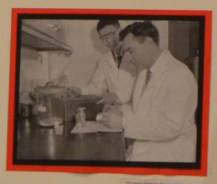
DOCTOR SALK AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE POLIO VACCINE

ackground

In the early twentieth century, polio crippled thousands of individuals each year in the United States, and spread fear around the world. This tragedy ended when Dr. Jonas Salk successfully developed a safe and effective polio vaccine for the public, and lead to the immediate decline of polio cases. The triumph of the vaccine led to the eradication of the disease in nearly every country around the world.

In today's society, we don't have to worry about diseases such as smallpox, measles, or polio. This is because there are vaccines. However, there were not always vaccines readily available for the public.



"The modern era of epidemiology began in approximately 1940, when The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) was founded in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1946."
(Centers for Disease Control)

"In 1947, Dr. Jonas Salk took a position at University of Pittsburgh, where he began conducting research on polio, then known as infantile paralysis."
(Pallansch)

During the polio's height, all focus was on finding a way to prevent it. There were many trial vaccines; they were rarely approved for testing.

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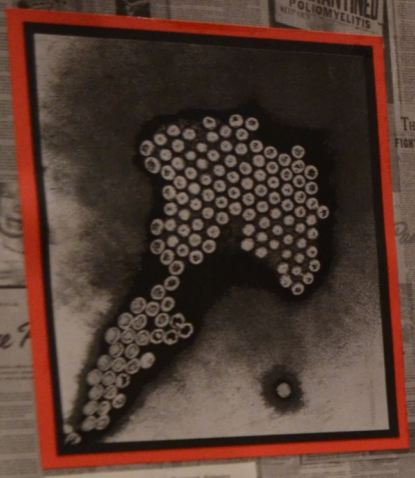
(Pallansch)

After years of testing, the vaccine was released for the public. There was hope that the disease of polio was over.

Government Reports and Graphs on Polio

Background

"It's a paradox of public health that being too clean can sometimes lead to disease."
(PBS 1995 Report)



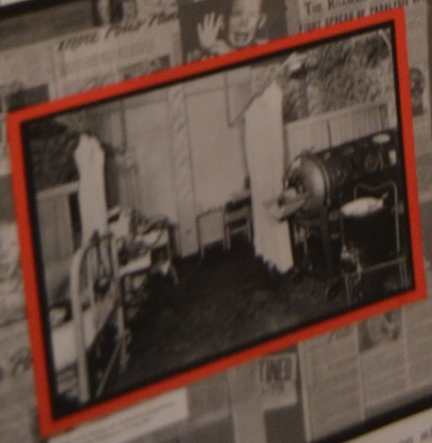
Polio has been around since Egyptian times, however, it has not always been prevalent. Polio first showed up in 1894 in Vermont with only 132 cases. After the 1894 outbreak, the number began to climb yearly.

"It begins with the first onset of symptoms, including fever, pain, and the earliest recognition that one's limbs are no longer functioning properly. Then it turns to the initial hospitalization and the time when the final diagnosis of polio is made."
(Daniel J. Wilson)

