

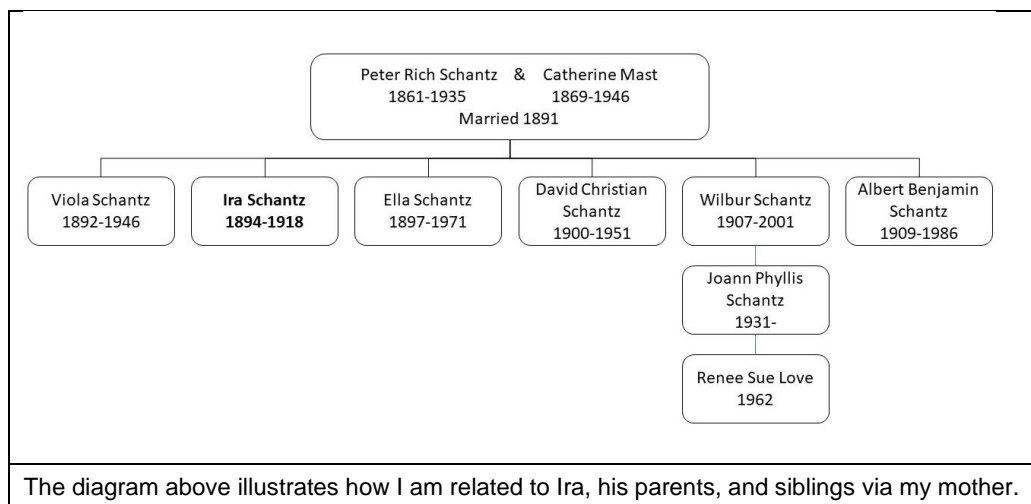
My Great Uncle, Private Ira Schantz 1894-1918

A personal loss from the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1920 remembered during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2021

Renee (Love) Cue 20 Aug 2021

The Great War, or World War I as we now think of it, was devastating to families and communities all over the world. The Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918-1920, occurring at the same time, was spread by the troop movements in the war which exacerbated the death toll for all sides. I have had time to reflect on this very personal loss for my family, Ira Schantz, my great-uncle on my mother's side, in World War I as we wait, in and out of quarantine, during the Covid-19 pandemic that currently affects the world.

Ira was born on 1 Sep 1894; the same day and month as my oldest son Jeremy. He was the oldest son of Peter Rich and Catherine (Mast) Schantz. Ira was born into a Mennonite family in rural Crawfordsville, Washington County, southeastern Iowa. With a current population of around 270, it has been a solid farming community since before Iowa became a state in 1846. My Schantz ancestors first came to the area before 1860 and I have close family that reside in and around Crawfordsville.



My great-grandparents were farmers who relied on their oldest son and his work on the farm. Since Ira died 44 years before I was born, most of the information that I have learned about his life, service and death in World War I came via articles available from the small-town newspapers in Washington, Henry, and Louisa counties in Iowa.

The Selective Service Act was enacted 18 May 1917, about six weeks after the United States formally entered the First World War. On 5 Jun 1917, the first national day of registration for men between the ages of 21 and 30, Ira, aged 22, registered for the draft. The Schantz family worshiped at Eicher Emmanuel Mennonite Church in rural southern Washington County, Iowa. Ira's World War I draft registration card included that special information filled in on Line 12:

"Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?" Ira specified: Member Mennonite Church.

Form 1 293 REGISTRATION CARD		No. 61
1	Name in full <u>Ira Schantz</u>	Age in yrs. <u>22</u>
2	Home address <u>Crawfordsville, Iowa.</u>	
3	Date of birth <u>Sept 1st 1894</u>	
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? <u>Natural Born</u>	
5	Where were you born? <u>Crawfordsville Iowa USA</u>	
6	If not a citizen, of what country are you a citizen or subject? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
7	What is your present trade, occupation, or office? <u>Farming</u>	
8	By whom employed? <u>Owner (P.R. Schantz)</u>	
9	Where employed? <u>Crawfordsville Iowa</u>	
10	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 12, or a sister or brother under 12, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? <u>No</u>	
11	Married or single (which)? <u>Single</u>	Race (specify) <u>Caucasian</u>
12	What military service have you had? <u>None</u>	
Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)? <u>Member Mennonite Church</u>		
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true.		
<u>Ira Schantz</u>		

