

In 1977 the world's health agencies attained a monumental goal. Through years of vaccination campaigns and quarantines smallpox was eliminated all over the world. The historic killer of millions was now extinct and would no longer terrorize the world. How Grant County suffered in the past, is hard to realize today. In the winter of 1844 Platteville was devastated by an outbreak of smallpox. The epidemic hit 226 of the city's 500 residents. Many died. Smallpox kills up to 30% of its victims, and leaves the rest scarred and pitted for life. Although Edward Jenner had invented a smallpox inoculation, and Washington had ordered inoculation of his soldiers at Valley Forge, no public health campaign was begun to eradicate it until after 1929, when Progressive's in Wisconsin's government convinced the citizenry that public health was a concern for government, and county health departments were established.

disease was highly contagious through face to face contact, touching fluids, and worst of all airborne transmission often over great distances through ventilation ducts. In 1937 Lancaster parents panicked after learning of the infection of a student at the high school. In 1941 Grant County began an intensive campaign to vaccinate all pre-school and grade school children. In the following decade Smallpox became only a memory, but those of us of a certain age have painful recollections of shedding tears while being inoculated.



In 1901 a smallpox outbreak in Glen Haven forced the St. Paul railway postal authorities to accept no mail from that village. Smallpox was described as epidemic in Wisconsin, especially in the lumber camps of the state. Throughout the 1930's and 1940's vaccinations were given and coordinated eradication campaigns were mounted, but outbreaks continued. This

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Rush Vaccinations to Halt Epidemic

LANCASTER — Doctors and health officials hurried to complete nearly 600 vaccinations against smallpox here today in an effort to prevent a spread of the disease. A high school youth became ill with the disease and attended school several days before quarantined. No other cases have been reported, Dr. James Fowler, health

officer said. All school children have been vaccinated, he said, but it will be 10 to 20 days before new cases will develop.