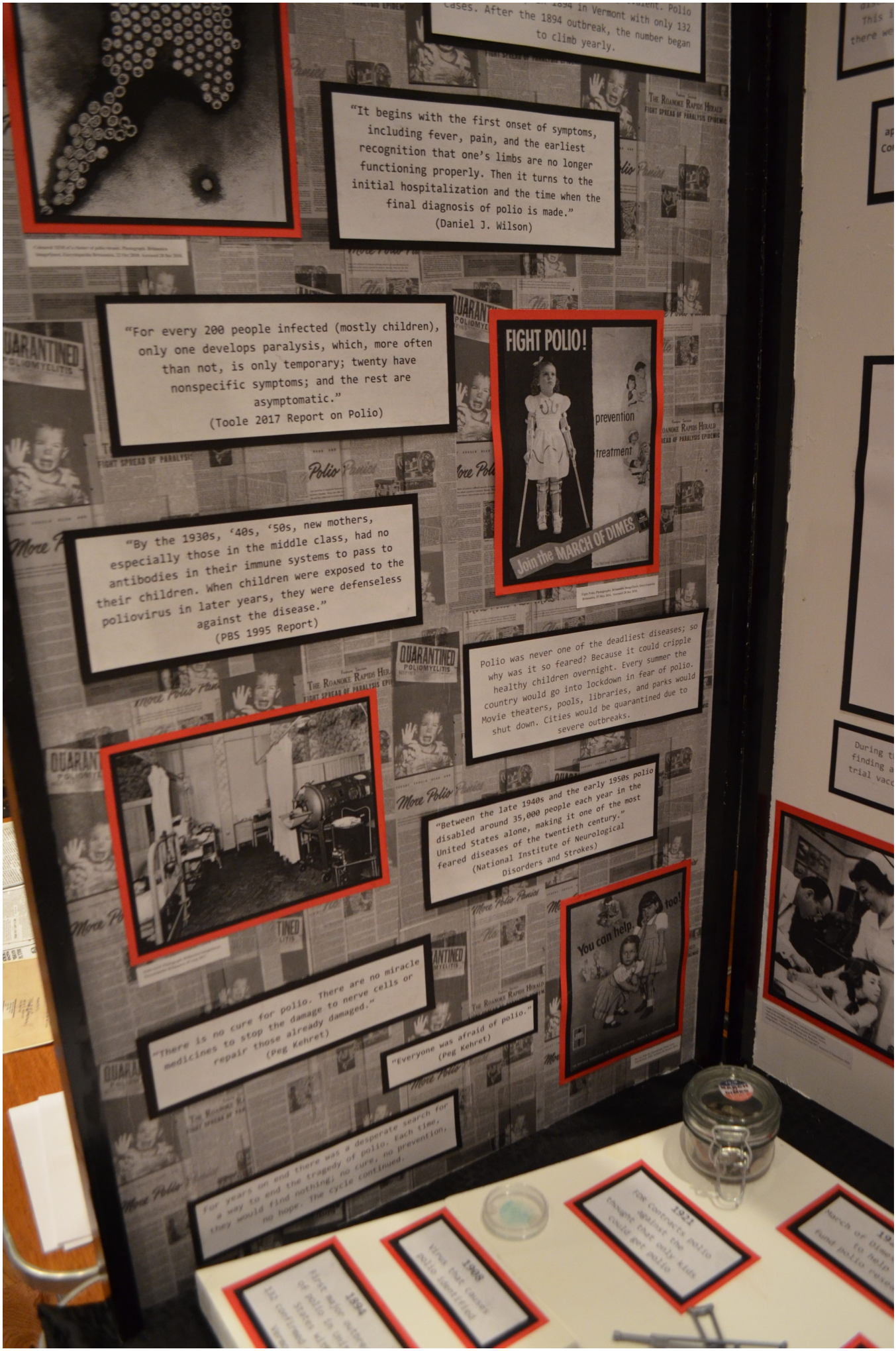
"For every 200 people infected (mostly children), only one develops paralysis, which, more often than not, is only temporary; twenty have nonspecific symptoms; and the rest are asymptomatic."
(Toole 2017 Report on Polio)

"By the 1930s, '40s, '50s, new mothers, especially those in the middle class, had no antibodies in their immune systems to pass to their children. When children were exposed to the poliovirus in later years, they were defenseless against the disease."
(PBS 1995 Report)

Polio was never one of the deadliest diseases; so why was it so feared? Because it could cripple healthy children overnight. Every summer the country would go into lockdown in fear of polio. Movie theaters, pools, libraries, and parks would shut down. Cities would be quarantined due to severe outbreaks.



"Between the late 1940s and the early 1950s polio disabled around 35,000 people each year in the United States alone, making it one of the most feared diseases of the twentieth century."
(National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes)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FIGHT POLIO!
prevention
treatment
Join the MARCH OF DIMES
"By the 1930s, '40s, '50s, new mothers, especially those in the middle class, had no antibodies in their immune systems to pass to their children. When children were exposed to the poliovirus in later years, they were defenseless against the disease."
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QUARANTINED
POLIOMYELITIS
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(National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Strokes)
You can help, too!
"There is no cure for polio. There are no miracle medicines to stop the damage to nerve cells or repair those already damaged."
(Peg Kehret)
"Everyone was afraid of polio."
(Peg Kehret)
For years on end there was a desperate search for a way to end the tragedy of polio. Each time, they would find nothing; no cure, no prevention, no hope. The cycle continued.