14-2-55 REGISTRAR'S REPORT	
1	Tall, medium, or short (specify which)? <u>Tall</u>
2	Slender, medium, or stout (which)? <u>Medium</u>
3	Color of eyes <u>Blue</u>
4	Color of hair <u>Brown</u>
5	Bald? <u>No</u>
6	Has person lost arm, leg, hand, foot, or both eyes, or is he otherwise disabled (specify)? <u>No</u>
I certify that my answers are true, that the person registered has read his own answers, that I have witnessed his signature, and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:	
<u>E. R. Schantz</u>	
(Signature of registrar)	
Precinct <u>Crawfordsville</u>	
City or County <u>Washington</u>	
State <u>Iowa</u>	
June 5 1917	
(Date of registration)	

"Ira Schantz," U.S. World War I Draft Registration Cards, 1917-1918, Registration State: Iowa; Registration County: Washington; Roll: 164 3362 Accessed Jun 2021 via Ancestry.com, 2005, Provo, UT, USA

The Mennonite religion originated in the sixteenth century during the Reformation with foundational beliefs around the separation of church and state. Mennonites were prohibited from participating in warfare. As pacifists, doctrine was that they should practice non-resistance, even in the case of self-defense.

When the draft was instituted in World War I, there was a great deal of public and political backlash for anyone opposed to military conscription. Conscientious objector status posed a unique, direct challenge to the military duties of citizenship. The Selective Service Act of 1917 contained specific exemptions for "well-recognized religious sects or organizations at present organized and existing and whose existing creed or principles forbid its members to participate in war in any form...but no person so exempted shall be exempted from service in any capacity that the President shall declare to be non-combatant."¹

Despite the language of the Act and the fact that Mennonites had served in non-combatant alternatives in prior wars and conflicts, Mennonite leaders were not successful in persuading the U.S. government to generally accept conscientious objector status and define the terms of alternative service for Mennonite conscripts. In addition, there were several other pieces of wartime legislation that gave the government extraordinary wartime powers. Of the Mennonites who declined service in the United States, about 10% were court-martialed and sentenced to Leavenworth for an average of over twenty years, 60% accepted alternative service, and 30% remained in military camps until the end of the war.²

¹ Selective Service Act, 1917, An Act to authorize the President to increase temporarily the Military Establishment, approved May 18, 1917, Public Law No. 12, 65th Congress, H.R. 3545, U.S. Statutes at Large, XL, Part 1, p 78.

² Eberle, Donald. "The Plain Mennonite Face of the World War One Conscientious Objector," *Journal of Amish and Plain Anabaptist Studies*, Volume 3 Issue 2 (2015): 175-201.

Ira's younger brother, my great-uncle David Christian Schantz 1900-1951, registered for the draft on the third national day of registration on 12 September 1918 for men aged 18 through 45. Question 12, "Do you claim exemption from draft (specify grounds)?," was no longer on the Registration Card.

When Ira's draft number came up in July 1918, Ira did not decline service or make a conscientious objector claim to the local draft board to seek alternative service. Eicher Church was a part of the more progressive General Conference Mennonite Church. They were more assimilated and open to participation in society. For example, Ira owned an automobile. We know this because he got into an accident with a Mennonite cousin! In an Old Order Mennonite congregation, a man would be at risk of being expelled if they served in the military. The General Conference congregations did not apply those sanctions.

On 23 Jul 1918, a large crowd of around 10,000 gathered in Washington, Iowa to send off the 161 young men to basic training with parades, speeches, and picnics. Ira was one of the young men that boarded the Burlington Railroad line at 6:30 p.m. headed for Camp Pike, Arkansas. The article below describes a festive scene with an optimism that the patriotic young men would come home heroes. The article went on to list all of the men that were on their way to Camp Pike, Arkansas that afternoon. Camp Pike is now known as Camp Joseph T. Robinson and serves as a 33,000-acre training facility for the Army National Guard. It is also the headquarters for the Arkansas National Guard.³

The only jury case this term of court, by Judge Silwold, was the automobile damage suit wherein John Widmer of Henry County sued Ira Schantz of Crawford township, for an automobile smash up that occurred last fall, as both were returning home from the Wayland Chautauqua. They had a collision at the Wenger corner east of town, and both cars were damaged. Widmer spent something over \$60 and Schantz over \$140. Widmer sued Schantz for damages. It was on trial three days, and the jury gave a verdict for the defendant Schantz, thus throwing Widmer into the costs. Mort Keeley was Schantz's lawyer and Charley Dewey Widmer's.

"Ira Schantz, Automobile Damage Suit," *Washington Democrat*, published in Washington, Iowa on Tuesday, March 27th, 1917, 4. Accessed via <https://se Iowa.advantage-preservation.com/>.

