On September 18, 1918, influenza, or grippe as it is sometimes called, was first brought to our attention as occurring in prisoners at the city farm. The disease gained a momentum all over the city, so that by October 1st it was reported to the City Commission as being epidemic in Jacksonville. Warning notices were inserted in the newspapers with directions as to symptoms and what to do if taken sick. On October 4, a call was issued for volunteer nurses. On the 7th, cases and deaths had become so numerous that the schools were closed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, after conference with the City Health Officer. The motion picture shows closed their doors voluntarily upon the informal request of this department. The City Commission, on October 8, by order, closed all amusement places and soft drink parlors, and placed a ban on indoor public gatherings; and on October 10 ordered all retail stores opened at nine a.m. and closed at four p.m., so as to limit street-car congestion. A soup kitchen, for those unable to secure nourishment, was opened on October 10, in the basement of the Union Congregational church by the Sunday School. Deliveries were then made by citizens in automobiles, and over one hundred cases were served the first day. St. John’s Parish guild took over some of the work on the 11th, and a kitchen was also opened for negroes, in Stanton school. Following this a diet relief organization was formed, and all of these activities were grouped under systematic management, funds being contributed by many citizens. On October 12, General Duvall, commander of Camp Johnston, tendered the use of four army portable soup kitchens, which was accepted. This relief organization served 5709 white and 11,084 colored cases from October 10 to October 22, when the necessity for such relief no longer existed. Emergency hospitals were opened at the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. M. H. A. buildings, at Stanton school, and at St. Luke’s Hospital. The local Red Cross stood sponsor for the hospital at Stanton school, and their ambulance and the sanitary detachment were on the job night and day.

The peak of the epidemic was reached about the 13th of the month (October), on which day there were 39 deaths. New cases apparently ceased to develop by the 22nd (October), and at the end of the month there had been 464 deaths from influenza or complicating pneumonia. The disease ran through all the susceptible material before it died down. It is estimated that there were nearly 30,000 persons infected with the disease and that none of our published precautions had any effect on the disease.

In January, 1919, there were 471 additional cases reported, and for the year 1919 there were 621 cases with 64 deaths.

In 1920, during February and March, there were 2,541 cases, with 79 deaths. A large number of physicians reported in 1920 that about one-quarter of their cases had had a previous infection, in 1918.

The foregoing tells the official story of the epidemic of 1918. There was no panic among the people like that of the yellow fever epidemic of 1888, for the “flu” was everywhere,