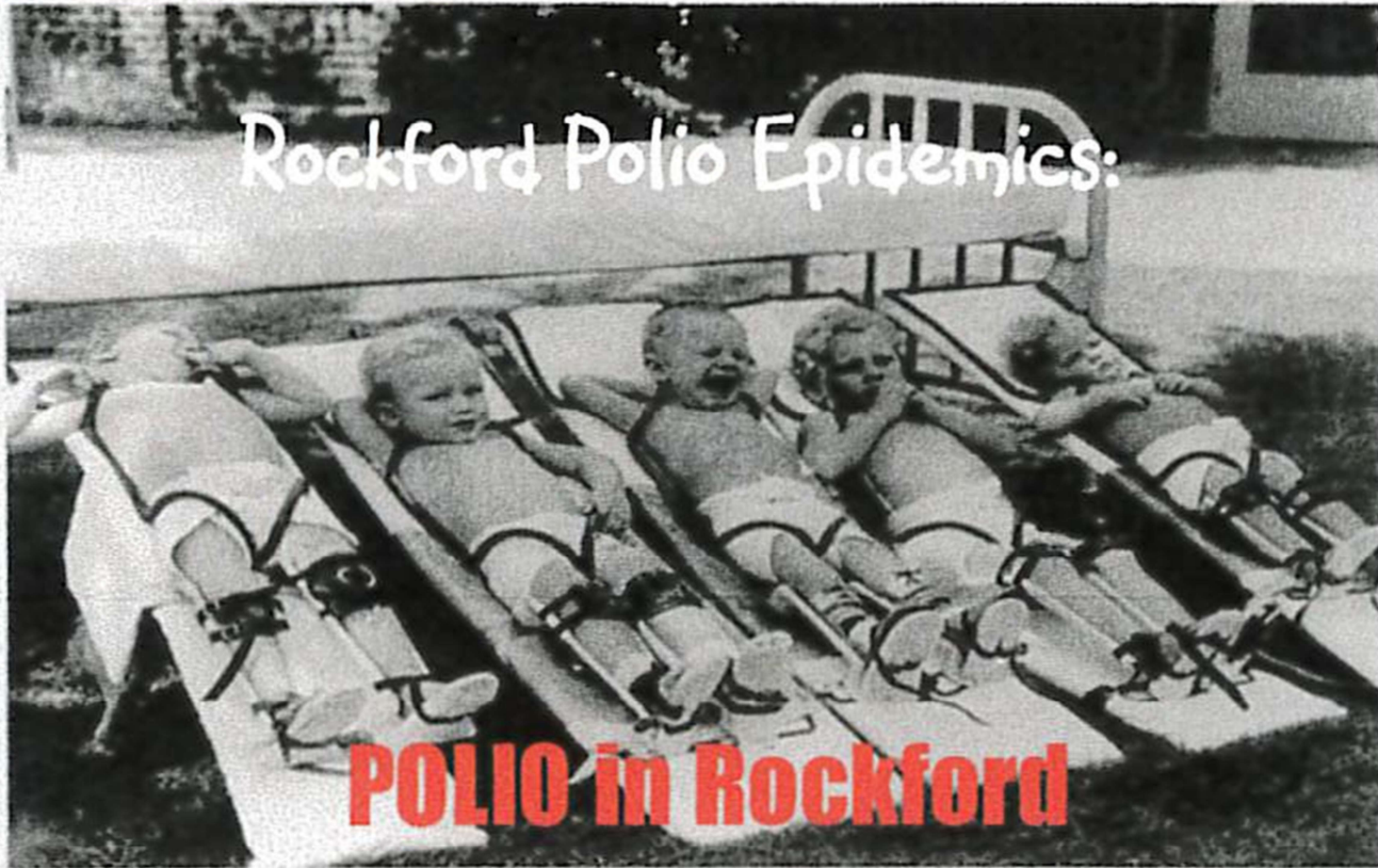


Rockford Polio Epidemics:



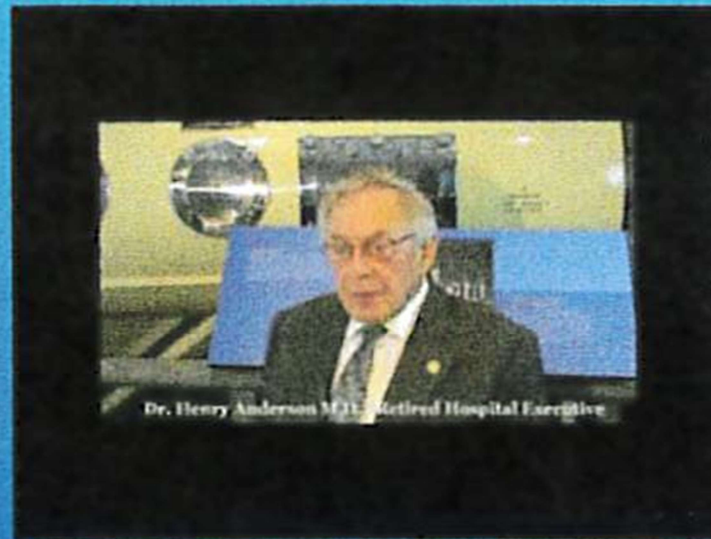
**POLIO in Rockford**

By Don Swanson, Retired Principal of Walker School, Member of the Board of Trustees of Midway Village Museum, and a polio survivor.

# ROCKFORD'S POLIO EPIDEMIC - 1945

## ROCKFORD REMINISCES OF DR. ANDERSON

In 2014, Dr. Henry Anderson of Swedish American Hospital explained his recollections about the Rockford Polio Epidemic of the 1940s and 1950s. He also explained the polio displays in the museum area of Swedish American Hospital.