According to the Arkansas National Guard Museum, "After arriving at the camp all new soldiers were restricted to barracks for a ten-day quarantine to prevent the spread of contagious diseases. After completing the quarantine the soldiers were issued uniforms and began training. The majority of the soldiers stayed in two story wooden structures. Sleeping quarters were on the top floor and consisted of approximately 100 cots arranged in single rows along the two outer walls and down the middle. Each cot had a mattress filled with straw. Located on the first floor were a mess hall and a squad room. All cots and mattress were moved outside each day, weather permitting, and the floors were scrubbed."⁴

³ "Camp Pike, Arkansas, during World War I," *World War I, Arkansas, Arkansas Digital Archives*, Accessed 22 Jul 2021, <https://digitalheritage.arkansas.gov/exhibits-online-ww1/27/>.

⁴ "World War I Why Camp Pike Was Located Here," *Arkansas National Guard Museum*, Accessed 22 Jul 2021, <https://arngmuseum.com/history/history-of-the-post/world-war-i/>.

Washington County Folks are Getting the War Spirit.

It wouldn't have been very safe for anybody to have said anything against America on the streets of Washington Monday. If anybody had said hurrah for the Kaiser, he would not have lasted as long as a June frost. Patriotism was at the top pitch and America, first, was in the minds of men, women and children, to the number of 10,000. And we observed another very significant thing, that is, the absence of some of those who have been suspected of disloyalty throughout the war.

And it may be just as well that they stay away. It is just as safe for them anyway. And we will take it for granted that they are saying nothing, at worst.

People are apt to become over enthusiastic about the size of crowds, and are likely to overestimate them, but if Washington didn't have 10,000 people on the streets and in Central Park, Monday, they didn't have one hundred.

Joe Huston said not many more could stand in the park, and the streets were full in addition. We never saw as big a crowd in town, in twenty five years of newspapering. They were here from every town, and town-ship. Brighton just locked up shop, and threw their keys in the well, and came over. Even Jim Lemley was over, and we didn't know he ever left his place of business. Crawfordsville was here in force. The Kalona, Richmond and Brighton postmasters were here.

The Crawfordsville band was here and played bully. Two of Fred Palmer's girls are in it and Sherm White's girl, the one that looks so much like her mother that we doubt if the mother always knows herself whether it is she or the daughter playing in the band.

Charley Langenberg leads them and they are splendid for amateurs. Our own band played all day and the Riverside band also was very generous with its playing and they are very good, indeed. Then there was a Keota drum and fife corps that made the welkin ring.

Col C. J. Wilson and W. H. Butterfield spoke but the crowd was so big they could not hear, but those who did, must have liked what they said, as they cheered to beat the band.

The boys all registered at the Court House, and dinners were eaten, by the few who came in the forenoon at the eating houses and in the park. Most of the crowd came after dinner and we have not seen as many cars in town. We hope we are not unpatriotic for saying it was a sad day for Washington County when it comes to sending out 161 fine young men, but it was a proud day that we had them to send, to make the world fit for decent people to live in. And they went with a good will.

Many weeping mothers bade their sons goodbye, and many sisters were crying and now and then, a man wiped his eyes, sheepishly, but it was nothing to be ashamed of. Strong men weep. Jesus wept. It is manly to weep for the sorrowing.

But if we are weeping on account of the war, we who are just starting, what must France and Belgium, and Serbia and England and Poland and Russia be doing. It is amazing to think of it.

Many a sad home there was in Washington County over Sunday, but they will be glad when they learn of the achievements of our boys over seas. And there were all nationalities, as you will ascertain by reading the list of names. There were Swedes and French and Irish and English and German and Bohemians and Austrians and Danes and all went to fight for America.

We say it should be a happy day instead of a sad day, and we should rejoice that we have the men to send.

Every boy was given a dandy box of lunch for on the road to Camp Pike whither they went, over the Burlington at 6:30.

Once the troops completed training at Camp Pike, they moved to Camp Merritt near Hoboken, New Jersey. With the local families' permission, the newspapers published letters from the soldiers. Ira's parents shared several of the letters that Ira wrote home while waiting to be deployed to France. It is a bittersweet experience to find the joy in being able to directly read Ira's words to "Dear Folks" while knowing that Ira was not going to return to a life with family, church and community in Crawfordsville, Iowa. Ira's letters were full of reassurances that things were going well for him in the Army. From the clothes and uniforms to comments on the food, he always ends the letters with the best address to reach him. Ira, a man of the farm, got a chance to experience New York City prior to shipping out to France. "Would like to stay there for a week or two...It is the same after dark as in the day time."

