FLU IN THE ARCTIC
INFLUENZA IN ALASKA, 1918

OCTOBER OF 1918;

WHILE SPANISH INFLUENZA WILL NOT COME TO ALASKA AS QUICKLY AS IT SPREAD ACROSS THE CONTINENT, IT WILL BE HERE IN TIME," SAID DR. L. O. SLOANE, PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER, THIS MORNING.

- THE ALASKA DAILY EMPIRE, OCT. 5, 1918
The Empire's readers did not have to wait long. By Oct. 14, the paper reported 4 cases in Juneau.

On Oct. 20, 36 people arrived in Nome on the steamship Victoria.

Though mail bags were fumigated, the sickness was carried across Western & Northern Alaska, likely following postal & mining trails.
The impact was immediate.

This was especially true for indigenous communities.
"Nome, Dec. 21 - Deaths among the native population on the Seward Peninsula from the Spanish influenza is estimated at 1,000. Entire villages of adults have been wiped out. Children are the principal survivors..." Alaska Daily Empire, Dec. 21, 1918
Reports surfaced of contained outbreaks in mining communities.

Railroad construction was suspended. Alaskans were largely advised to wear masks, observe quarantines, and find some joy in the number of recoveries printed in the newspapers.
QUARANTINE!
TURN AROUND.
Upto 90% of some indigenous communities died of sickness, cold & starvation, leaving children at the mercy of white teachers, clergy, & missionaries.

Bodies were found decaying inside Inuit homes, with survivors huddling to corpses for warmth.

Meanwhile, doctors in Anchorage & Juneau described the epidemic as mild.
"ALL THIS TALK ABOUT SPANISH INFLUENZA
IS NONSENSE... IT IS THE OLD FASHIONED
INFLUENZA, & IT STARTED A LITTLE
EARLIER THIS YEAR..."

"THERE IS NOTHING TO BE
SCARED ABOUT IN THIS
EPIDEMIC..."

"THIS DISEASE IS EASILY CURABLE & SHOULD NOT BE MADE THE
MEANS OF GERMAN PROPAGANDA OR FRIGHTFULNESS..."

-DR. BENJAMIN BRIGGS, THE ALASKA DAILY EMPIRE

OCT. 14, 1918."