

1918 FLU



**AS WORLD WAR I WOUND DOWN, A FIERCE
INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC SPREAD AROUND
THE WORLD KILLING TENS OF MILLIONS.
COULD IT HAPPEN AGAIN?**

By Robert J. Roos

LEFT: DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES;
RIGHT: NATIONAL ARCHIVES



On a Sunday morning in late September 1918, Dr. William Henry Welch, then the nation's most distinguished physician and scientist, and three other eminent doctors stepped off a train in Washington, D.C. They had just finished touring Army bases in the South, looking for conditions that could allow infectious diseases to spread as the Army feverishly trained millions of men for the war

in Europe. The doctors had found the Army in good health and following appropriate hygiene.

But as they got off the train they were met by a man waiting to take them to the office of the Army surgeon general. When they arrived there, the deputy surgeon general ordered them to go immediately to Camp Devens, a large Army camp near Boston. "The Spanish influenza has struck that camp," they were told.