Ira wrote every day from his initial time in Camp Merritt and asked for letters back. In a letter written on September 10th, Ira reported that he was healthy, probably because he knew there was concern with what was going on with the Spanish Flu. By that time, America was in quarantine, "Have never been sick since I left home. Eat 3 meals every day and sometimes 4. With love to all, Ira Schantz"⁵

<p style="text-align: center;">From Ira Schantz</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Camp Merrit, Sept. 5, 1918.</p> <p>Dear folks—</p> <p>I am writing this at 10 in the morning. We got all our overseas equipment last night. The color of the clothes is olive drab. We turned in all our cotton clothes this morning. I got a good fit. We all got two pairs of new shoes, the soles are a full half inch thick with toe and heel plates and hobnails. The coat, overcoat, raincoat and blanket are all the same color. This makes 4 pairs of shoes I have received since being in the army. If anything had a hole or a rip in it we could turn it in and get new goods for it.</p> <p>If you would see me in my new uniform you would not know me. I don't think I will have my picture taken here unless we have a pay day. I saw Charles Longer yesterday afternoon, he came in here Monday from a Florida camp. There are several prisoner pens in this camp which have a wire fence around them, 10 ft. high, charged from the electric line so there is no danger of any of them to get out.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">This is a fine camp. It is more like a big city than a camp. We are right on a main street and there are three towns in the camp. The streets are all paved and there is all kinds of traffic. The eats are not as good here as at Camp Pike, but it is all the mess sergeants fault. He don't know what kind of food to order. I gained 10 pounds at Camp Pike and have gained about 30 pounds in clothes here. I am feeling alright. They change our address here about every day. I don't think there are two that write the address the same. This will be the right address from now on.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ira Schantz, Co. 21 Camp Pike Aug. Auto Repc. Draft Inf. Overseas Casuals Camp Merrit, New Jersey.</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Camp Merrit Sept. 8, 1918.</p> <p>Dear folks:</p> <p>This is 8 o'clock Friday morning. I went down to New York City last night as 50 of the men can go at one time. We were in the city 8 hours and got back to camp at 2 o'clock this morning. It is about 20 miles from Camp to the city. We take a jitney to Jersey City then cross the Hudson river on a ferry boat then you are in New York. We took an elevated car at the river and got off at Broadway right in the main part of the city. You can ride as far as you want to for 5 cents on the elevated or subway lines. It also costs five cents to cross the Hudson. The jitneys charge one dollar to take you to the river and it is paved all the way. Street cars cannot run out here, its too hilly. I rode in a Packard to the river. They have to run on low gear for half a mile on one hill. Would not have missed the trip for \$50. You can't get lost if you know where you want to go from the city. Would like to stay there for a week or two. Seen some of the finest buildings in the world. It is about the same after dark as in the day time. You never see the sun there. It is raining a little this morning. We will sail before long but I don't know how soon.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">From your son, Ira.</p>
<p>"From Ira Schantz, Letter 1" <i>Wayland News</i>, published in Wayland, Iowa, 12 Sep 1918, 1. Accessed via https://seiowa.advantage-preservation.com/.</p>	<p>"From Ira Schantz, Letter 2," <i>Wayland News</i>, 1.</p>	

⁵ "From Ira Schantz", *Wayland News*, published in Wayland, Iowa, 26 Sep 1918, 1. Accessed via <https://seiowa.advantage-preservation.com/>.



Image from Wikipedia, USS *Pocahontas* (ID-3044) US Naval Historical Center - U.S. Naval Historical Center Photograph # [NH 68722-A](#) Accessed 22 Jun 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Pocahontas_\(ID-3044\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Pocahontas_(ID-3044)).

On 15 Sep 1918, Private Ira Schantz and his fellow soldiers of the Camp Pike August Automatic Replacement Draft Company #21 Infantry, set sail from Hoboken, New Jersey for France aboard the WWI Troop Transport Ship *Pocahontas*.⁶

According to the Evening Journal in Washington, Iowa, Ira's parents received word from their son that he had arrived "safely overseas" around 4 Oct 1918.⁷

⁶ The National Archives at College Park; College Park, Maryland; Record Group Title: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, 1774-1985; Record Group Number: 92; Roll or Box Number: 529 U.S. Army Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1910-1939 Repository – Ancestry.com Accessed Jun 2021.

⁷ "Local News", *Evening Journal*, published in Washington, Iowa 4 Oct 1918, 3. Accessed via <https://seioawa.advantage-preservation.com/>.

Ira never fought in the Great War. Shortly after arriving in France, on 7 Oct 1918, at age 24, Ira succumbed to complications from the Spanish Flu in a hospital in Brest, France. His parents received word on 9 Nov 1918, just two days prior to Armistice Day ending World War I, of Ira's death. The newspaper article reporting his death identified his date of death as 11 Oct 1918 but that date was later updated to 7 Oct 1918 based on his Army Burial Card.