[www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ld3k0jZPBy0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ld3k0jZPBy0)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ld3k0jZPBy0>



# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

## INTRODUCTION

In July – October 1945, Rockford was hit by a polio outbreak of epidemic proportions.



### KEY TO GRAPH

- Number of deaths in City of Rockford — 13
- Number of cases in City of Rockford — 205

# **ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945**

## **EPIDEMIC STAFFING**

<b>NURSES</b>	<b>259</b>
<b>PHYSICAL THERAPISTS</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>INTERNES</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>VOLUNTEERS</b>	<b>646</b>
<b>VOLUNTEER HOURS</b>	<b>12,738</b>



## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

### ROCKFORD GEARS UP

During July 1945, Mayor Henry Bloom appointed community leaders to a Polio Executive Committee.



## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

### ROCKFORD GEARS UP



He also appointed I.D. Pennock as Director of the Committee.



## **ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945**

### **ROCKFORD GEARS UP**

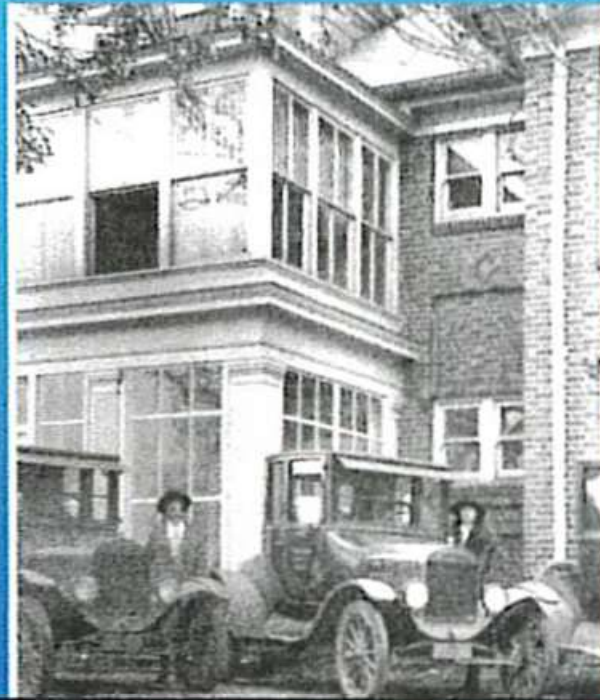
They designated the Winnebago County Hospital a Contagion Facility for the city and county.



# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

## ROCKFORD GEARS UP

The medical staff of the hospital were incorporated in the new Polio facility.

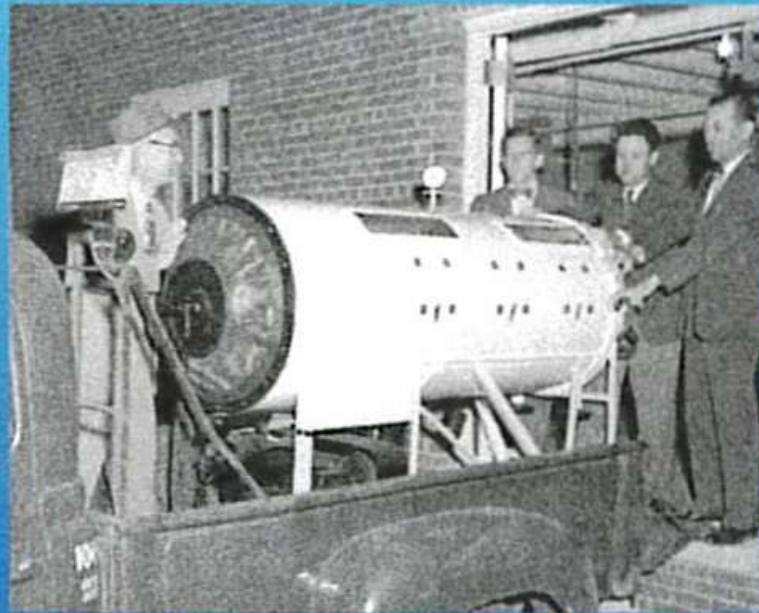




# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

## ROCKFORD GEARS UP

New equipment from neighboring hospitals and the National Committee for Infantile Paralysis arrived without delay.



## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

### ROCKFORD GEARS UP



259 nurses and 18 physical therapists were recruited from 18 different states and Argentina.



## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

### ROCKFORD GEARS UP

Here are some of the nurses and therapists who came to County Hospital from near-by Camp Grant.



## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

### TREATMENT OF PATIENTS

Each day nurses were transported to County Hospital from the Faust Hotel where they were provided with living quarters.





# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

## ROCKFORD GEARS UP

In July, 1945, the Executive Committee published this Proclamation in an attempt to contain the contagion.

### POLIO PROCLAMATION

The INFANTILE PARALYSIS COMMITTEE strongly recommends that parents keep their children under 14 from congregating in parks, playgrounds, business districts and other public places. It is important that children be kept from making new contacts and from engaging in all fatiguing activities. Insofar as possible, children should be kept within the areas of their own yards.

C. Henry Bloom, Mayor  
Dr. W. O. Gunderson, Health Commissioner  
I. D. Pennock, Director  
Infantile Paralysis Exec. Committee

This proclamation is issued and paid for by the Winnebago County Chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

## ROCKFORD GEARS UP



The popular Fairgrounds Pool was one of the facilities closed along with theaters. The school system joined the efforts by delaying the start of school until October.