

"SPANISH FLU"  
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Presented by Grade 6, Henry Gordon Academy  
Cartwright, Labrador

This is a dramatization of a poem about the Spanish  
flu epidemic in Sandwich Bay in 1918. The original  
material was taken from Reverend Gordon's diary and  
adapted by Emma Marsh.

CAST OF CHARACTERS  
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Reciters:	-	Elaine Learning Jeanne Pardy
Rev. Gordon	-	Tommy Mugford
Mrs. Parsons	-	Sheila Pottle
Mr. Parsons	-	Craig Roberts
Mr. Payne	-	Ben Dyson
Uncle Ab	-	Richard Williams
Aunt Liz	-	Pauline Morris
Mr. Doan	-	Paul Holwell



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THE SPANISH FLU

In the 1918<sup>th</sup> year of our Lord  
Rev. Henry Gordon had just gotten word  
Of a strange epidemic, with death toll high  
That ranged in Newfoundland, to the South, close by.

He was leaving Cartwright and he took  
John Bird and Rebecca back to Dave's Brook  
Young Roly would crew for the rest of the trip  
To get home before freeze up would be quite a nip.

Next morning young Roly seemed rather unwell  
By noontime it was quite easy to tell  
With a fever so high he was tossing about  
T'was the dreaded disease, there was little doubt.

The Reverend got back to Cartwright as fast as he could  
And the news that awaited was so far from good  
From the eighty persons there were only four  
Who were well enough to answer the door.

Curtain *opens*

Scene I

Mr. Parsons (Hudson Bay Manager) *5-7*  
Mrs. Parsons *6-10*  
Mr. Doan  
Rev. Henry Gordon  
Mr. Payne

Rev. Gordon

With the Doctor 150 miles away and the ice as bad as it is,  
we shall just have to trust in God and get on with things as  
best we can.

Mr. Parsons

Thank God my wife is a trained nurse. Her work is cut out.

Mr. Doan

Maybe you could take on the cooking Mr. Parsons. The Rev. and  
I will see to the water and get some wood.

Rev. Gordon

We are all so weary, (Droops head on hands and rests for a  
moment)

Let us take a moment to pray. (All pray quietly)  
"Into thy hands Oh God we commend ourselves".  
Now we must go off to rest.

All

Goodnight

ALL EXIT

Off stage (Knock, Knock)

Rev. Gordon enters onstage and answers door.

Rev. Gordon

Hello Jim, whatever is it?

Payne

T'is Mrs. Payne, Rev., she's awful bad - she keeps crying  
for her sister Rebecca. What can we do, what can we do?  
(Hands go up and he shakes his head in despair)

Rev. Gordon

I'll have to go up to Dove's Brook and get Rebecca — we  
can do with another pair of hands here, Jim.

Mr. Payne

God Bless you Rev., 'Tis in hard straits we all are.

Rev. Gordon

Well, be off with you Jim while you can still stand.  
I'll make another round of the houses as soon as I get  
back from Dove's Brook

Arthur Clough

Things kept going from bad to worst  
Until we reached November first  
When an old fishing boat came sailing in  
With Isaac Lethers and 'an of his kin

They were just settled down in a tumble down shack  
When Mrs. Payne came running along the track  
Howard Poquet had died, the first to succumb  
The fear all around made everyone numb

On November 3rd. Rev. Gordon took ill  
He'd been fighting the 'flu' with his iron will  
Then Garland Lethbridge and Sam Learning too  
Death was all around because of the 'flu.

Rev. Gordon improved, though weak and in stress  
He carried on and continued to bless  
The dying, the dead and the ones who were left  
So many of joy and hope now bereft.

Then Mrs. Lethbridge she died too  
We went to the graveyard our work to do  
The ship "Meal" we heard blow, Our help in Gods name  
We waited for the boat, but all-1, some came

We rode out and collected supplies and mail  
The Captain let us out over the rail  
The dread of the sickness was great indeed  
The last boat for our country had failed in our need.

One Lethers child died as the night went on  
Arthur Hazel brought news of the death of John  
Another Hazel, Rebecca Bird, Mrs. Payne  
Evelyn died bringing grief for the Learnings again

One of the Poomashies struggled from Table Bay Pond  
The other four had all passed on  
Another decision they had to be brave  
But they just couldn't manage one more grave.

Fishing salt in a shed was our mortuary  
The bodies they would later bury  
Out of 76 they'd lost 12 of their brothers  
Some invalids now could help with the others.

Arthur Clough

Scene II Rev. Gordon sitting at a table writing.

Rev. Gordon November 14th -- 5th casualty in the LeMare shack today. Seems like two more will slip away before daybreak.  
(He looks up in contemplation)

Rev. Gordon The ice is creeping out of the bay, Oh dear father in heaven what will the news be from the outside?

(Rev. Gordon goes to the window)

Rev. Gordon God help us! Will this storm never let up!  
*in from John*  
Mr. Parsons, Mr. Parsons, come quickly -- there's a small boat making for the edge of the ice. Look, Look (he points) there are -- inside the harbour point.

Mr. Parsons You're right Rev., I'll go get Down and MacDonald right away.

Exit Parsons -- Rev. Gordon still at window

Curtain *down*

Scene III

Curtain *opens*

Curtain (Rev. Gordon seated at table again writing -- He talks aloud to himself as he writes).

Rev. Gordon Today Will Learning arrived by boat with his son, from Huntington. They could hardly talk they were so frightened and exhausted. They brought black news from North River, ten of the fourteen are dead -- the others are going mad with fear. Tomorrow I shall take Parsons, Down, and MacDonald and go to them.  
God have mercy on us all

Curtain *opens*

They set out at dawn on their mission, no grave in those circumstances it was hard to be brave On Snowy Point one grave for us Was the best could be done in that frozen time

To Aunt Liz Williams, Rev. then went along But as he got nigh he knew something was wrong A big board of dogs tore the door with a yell MacDonald's gun was his only help.

A pitiful sight met them as they went inside Aunt Liz's family all had died All four of them were on the floor dead While poor Aunt Liz shivered so sick in her bed.

The dead were buried who were kept in the vault It was hard on the families as they opened the vault Still no news from the North they had to wait But December first was a memorable date.

Curtain *opens*

Curtain *down*