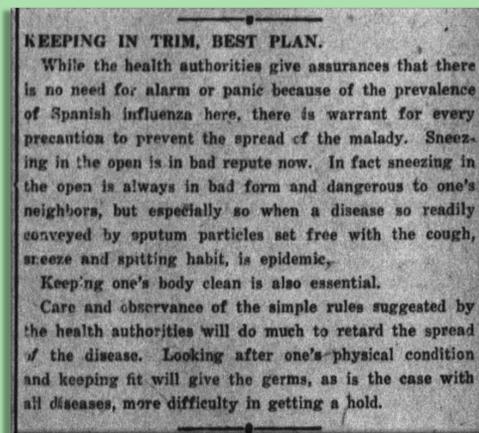


# Pandemic, Plague, and Panic

Onslow County experienced several epidemic illnesses, sicknesses which affected large segments of the population. Fevers such as malaria and yellow fever, brought by mosquitos, and viral illnesses such as small pox and the flu, could quickly spread among people to wreak havoc in the community. Due to fear of spreading disease and also a lack of knowledge about how these diseases were carried led hysteria and also regulations from the county government. The first instance of quarantine by the county government is in 1802, when Lemuel Hatch was directed to use his home as the pest house for the inoculation of smallpox. Later illnesses, such as the flu pandemic of 1918 also brought an increase in the role of local government in public health.

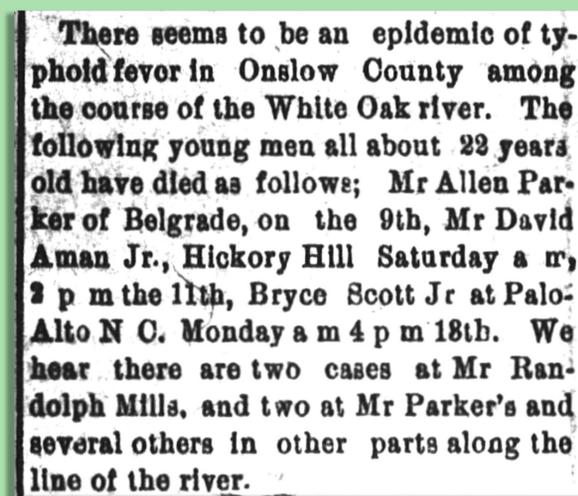
The spring of 1918 witnessed one of the worst illnesses in recent history. The Spanish Flu, also called the Grippe, infected

nearly one third of the world's population, killing approximately fifteen percent of those infected. The virus affected southeastern North Carolina in the fall and winter of 1918-1919, beginning first in Wilmington. Many counties' unpreparedness led to increased public health nurses and the growth of hospitals. This newspaper clipping from Kinston provides advice to readers on how to protect themselves.

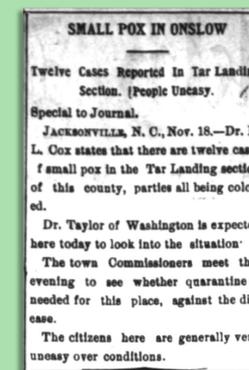


The Daily Free Press, Oct. 4, 1918

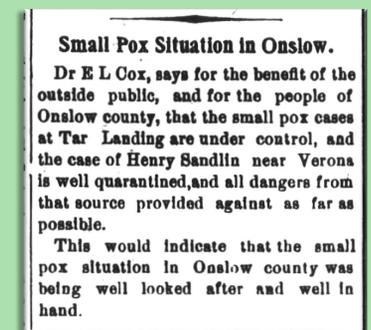
Typhoid Fever, though common, could reach epidemic proportions. Caused by unhygienic conditions leading to fecal matter in food and water, the fever causes abdominal pain, bloody nose, red spots on the abdomen, delirium, and can result in death. In Onslow County, during the years 1914-1917 an average of thirty one people died each year due to Typhoid Fever.



The Daily Journal, July 16, 1903



New Berne Weekly Journal, Nov. 21, 1902



The Daily Journal, Dec. 31, 1902

Though many people think of small pox as a disease that affected people hundreds of years ago, an outbreak caused panic in Onslow in the twentieth century. At the epidemic's height, Dr. E. L. Cox reported to the North Carolina Medical Society that fifty patients were infected with the virus. Following outbreaks such as this doctors in the society pushed for increased vaccinations, some even calling for them to be mandatory.

