

# History Lecture #24 Canada As It Was

Wednesday, December 7, 2016 2:33 PM



Audio 1 - 2

## The Spanish Flu

- The celebrations of the end of the war were tempered by the influenza epidemic
- It would kill 50 million world wide
- 50 000 Canadians died
- Original epidemic came out of China by Chinese working class men carried out by the British to work at the western front digging ditches
- Thought to originally be in Spain since that's where the first case was
- War time was the perfect time for disease to spread
  - 100 000's of young men all over the world, low hygiene kept together in close quarters
- Church is closed, school is closed, public workers wore masks to prevent the spread of disease
- This was the new kind of fear
- There is a new enemy-influenza
- Goes from bad to worse

## The Years of Labour Turmoil

- The desire of a classless society failed
  - Class lines, and divisions remained just as entrenched as it has been before the war
- There was no more unemployment
- Employers needed more workers than what was available
- For labour movements it looked like a healthy time
- Inflation kicks in and cost of living goes up
- By the end of the war it looks like labourers are doing well on paper
  - Wages go up but housing prices rose even higher
- SO in 1917 there is a record number of strikes across the country
- Discontent was sharpened by events in Russia
  - Russian revolution and anti Bolshevik sentiment
- Radical labour unions start pushing workers to be more aggressive and Bolshevik
  - Rise of socialism
- Workers wanted higher wages, respect, safety, fairness
  - But the employers want everything back to the way it was before the war
- The rise is especially prominent in Winnipeg
- Strikes put down and achieved nothing
- Government is able to stop the labour movement, many union members dropped out
- Therefore the hopes of a classless society dissolved
- Ethnic turmoil remained
- Emanuel Halm
  - Sculptor of the quarter
  - Was from Germany living in Toronto
  - When the war started they were immediately alienated again
  - Turned into a sculptor of war memorials
    - This was profitable
  - If you're a German sculptor after 1918 you don't sign your work
- Elizabeth Wyn Wood
  - Created a war memorial in Welland
  - Married to Emmanuel Halm
  - Won sculpting memorial contest but was once again dropped because of German roots like husband
- Many Native Americans lost many freedoms they had won while in the Canadian Corps as soon as the war was over
- This was the same for French English relations
  - WWI becomes another chapter of the failing relationship between the French and English in Canada
- The war didn't change much

## Greif

- It did bring an overwhelming sense of grief however
- Lives were shortened by the war in a way that wasn't foreseeable
  - Many weren't killed by enemy action
    - Yet the army claimed that many died because of their service ?
    - Nurse who got ill during the war, lost her job, fell terribly sick and died
  - Grief was present even after the war
  - The effects of war would be felt many years after

- Grief of the war brought extreme losses to many
  - Travel to Europe to retrieve the bones of dead loved ones and bring them back to Canada to be buried
- Giant families with many sons enlisted to serve in the wars
  - Many died, families lost many sons
  - Mother became a silver cross mother
- Infant mortality rates started to go down in the 1900's but this changed during the war
  - Parents thought the long lives of children meant they would stop burying their kids but as soon as the war came they once again have to bury their killed kids
  - This created a lot of grief

## Dashed Hopes

- The 1920's was the decade of dashed hopes
  - Things don't turn out to be the way people thought it might
  - Nothing else can go wrong can it?
- Crisis of confidence, no hope was left
- People looked for positives of the war
- Too many battles and too many lives lost for pointless reasons
- So people focused on the intention
  - Canada intended to make the world better
  - Canada embraced the idea that those who died went to war for good reasons
  - Whether or not anything was achieved wasn't focused on
- Henry Albert Harper
  - Journalist
  - Jumped into a frozen river to try to save a drowning woman
  - Both drowned
  - Tried to save her life but he failed
  - People saw this as a powerful act of self sacrifice and heroism
  - It didn't matter that he failed and died what mattered that he made the attempt
- This was how people viewed the people who died in the war, reflected the same thoughts on to the war in general

## Conclusion

- The war changed Canada
  - More technology, more industry,
  - A timeless rural community become modernized in a short amount of time
- The world changed from a world of certainty to one of doubt
- From a world of optimism to one of cynicism
- The break wasn't absolute
  - The old and the new world struggled against each other
  - The old world lasted a long time, has a firm grip on people
- WWI was one that shakes the foundations of tradition in Canada
- What has this war achieved?
  - Nothing
  - All this war had done was plant young men in a grave prematurely
- Paintings that critiqued the war weren't really powerful or noticed much in the 1920's
- What was noticed was heroic and patriotic paintings
- For what?
  - For family
  - For the British empire
  - For country
  - For all the values you hold dearly
  - People went through this experience because they believed what they were doing was the right thing
- After the first world war nothing was simple again