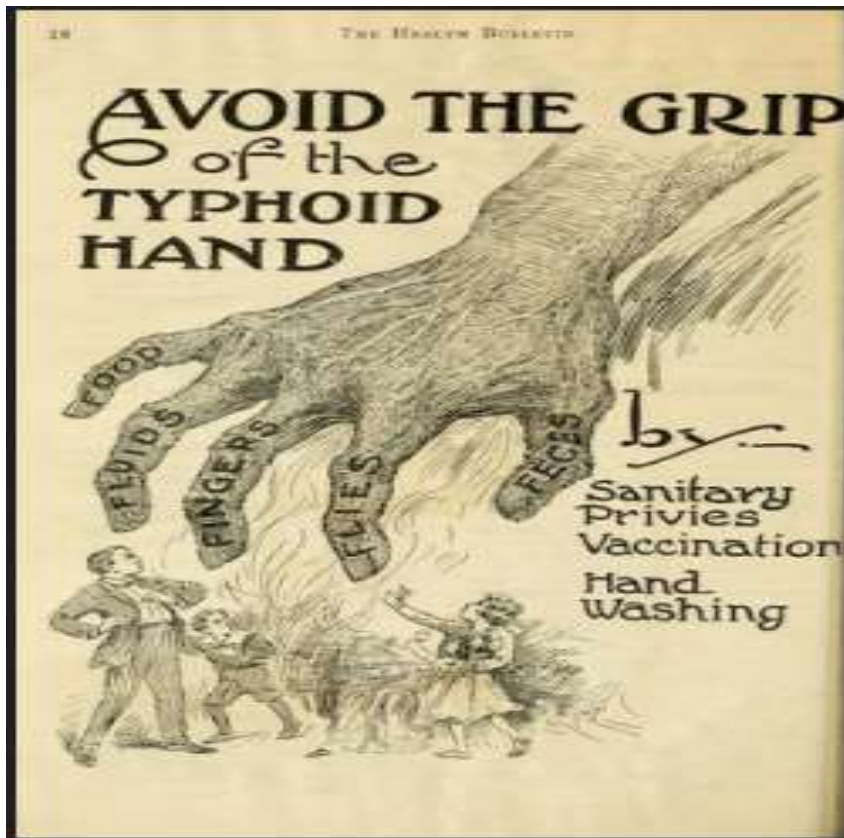
1919, and how proud we were to be the "Studious Sophomores." Again new students entered the class: Melba Stroupe, Annie Laurie Choate, Crettie Adams, Ruth Edwards, Ohna Triplett, Lala Triplett, Fred Hodges, and Howard Bingham. This year was very irregular; the epidemic of influenza swept America; the school was quarantined; many of the students dropped out, and we were unable publicly to present the second issue of our magazine. But the flu passed, most of the students returned, and despite our disappointments and troubles we closed this strenuous year with a thoroughly good time and emerged with flying colors.

How it is remembered today: From the current ASU archives:

- 1918: In October, an Influenza scare hits Boone, NC. The Appalachian Training School campus is put under quarantine against Spanish Influenza, students are restricted to campus, and entrances are closed to visitors. Church services in the town are suspended temporarily. A few mild cases of sickness among students are reported, but all recover within a few days.