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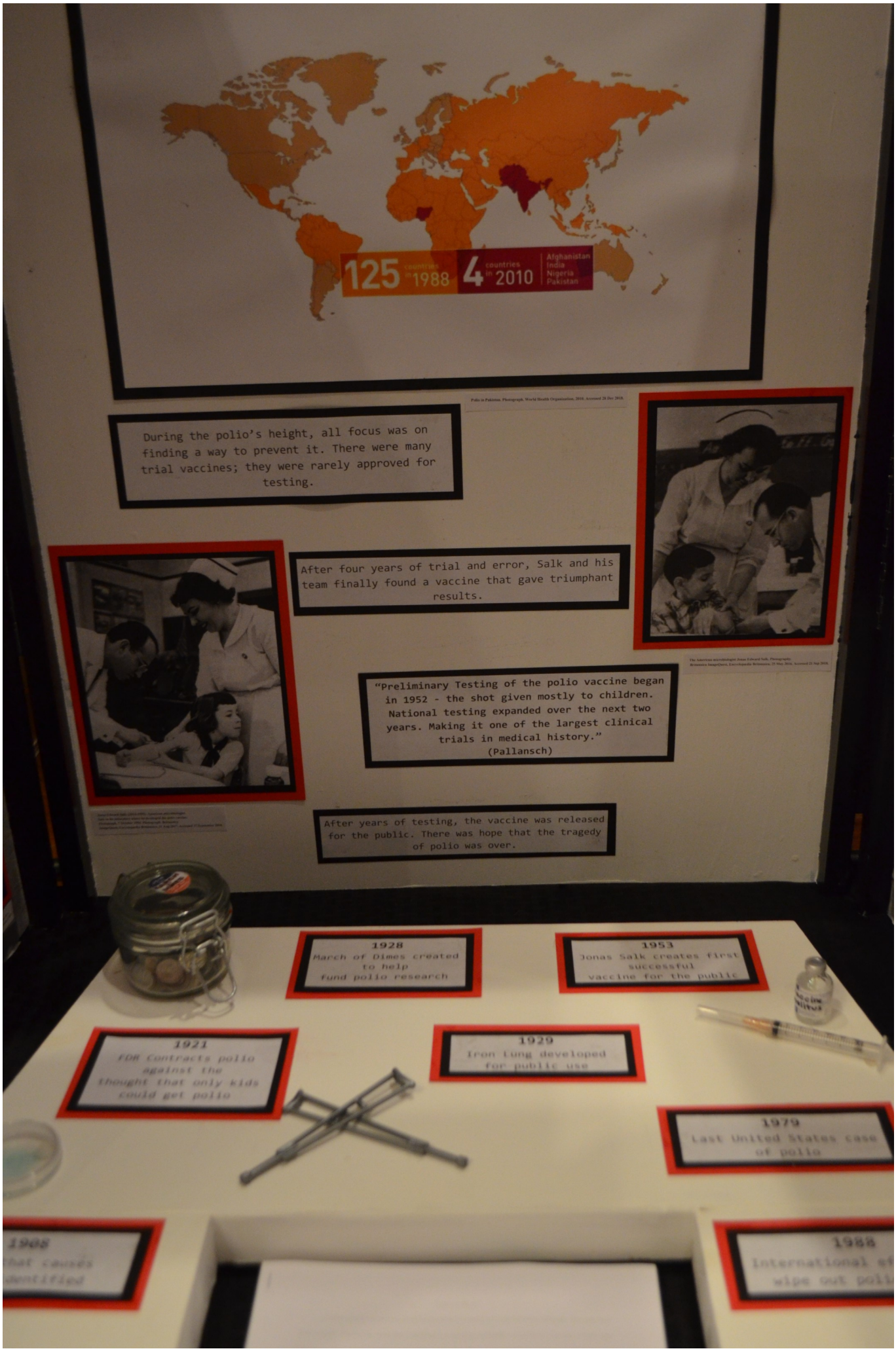
125 countries in 1988
4 countries in 2010
Afghanistan
India
Nigeria
Pakistan
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After four years of trial and error, Salk and his team finally found a vaccine that gave triumphant results.
"Preliminary Testing of the polio vaccine began in 1952 - the shot given mostly to children. National testing expanded over the next two years. Making it one of the largest clinical trials in medical history."
(Pallansch)
After years of testing, the vaccine was released for the public. There was hope that the tragedy of polio was over.
1928
March of Dimes created to help fund polio research
1953
Jonas Salk creates first successful vaccine for the public
1921
FDR Contracts polio against the thought that only kids could get polio
1929
Iron Lung developed for public use
1979
Last United States case of polio

