

In light of the current COVID-19/coronavirus crisis, several members have asked how the Wednesday Club dealt with the 1918 influenza epidemic.

So I did some searching in the board meeting minutes of that time.

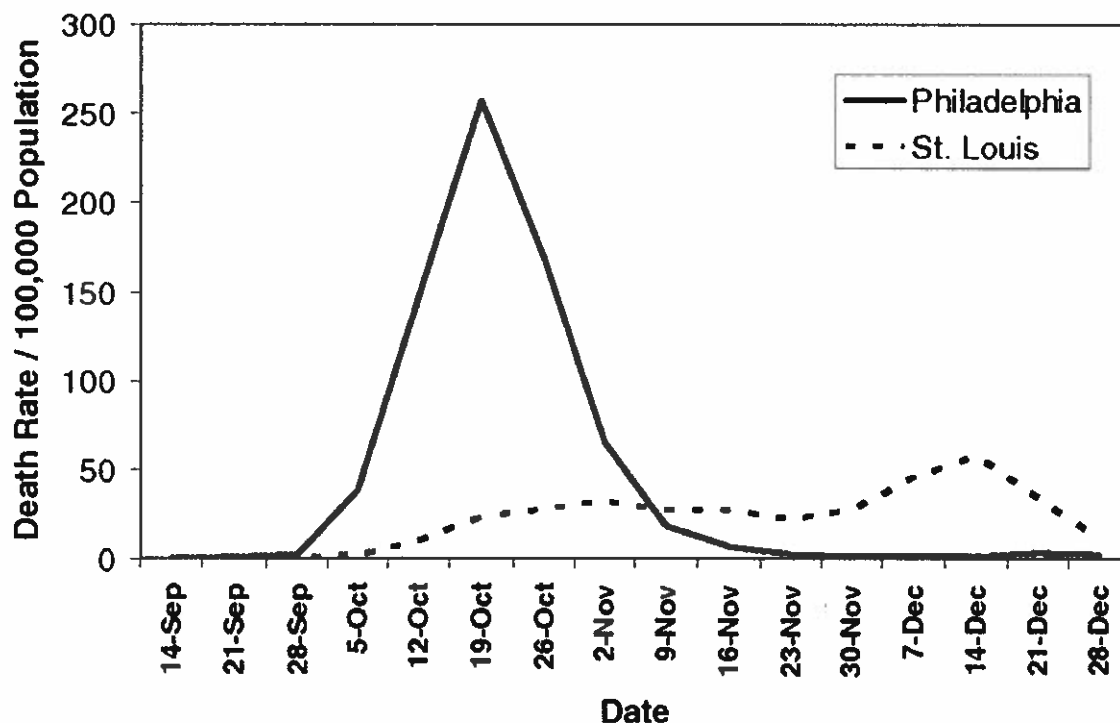
It appears that Club members were primarily taken up with concerns about WWI. I could find no mention of the word influenza at all, even though it was a serious issue for our troops! It may be there somewhere, but I haven't found it - yet.

However - they did suspend general meetings from mid-October of 1918 until Mid-November, and didn't meet again until December 11. The only explanation the minutes show is that it was on the orders of the mayor and the health department (but not why!). It appears that they continued to hold board meetings.

The chart, below, will show that that was the period of the most influenza cases in St. Louis.

Nationally, that pandemic was not over until December, 1920 - but St. Louis, thanks to the shut-down ordered by Dr. Starkloff and Mayor Kiel, fared better than most cities.

It would be worthwhile to search more in the board minutes - into 1919 - to see if there was another period of suspension - or any mention of the illness.



This link is to a good article about the influenza epidemic in St. Louis:

<https://www.influenzaarchive.org/cities/city-stlouis.html#>

Mary O'Reilly - outgoing Archives Chair - April, 2020