The article mentions compatriots of Ira that had also succumbed to the flu and concern for the other Washington County boys. The four dead soldiers included Ira, William Kellerhals, Dan Reeves, and Merton Topping.

Ira Schantz, Soldier.

Unspeakably sad is the death of Ira Schantz, October 11, 1918. A telegram from the war department reached his father Saturday evening. They had not known of his illness, although they were worried as they had had no word from him since in September.

Ira left here with the bunch that went to Camp Pike July 22nd, and and he went gladly. We had talked with him only a few days before, and he said where duty called him, he was glad to go. He went in the 164th Infantry. Later he went into Co 21, A. R. D., if we understood it correctly, and went over in early September, and they heard from him last about September 10th.

Ira was born on the home place, where he grew up, September 1, 1894. He was a natural, born farmer and stockman, and he was his father's main dependence. When Ira was at home, his father had little concern about how things went.

Naturally, the father and mother are heart broken, for he was a strong, manly, splendid young man.

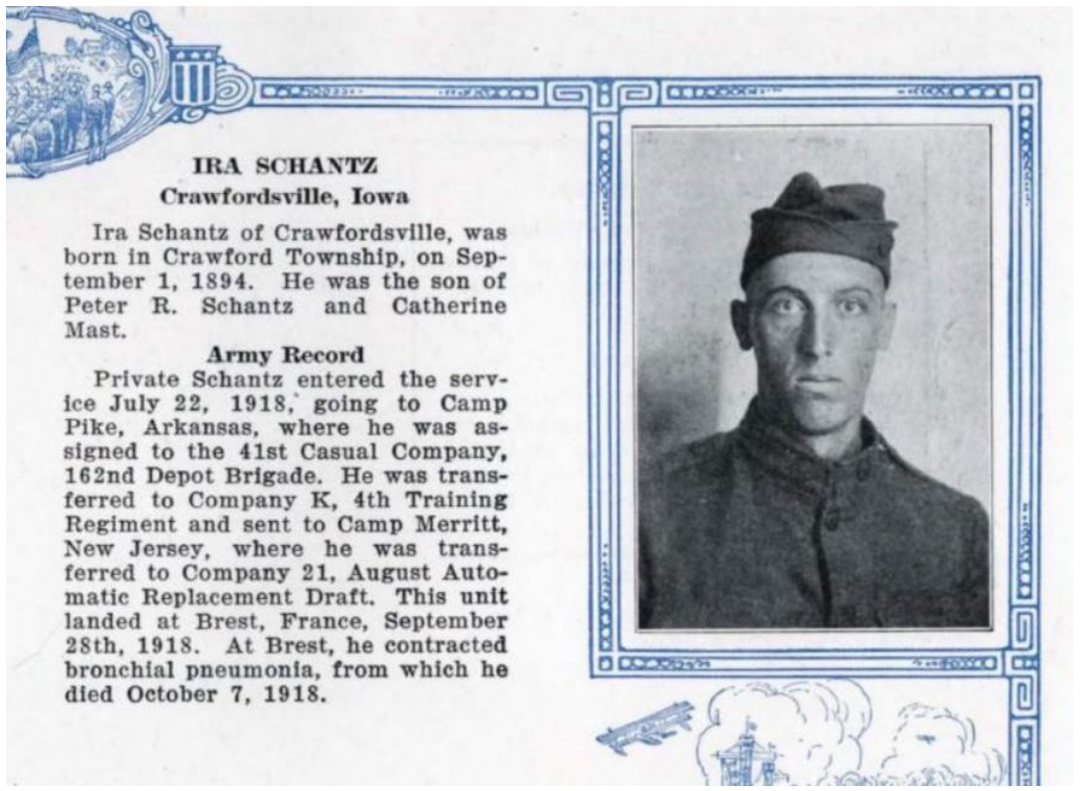
His father is Peter R. Schantz, and his mother, Katie Mast Schantz. The other children are: Viola, Ella, David, Wilber and Benny, all at home.

Ira went with William Kellerhals, who died a few days before, and with Dale Reeves, who also died of influenza. This makes four of that contingent known to have died of disease. They are Ira, Dale, William Kellerhals, and the Topping boy from Wellman.

Ira's parents are very anxious for any information as to Ira's death that may come in any soldier letters, and we are suggesting that if any readers of this hear anything of interest, they communicate with the Schantz family. Carl Frey is also in France, but he left the boys. Spencer Reed was also with the same squad, and he may write home. He is the son of George Reed.

"Ira Schantz, Soldier," *Washington Democrat*, published in Washington, Iowa on Tuesday, November 12, 1918, 1.
Accessed via <https://seiowa.advantage-preservation.com/>.

