

Montana Episodes

A "Fluey" Diary, 1918

The influenza epidemic struck the Montana State College campus within a month after the fall term began in 1918, forcing the school to close for the rest of the session. But students in the Student Army Training Corps (SATC) had to remain on campus to train during the epidemic. One of them penned a diary of his incarceration for the 1919 *Montanan*, the MSC yearbook produced by the Class of 1920. "In many ways, this past year has been far from a normal year, because of war conditions and readjusting to normal life," the *Montanan* staff reminded their readers. "The 'Flu' is blamed for most everything so perhaps we can blame any failure of ours to the 'Flu.'" The student's "Fluey" diary and attendant cartoons were a lighter view of a frightening episode in Montana's past.

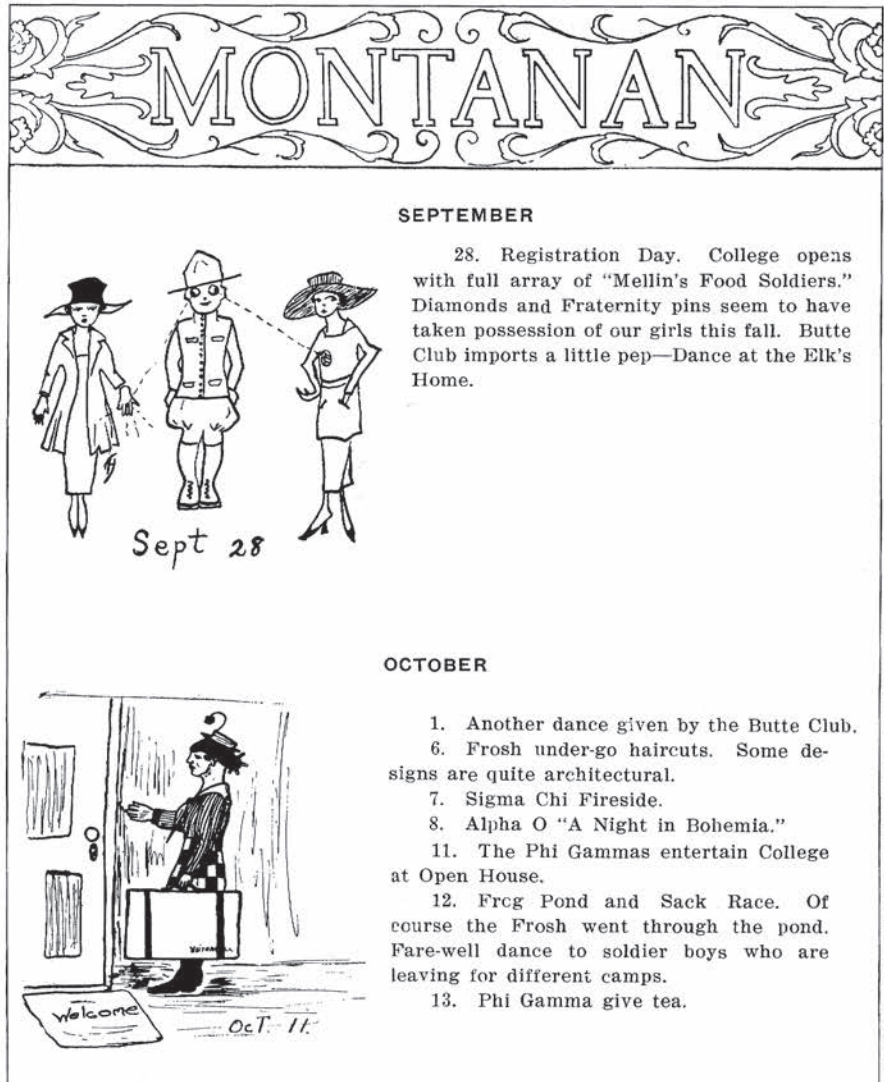
Sept. 28.—If today is a sample of college life, I think it is pretty hard work. I've been trying to register all day long and haven't done it yet. Slow business, this getting a college education.

Oct. 8.—Moved my sleeping quarters to Montana hall today. There is a whole bunch of us quartered there. It's pretty cold, too. They make us air our blankets, so we drape them on the outside of the building and pull them in with a fish pole and hook. Real sport, I'd say. Finished registering today; but now I am having a tough time with my schedule. We got a lot of sophs last night and made them do some good stunts. Hope they don't get me.

