

## Pandemic Influenza Storybook

Thomas Langan was born in 1893 and he lived in a small town in Cedar Rapids, Nebraska. Cedar Rapids in the early 1900s was a farming community. The biggest structure in the whole town was a big flour mill next to the river. And Thomas lived there with his entire family. Thomas, at age 25 in 1918, was already married and had five children. He and his wife Carrie had met in the small town of Cedar Rapids (pause). The H1N1 virus, the pandemic virus came to Cedar Rapids, Nebraska and what we understand from the family is that Thomas, the oldest who lived away from home and was already married, became ill with the H1N1 the flu virus. And one of the boys who was still living at home, William, brought a home remedy to help take care of Thomas, my grandfather. And this was in December of 1918 and what we understand is that in a few short days all, all four of the boys were sick, so it was Thomas, William who was 22, Edward who was 20 and David who was 16 years of age. They all became ill. Even though Thomas was the first to become ill, it turns out that Edward was the first to die. And then William died. And then David died on the same day that William did. Now Thomas, again who was the first to become ill, was still in his sick bed and he got up and went to the funeral of William and David which was held on the same day. And there's a large monument in the cemetery in this very small town of Cedar Rapids, Nebraska that had been put up by my great grandfather who had lost his wife and three of his four boys in 1918. And I didn't know about this story in fact until I started to work on a special edition of a crisis and emergency risk communication book that we have written here at CDC to promote the proper way to talk to people when really bad things happen to them. And I was asked to do a special version of it specifically for pandemic influenza looking forward to the potential pandemic that's out there. And as I was working on this book, we had a very short deadline and my mother would call and want to understand why I was working on weekends. And I told her

what I was working on, this pandemic influenza book. It was at that point she told me the story about my grandfather and his three brothers. But what's really interesting about this story, the thing that, I think, when I talk to people about it, I want them to understand is my, my grandfather Thomas had five children before he became ill with this disease. William, Edward, and David were still living at home, weren't married, and had no children. Well, Thomas survived and went on to have four more children, one of which was my mother.