The commemorative book *Washington County in the World War*, published in 1920, identifies the soldiers that lost their lives in the Great War. A count reveals that 25 of the 40 men who died from Washington County succumbed to the Spanish Flu or complications, like bronchial pneumonia.⁸



IRA SCHANTZ
Crawfordsville, Iowa

Ira Schantz of Crawfordsville, was born in Crawford Township, on September 1, 1894. He was the son of Peter R. Schantz and Catherine Mast.

Army Record

Private Schantz entered the service July 22, 1918, going to Camp Pike, Arkansas, where he was assigned to the 41st Casual Company, 162nd Depot Brigade. He was transferred to Company K, 4th Training Regiment and sent to Camp Merritt, New Jersey, where he was transferred to Company 21, August Automatic Replacement Draft. This unit landed at Brest, France, September 28th, 1918. At Brest, he contracted bronchial pneumonia, from which he died October 7, 1918.

Matthews, J.T. "Ira Schantz" in *Washington County in the World War, Pictorial and Biographical Review of Washington County's most generous and patriotic contribution to the Great Victory of Democracy*, 1 Jan 1920, 17. Accessed 22 Jun 2021. <http://iagenweb.org/washington/wwibook.pdf>.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the 1918 influenza pandemic was the most severe in recent history. "It is estimated that about 500 million people or one-third of the world's population became infected with this virus. The number of deaths was estimated to be at least 50 million worldwide with about 675,000 occurring in the United States." The virus was particularly lethal for those under age 5, 20 to 40, and over 65 which is why it so thoroughly devastated the troops.⁹

The pandemic virus was named the Spanish Flu because it was first in Spain that the media reported the affliction and mortality that wreaked havoc as a result of this plague. Spain was neutral in World War I; most countries in Europe and in the United States were under strict media restrictions and blackouts and would not report on the impact of the flu or on what was happening with outbreaks

⁸ Matthews, J.T., *Washington County in the World War, Pictorial and Biographical Review of Washington County's most generous and patriotic contribution to the Great Victory of Democracy*, 1 Jan 1920, Accessed 22 Jun 2021. <http://iagenweb.org/washington/wwibook.pdf>

⁹ "1918 Pandemic (H1N1 virus)," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC*. Accessed 22 Jun 2021 <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/1918-pandemic-h1n1.html>

occurring in the military camps. As with our current pandemic, the current theory is that the Spanish Flu started in China as a novel virus, most likely originating in wild waterfowl.¹⁰ The Great War impacted where and how quickly the pandemic spread. Military training camps, troop trains, and transport ships put troops closely together and fired the spread of infection.¹¹

We don't yet know the full extent of the current Covid-19 pandemic infection and mortality. At the time of this writing, August of 2021, at least 4,400,284 people have died of Covid-19 world wide,¹² 624,213 in the United States.¹³ We are still in the midst of the pandemic. While the United States has vaccines available for people over 12 years old, the vaccination rate varies widely across the country and a surge of a new variant has brought a new round of infection and death. In our current time, much like 1918, there is a lot of conflict and contention about the cause, the severity, and the best response to stop the spread of the disease. This article in The Wellman Advance, 17 Oct 1918, reads eerily like the articles from 2020 regarding how the pandemic spread:

"No matter what particular kind of germ causes the epidemic, it is now believed that influenza is always spread from person to person, the germs being carried with the air along with the very small droplets of mucus, expelled by coughing or sneezing, forceful talking, and the like by one who already has the germs of the disease."¹⁴

Then, as in our current world, the pandemic was devastating. It is estimated that between three and six percent of the entire global population died of the Spanish Flu. In the Great War, an estimated 43,000 servicemen mobilized died of influenza as a result of the flu. Of the US soldiers who died in Europe, half of them fell to the influenza virus and not to the enemy. In addition, based on the overall number of people who died, the average lifespan in the U.S. was estimated to lower by 10 years.¹⁵

The entire world was in mourning from war and disease. In Iowa, approximately 93,000 people were infected with the virus and 6,000 died. During the fall of 1918, the state was quarantined, as was most of the United States. With infection and deaths at a lower rate than the rest of the world, Iowa's population of approximately 2.4 million was spared the overall devastation seen in the military and in more densely populated areas.¹⁶

In comparison, with the assistance of modern medicine and vaccines, our current world-wide death toll from Covid-19 is estimated to be around 0.06% of the population. Iowa has fared poorly in this pandemic and the state is currently encountering a rise in cases. It is rated a Very High Risk level for the spread of Covid. As of this writing, the state population of approximately 3.155 million people has

¹⁰ Taubenberger, Jeffrey K., Kash, John C., and Morens, David M. , "The 1918 influenza pandemic: 100 years of questions answered and unanswered," *Science Translational Medicine*, published 24 Jul 2019, Volume 11, Issue 502. Accessed 22 Jun 2021, <https://stm.sciencemag.org/content/11/502/eaau5485>.