Oct. 12.—Been so busy getting started I have a hard time finding time to write. We got pulled thru the pond this afternoon. It sure was wet. But we won the sack rush anyhow. There's lots of excitement about the Spanish influenza. They say it is coming west. I don't believe it will hurt us. We get so much fresh air in drill and it is cold enough to freeze any germ at nights here. Several of the fellows have colds.

Oct. 17.—We're having a vacation from everything but drill; the "flu" struck at last, and they want to keep it from spreading. Some of the boys have it, and they are in a log house down by the "bug building." They say we may all have to wear "flu" masks. We'd look like members of the "Ku Klux Klan" then.

Oct. 19.—"Flu" still going on. They moved the fellows, beds and all, up to the gymnasium today. It is being fixed



All illustrations are from the *Montanan*, Montana State College, 1919

up for a hospital. One of us fellows has to guard it all the time, and we can't even let cars go past. The drill sure is stiff. Some of the fellows get sick in it and have to drop out; the next thing we know is that they have the influenza. None of the dorm girls have it tho. The doctors sure are busy and so are the nurses. I'm feeling pretty tired tonight. Think I'll go to bed early.

Oct. 21.—No more dates. The girls at the dorm are all quarantined—no influenza there and they think they can keep it out by locking themselves in. Ostrich tactics, so to speak. Several more fellows are sick. The log house is full so they have a couple of tents there, too. I don't think very many more will get sick. I have a little cold, but I know it isn't the "flu."

Oct. 25.—I sure didn't think I was getting the "flu" last time I wrote. But here I am in bed. I am not very sick. The day after I got in the gymnasium they moved the hospital over to the aggie building. Some of the fellows were wheeled over in chairs, and the rest of them were carried in bed. I had to stay in bed and they covered my head all up. Pretty near got tipped out a couple of times—especially going up the aggie building stairs. Here comes the nurse.

Oct. 27.—This being sick isn't any fun at all. Here we've been having lots of anything we wanted to eat and yesterday they decided to give the sickest ones just liquids and us soft stuff. The almost well ones couldn't even have enough to eat either. I had a poached egg on toast and some custard for supper. Gosh! and I felt like a sirloin steak, potatoes, gravy, mince pie, "n' everything." It was hardest on the liquid fellows tho; they just got milk or cocoa.

Oct. 29.—We have some new nurses. Too many patients for the real ones to take care of. The new ones are college girls but we can't see anything of them except their eyes. They won't talk much either. College girls are cooking for us, too. I'm in what was once a sewing room. They say there are more fellows in the other rooms on this floor. They all are getting along well, the nurses say. I wish I'd get some letters from home. Gets mighty tiresome lying around here all day.

Nov. 1.—Decided to try to write down my feelings while I had the "flu"—for the benefit of science or at least for future generations. The first symptom is being tired; the second is having a fit of "blues;" they say girls always cry; then you get a "bad cold,"

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17. Quarantine Declared. College is closed and strict quarantine prevails all over town. The Dorm girls are allowed to stroll on one part of Campus and S. A. T. C. patrol the lower part. The Aggie Building is turned into a hospital, and many of the girls are volunteering to act as nurses and to cook in the dietary kitchen.



OCT.—17.

20. Flu Mask is the most prevailing mode of headdress.



OCT 20

NOVEMBER

27. Quarantine still on. The Dorm girls go home for the rest of the quarter. The Hill is still quarantined and Aggie Building is fully equipped as temporary hospital.

JANUARY

1. College opens again, after long vacation. Registration 406.
2. The Ban is still on, and no social functions are allowed.
6. Doris gets a free ride down the "Short Cut." Coasting is fine!
10. A new society is started at the Dorm—Vampi Vampi Guy.
11. The Theta Xis polish their floors and the results are disastrous to Georgia.
13. Spanish Rice is served at the Dorm—everybody sick.
15. College still runs on but no dates for social activities are given.



JANUARY-6.

and soon go to bed; along comes an officer and sends you off to the hospital; you sleep awhile; when you wake up your back and legs ache and ache and ache some more; you wish you were a cat so you could double up your back and get the pains out; by this time you get your green cough sirup regularly, and your temperature taken about every two minutes, and white tablets now and

then; when you've been sick several days you feel like a toy balloon that someone has stuck a pin into; this lasts until your soft diet begins; you get to feeling better then; the funniest sensation is when you walk; you feel like an inflated balloon this time—just barely anchored by a thread and ready to go up into the air any minute; after you're up, you are terribly hungry and

can eat a whole day's food at one meal. That is the point I've reached now. For the sake of conservation of the food resources of the nation, I hope I don't have such an appetite very long.

