

## Fall City in Virus Time



Life feels a little out of focus for all of us in this pandemic time. The last similar period was the **1919 Flu Epidemic**, 100 years ago. Let's all hope this too is a "100-year event." And be thankful for the many ways we can still communicate and work electronically.



We've had to cancel or postpone the activities we hoped to be doing this spring. One of the things we had in mind for 2020 was to offer some field trips...visits to regional museums, a Fall City Cemetery tour, and walks to explore local history. Not in the cards for now! Even Fall City Day will not happen this year.

**We invite you to take an "at home" historic signs tour via our website:** on HOME page, use the **Historic Walking Tour** button to go to the Signs page, where you can "walk around town", looking at signs and reading the linked reports. By the way, we received a grant from **King County Community Services Area** this year to create a large sign for the Fall City Hop Shed. A first draft has been completed.

**A shout-out to local businesses** who are offering take-out food, and especially to **Farmhouse Market**, for keeping groceries available in town, with guidelines to maintain safety for staff as well as customers.



### *One thing that will happen in May!*

*Due to the exceptional need this year, the big online giving will be a two-day event, May 5-6.*

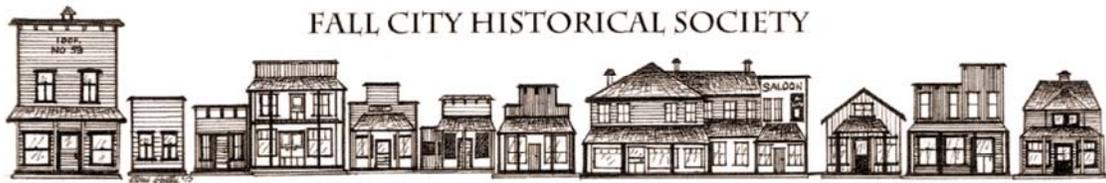
*Early giving is now available.*

*You may also donate via our website,  
or send a check to us at  
PO Box 293 in Fall City.*

***We'll be focusing our fundraising this year toward much-needed work on the Fall City Hop Shed. Its condition is becoming critical - it's the only standing Hop Shed left in King County.***

***Thank you!***





## FALL CITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## The 1918-1919 Flu Pandemic:

### ***DID YOU KNOW..?***

“*Spit Spreads Death*” is the name of an exhibition about the “Spanish flu” pandemic at a New York medical history museum. The flu arrived in Philadelphia in the summer of 1918. On Sept. 28, despite warnings that the sickness was circulating, the city held the Fourth Liberty Loan Parade, a patriotic affair to encourage buying war bonds. Thousands of people packed Broad Street. Within days, flu cases – and deaths – erupted. (Anti-spitting measures were adopted early, but it was later disproved that the illness could be spread through the inhalation of dried saliva particles.)

#### **Flu in Washington in 1918** (HistoryLink.org Essay 20300)

The pathogen's place of origin is still debated, but the role of World War I in its rapid spread is undisputed. Even so Washington, despite a heavy military presence, fared better than any other state in the union except Oregon. While the death toll was highest in the state's most populous cities, the pandemic touched nearly every community. Attempts to control the outbreak were largely futile, and from late September 1918 through the end of that year it killed nearly 5,000 Washingtonians. More than half the victims were between the ages of 20 and 49.



#### **FROM THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR IMMUNOLOGY 2005**

The 1918 flu was unusual in that it proved deadliest for people aged between 20 and 40. Normally flu is most dangerous for the very young and the elderly. It also struck quickly. One anecdote from the time tells the story of four healthy women playing bridge into the night. By morning, three had died of the flu.

Doctors reported the “most viscous types of pneumonia” that they had ever seen, leaving people struggling for air. Whether it was the profound virulence of the virus, or for another reason, the mortality rate ran at about 2.5 per cent compared to the typical 0.1 percent death rate of typical influenza epidemics.

In **2005**, scientists were able to reconstruct the H1N1 strain of the influenza virus that caused the 1918-1919 pandemic as a result of isolating genetic fragments of the original virus retrieved from the frozen corpses of patients buried in the permafrost of the Arctic. It enabled scientists to study the genetic variation of the virus's eight genes. One study based on this analysis even found a possible answer to why young, healthy adults were so vulnerable compared to the very young and very old. It was because their strong immune systems produced a “cytokine storm,” an extreme overreaction of the immune system, that evidently proved fatal for so many within this particular group.