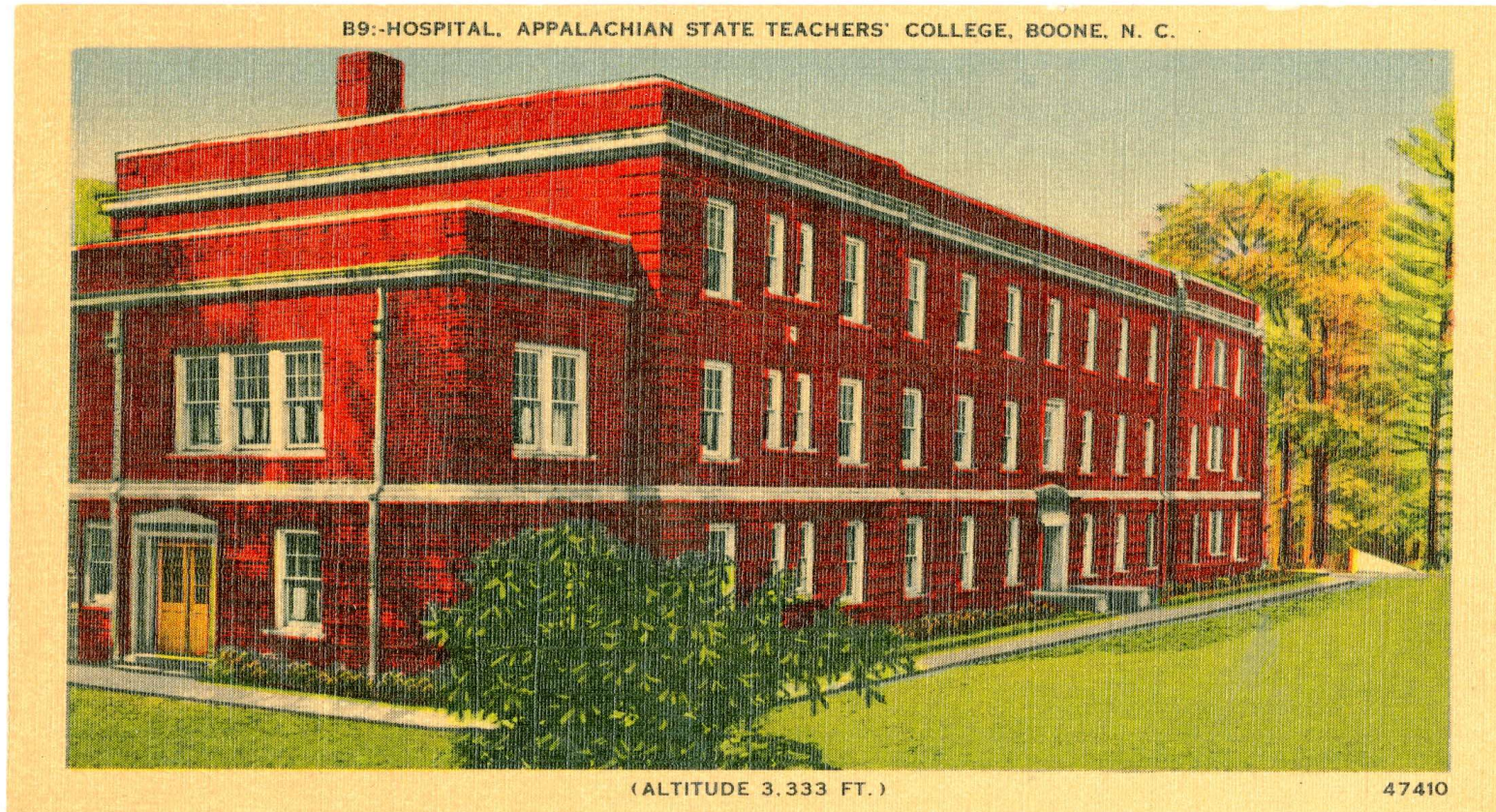
Some consequences of the 1918-1919 flu  
pandemic

Consequence #1 – Increased state and federal funding for public health





## Consequence #2 – More hospitals





## Consequence #3 – More nurses!



Questions? Comments?

W.D. October 17, 1918



OLD ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

—So far there have been but few cases of Influenza in Boone and vicinity, and they have been in a rather mild form. The quarantine laws are being rigidly enforced at the A. T. S., and all the public schools in this part of the county have been temporarily suspended. All Sunday schools and other religious gatherings are called off for the present, and every precaution is being taken to prevent the spread of the disease. It is hoped that the same steps are being taken throughout the county.