Nov. 4.—Still hungry. I'm on K.P. now. "It's a great life"—carrying trays back and forth and doing dishes. Get enough to eat now, anyway. Lots of the girls who have been helping here are sick now. We get a new bunch every day or two. We K.P. fellows sleep on the top floor of the building. The barracks are done now and about tomorrow I think I'll be sent down there. I sure do eat a lot. Gee! Wish it was supper time.

Nov. 7.—They decided to keep me here as "chief cook and bottle washer"—mostly bottle washer. The rest of the gang were sent down to the barracks this morning. There aren't very many fellows getting sick now. Some of them have a relapse and have to come back. Marie sent me a box of candy yesterday. It sure was good.

Nov. 11.—The war is over. I wonder what will happen to the S.A.T.C. We heard noise down town half the night, but no one told us what had happened. One of the fellows 'phoned down town and found out early this morning. Wonder if many of the fellows will want to stay at college now.

Nov. 20.—Was sent down to the barracks today. The influenza is almost over now. But they have decided to keep college closed until January. The dorm girls are all going home. The "flu" sure did its work. Almost every one of the boys had it. We don't any of us feel quite as good as we did before. Get tired lots easier. Five of the fellows and one of the nurses died with it and a couple other fellows are still dangerously sick. I'm sure glad it is getting better.

Dec. 19.—I haven't written for a long time. About the most important thing that has happened was that I was invited out for Thanksgiving dinner. It sure was great, too. We got our uniforms the other day. They are thinking of continuing the S.A.T.C. even after the war. I sure hope they do, so more of the fellows can go to college. The "flu" is past now. The only sick ones left are the scarlet fever boys and the four fellows in the hospital. The town will be out of quarantine tomorrow. I am going home for Christmas so guess this will be the last time I write until 1919.

This excerpt from the 1919 *Montanan* is used courtesy of the Special Collections/Archives, MSU Libraries, Bozeman.

MONTANAN



26. The Ban is off. Hurray! Grand Rush for first chance at the Date Committee.

27. The Frosh give a dance for their class. The youngsters live up to their motto of "Pep."

28. The Juniors stand first in Class Basketball with 1000 points.

29. Cabaret is introduced into Hamilton Hall dinners.

31. Sigma Chis are hosts at dancing party at Street's Hall.

17. Everybody's got a sore arm. Vaccination! Vaccination! Ouch!

20. The Flu is improving slightly and the Ban is raised a trifle.

21. Inter-Class Basketball begins. The Juniors are leading, of course.

22. Class elections.



Volunteered Their Services

During the "flu" epidemic among the members of the S.A.T.C. a number of townspeople, faculty, and students volunteered their services in helping to take care of the sick. Just at this time nurses were very scarce and the timely service of these people was indispensable in taking care of the "flu" situation. The following is a list, possibly incomplete, of those who offered their services:

Miss Bess M. Rowe } In charge of office and work
Miss Alba Bales } in kitchen.

Nursing

Mrs. Rich	Mignon Quaw
Mrs. Stewart	Florence Aitken
Mrs. Richter	Dr. Riley
Mrs. Finlay	Mr. Sherer
Grace Nutting	Mr. Morris
Louise Langohr	
Florence Switzer	
Elizabeth Forrest	
Victoria Jordan	
Cecile Van Steenberg	
Bess Snyder	
Minnie Ellen Marquis	
Georgia Knott	
Edith Luther	
Marie Couter	
Ruth Montgomery	
Jessie Donaldson	
Ethel Young	

Kitchen Work

Mrs. Joliffe	Marie Tolstad
Edith Franks	Abbaline Montgomery
Charlotte Ford	Mary Graber
Theda Jones	Georgia Roosevelt
Louise Stone	Marie Waterman
Edith Johnson	Elizabeth Cooley
Esther Eames	Genevieve Cooley
Mary Curl	Arvella Smith
Octavia Marquis	Mabel Hall
Lynnie Chattin	Miss Mintee
Azalea Linfield	Miss Wallin
Mildred Stewart	Veda Ferguson
Gladys White	
Etta Haynes	
Mae Erwin	
Mina Ogilvie	
Annie Breneman	
Frieda Bull	