

SALK'S VACCINE WORKS!



Official Count Polio Vaccine Reported 80 to 90% Effective

Only 3 Escape

NEV

Way Ena

New York Post

Salk Test Report:

POLIO ROUTED!

THE POLIO CRUSADE



WE WILL BE EVEN BETTER

Dr. Salk Visions 100% Effectiveness

ARMED AID YONKERS IS FACING

Supply to Be Low for Time But Output Will Be Rushed

6 VACCINE MAKERS GET U.S. LICENSES

FANFARO USHERS VERDICT ON TESTS

egra

S 'S POT

Majr Aga Para

1 x 60



PBS International



1 x 60

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It was the largest public health experiment in modern history—a crusade that eradicated one of the twentieth century's most dreaded diseases.

In the summer of 1950, fear gripped the residents of Wytheville, Virginia. Movie theaters shut down, baseball games were cancelled and panicky parents kept their children indoors—anything to keep them safe from an invisible invader. Outsiders sped through town with their windows rolled up and bandanas covering their faces. The ones who couldn't escape the perpetrator were left paralyzed, and some died in the wake of the devastating and contagious virus. Polio had struck in Wytheville. The town was in the midst of a full-blown epidemic. That year alone, more than 33,000 Americans fell victim—half of them under the age of ten.

The polio epidemic terrified Americans for decades, affecting thousands of children, leaving many crippled, paralyzed, or condemned to life in an iron lung. But on April 26, 1954, hope emerged. At the Franklin Sherman Elementary School in McLean, Virginia, six-year-old Randy Kerr stood at the head of a long line of children, and waited patiently while a nurse gently rolled up his sleeve, then filled a syringe with a cherry-colored liquid containing the world's first polio vaccine. Developed just a few years earlier by virologist Jonas Salk, the polio vaccine had not yet been widely tested on humans. No one was certain it was safe, or whether it could provide effective protection against the disease. In the coming weeks nearly two million school children in forty-four states received the shots. The Salk vaccine trials were the dramatic culmination of years of research and a multi-million dollar investment, made up in large part by public donations.

The film interweaves the personal accounts of polio survivors with the story of an ardent crusader who tirelessly fought on their behalf while scientists raced to eradicate this dreaded disease. Based in part on the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Polio: An American Story* by David Oshinsky, *The Polio Crusade* features interviews with historians, scientists, polio survivors, and the only surviving scientist from the core research team that developed the Salk vaccine, Julius Youngner.

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AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

CREDITS

Executive Producer: Mark Samels
Series Producer: Sharon Grimberg
Writer, Director, Producer: Sarah Colt

An AMERICAN EXPERIENCE production for WGBH Boston

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