¹¹ Billings, Molly, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," *Human Virology at Stanford*, Jun 1997 modified RDS February, 2005, Accessed 22 Jun 2021, <https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>.

¹² "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic," World Health Organization, WHO,. Accessed 20 Aug 2021. <https://www.who.int>

¹³ "COVID Data Tracker," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC*, Accessed 20 Aug 2021, <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#datatracker-home>

¹⁴ "Uncle Sam's Advice on Flu" *The Wellman Advance*, Wellman, Iowa, Published in Wellman, Iowa on Thursday, October 17, 1918, 8. Accessed via <https://seiova.advantage-preservation.com/>.

¹⁵ Billings, Molly, "The Influenza Pandemic of 1918," *Human Virology at Stanford*, Jun 1997 modified RDS February, 2005, Accessed 22 Jun 2021, <https://virus.stanford.edu/uda/>

¹⁶ "The 1918 Flu 100 Years Later," *Iowa Department of Public Health*, April 2018 Accessed 22 Jun 2021 http://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/33/100%20Years%20Infographic%20Original_final.pdf

392,970 confirmed cases and 6,226 deaths.¹⁷ At this point, the Iowa overall death rate is 0.2% of the population or about 3 times higher than the worldwide average.

Ira's body was initially buried in the American City cemetery in the Lambézellec neighborhood of Brest, a city on the western French coast. My great-grandparents were contacted by the War Department in 1920 and asked if they would like him returned for burial at home. Ira's remains were sent home on the U.S. Army Transport Service USS *Princess Matoika* from Brest, France on 19 Jun 1920, arriving in Hoboken, New Jersey on 21 Jul 1920.¹⁸

File No. 32719	Last Name SCHANTZ	Army Serial No. 3801670	First name and Initials Ira	Cablegram No. 289
Rank Pvt.	Organization 21st Co., Aug. Repl. Drft.	Cause of death Broncho pneumonia		Date of Death 10/7/18
Date of Burial 10/8/18	Place of Burial—Unconfirmed			No.
Authority File No. D 3246	Place of Burial—Confirmed Grave #63, Row 4, Plot H, American Cty., Lambézellec, (Finistere)			Cemetery Commune 531
Authority File No. D 11056	Disinterred and Reburied: Date 5/15/19 In: Grave #132, Extension Amer. Cty., Lambézellec, Finistere			Cemetery 531
Emergency Address: Peter Rich Schantz (Father) R #2, Crawfordsville, Iowa		Notified Emergency Address 12/20/18 2/17/20		
R. B. Sketch No.	Photograph No. L-5979			
Grave Marker	Name Peg	Cross	Head Board	Bottle
	Yes	Yes		
Ident. Tags	Buried with body	On grave marker		
	Yes	Yes		
REMARKS: 3/11/20 - F.115				

OVER

1 *SEP*

G. R. S. Form 13—Revised Jan. 25-20

U.S. WWI Burial Cards, the National Archives Record Group: RG 92 Roll: 0830001-0831673
SCHANTZ Army Serial Number 3801670, Accessed 22 Jun 2021, Fold3.com

¹⁷ "Tracking Coronavirus in Iowa: Latest Map and Case Count", *New York Times*, Updated Aug 20, 2021. Accessed 20 Aug 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/iowa-covid-cases.html>.

¹⁸ The National Archives at College Park; College Park, Maryland; Record Group Title: Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General, 1774-1985; Record Group Number: 92; Roll or Box Number: 268 U.S. Army Transport Service, Passenger Lists, 1910-1939 Repository Accessed Jun 2021, Ancestry.com

IRA SCHANTZ GIVEN FITTING BURIAL AT THE EICHER CHURCH

BODY OF SECOND COUNTY BOY
BROUGHT FROM FRANCE
IS LAID TO REST.

CROWD OVERFLOWS CHURCH

Crawfordsville and Wayland Pastors
Officiate.—Ex-Service Men In
Uniform Pay Tribute
To Here.

(By Alex R. Miller)

Ira Schantz the second Washington County boy to be brought home from France for burial, was buried at the Eicher churchyard, Sunday afternoon. It was the largest funeral we ever saw there. Friends came from most remote portions of the county and from Henry County, to show their respect for the soldier who had given his life for his country.

Ira went to Camp Pike with the big contingent in July, 1918. They went from there to Camp Merit and across in September and he died soon after landing. Indeed, he was deathly sick enroute. He was buried at Brest, where he lay till the body was brought to this country and it arrived Sunday morning at Noble. The body was taken to the home and a very brief service held there; but the main service was at the Eicher church, where he was a member and where he attended Sunday school, as a lad, and he was laid away among the relatives who had gone before, and in his own land and where all the folks knew him and respected him.

With Ira's return to Iowa, a funeral service, attended by hundreds of people including seventy soldiers of the World War in uniform, was held at Eicher Church on Sunday, 1 Aug 1920. He was interred at the Eicher Cemetery following the service. A complete account of the service was published in the local Washington newspaper.

"The pall bearers were Ira's boyhood acquaintances and friends. All were overseas men. They were Howard Cochran, Eddie Alliman, William Schantz, Wilbur Eicher, Carl Frey, and Dwight Messenger."

His pallbearers were local fellow soldiers from the Great War; at least four were cousins.

Ira was the son of Peter Schantz and Katherine Mast Schantz and was 24 years old when he died of the flu. ~~He was a steady, dependable, level-headed young fellow, and his family placed great reliance in his judgment. Ira was really the boss around the place, as we often noted. He was a natural born farmer and stockman, and his father was willing to unload the management on him, as he was worthy and trustworthy. But when the war came, and his number was turned up, he said he was going and he had no hesitancy about doing his part, a man's part, a hero's part.~~

His brothers and sisters are Viola, Ella, David, Wilber and Bennie. His aged grandmother Mast also survives and was able to attend the funeral.

As stated, Ira's devotion to his country was well repaid, by the respect in which his memory will be held. The interest neighbors and friends had in him, was attested by the great throng that attended the funeral. Rev W. G. Robertson of Crawfordsville preached most eloquently of the young man and his sacrifice, and it was at once a sermon and a challenge to better citizenship. ~~Rev. Robertson never did quite so well before~~ Rev Slack of the Wayland Methodist church assisted and his prayer was a gem likewise. And the choir directed by J. H. Wittig sang America and other suitable hymns very effectively.

It will be allowable to say that the government fits out the soldiers with splendid oak caskets and a soldier was sent with the body. The casket was flag draped and the service was beautiful.

Leon Beatty Post from Washington attended to the number of 44 and acted as a guard of honor. About 35 other soldiers joined and it was most impressive. This paper wishes it might express the writer's appreciation of the fine attendance of world soldiers. It must be a source of great gratification to the family.

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Capt Harold Putnam was in charge of the soldiers. A few marines, also, were in the escort. As the preacher pronounced the benediction, at the close, Bugler Allan Hays sounded "taps" and all was over. Ira had been given Christian burial as Rev Robertson had eloquently said. He had come to the land of his birth and he sleeps in the silent city but he is not forgotten and we trust none of us will forget what the boys did.

Because of these young fellows, as the preacher again said, women are safe, children are unafraid and our land is prosperous and happy.

Col Palmer representing the G. A. R., and Col C. J. Wilson representing the Spanish American war were present and although Col Wilson was not enlisted in the war of 1898, yet he has been in military affairs all his life and his attendance was proper and was appreciated.

To the parents and brothers and sisters, the opportunity to visit the grave of their fallen hero, will bring infinite solace, in the days that are to come.

Crawfordsville continues to honor Ira's memory. On Vine Street is a building housing the Post Office and the Crawfordsville Schantz-Mitchell American Legion Post 593.

There are so many things I never got a chance to know about my great-uncle. Ira was not married and lived at the family home when he was drafted and left for the war effort. Did he have a sweetheart? What did he think of the war? He farmed with his father; was he planning on buying a farm of his own? Ira was 13 years older than my grandfather, Wilbur Schantz, who was only 11 years old when his big brother died in France. Like many of us, I didn't think to talk to my grandfather, Wilbur, before he died and record his recollections of Ira. The articles and information available in the local newspapers are an invaluable resource as I seek to learn more about my family's history.



Schantz- Mitchell American Legion Post 593, Crawfordsville, Iowa, 18 Oct 2019 Photo from the private collection of Sonya Love-Smith.



Ira Schantz Gravestone, Eicher Cemetery north of Wayland, Washington County, Iowa, 15 Jun 2015 41°10'42.1"N 91°37'34.6"W Photo from the private collection of Renee Cue.



Certificate of Honor for Ira Schantz signed by Woodrow Wilson sent to Peter R and Catherine (Mast) Schantz circa 1919. From the private collection of Renee Cue

Ira's parents received the certificate displayed above signed by President Woodrow Wilson as a memento and thank-you for his service. I have the honor of being the custodian of this heirloom for this generation. Ira's life was cut short but our family's remembrance lives on.

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