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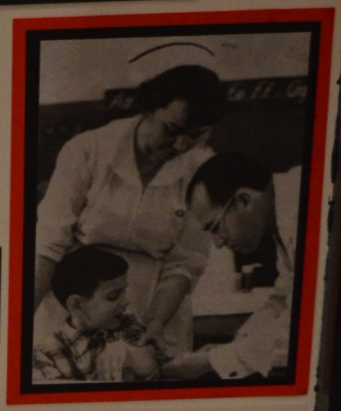

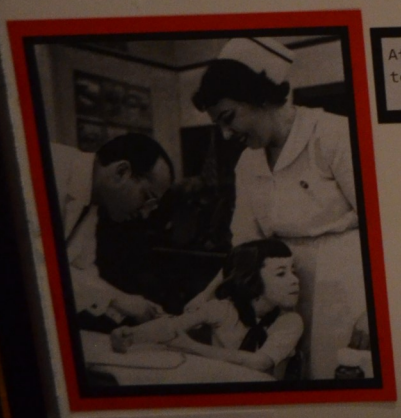

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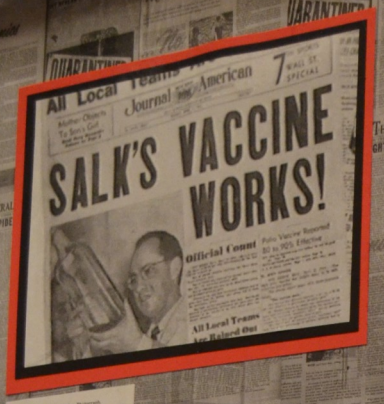
1908
that causes identified

1988
International wipe out pol

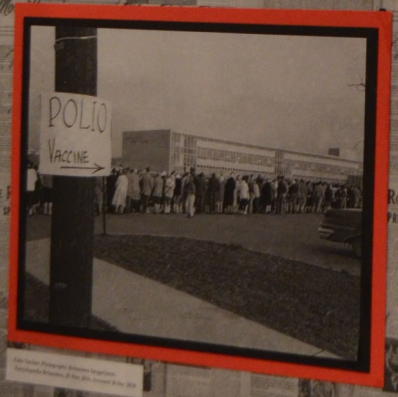
Impact



"In America, incidence of the disease dropped from almost 58,000 reported cases in 1952 to just 1,000 cases 10 years later."
(Bandyopadhyay)

By 1979, thanks to Salk's vaccine, the U.S. triumphantly eradicated the wild poliovirus.

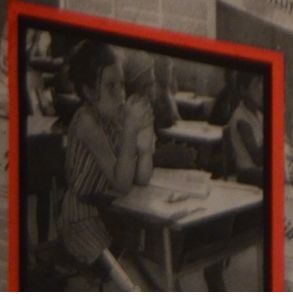
"In 1988, The World Health Organization, UNICEF, Rotary International, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention launched the Global Polio Eradication Effort to rid the rest of the world of polio."
(Bandyopadhyay)



By 1994 polio was triumphantly eradicated from the Western Hemisphere. Today, there are only three countries in the world that still have wild poliovirus.

During polio's tragic height, parents suffered as they saw their children become paralyzed. Many families dealt with the shame of having a disabled child after the disease's reign was over.

Will the world ever forget what happened during polio's reign of terror? We might have; as more parents are not vaccinating their kids. Have they forgotten what a tragedy it was?



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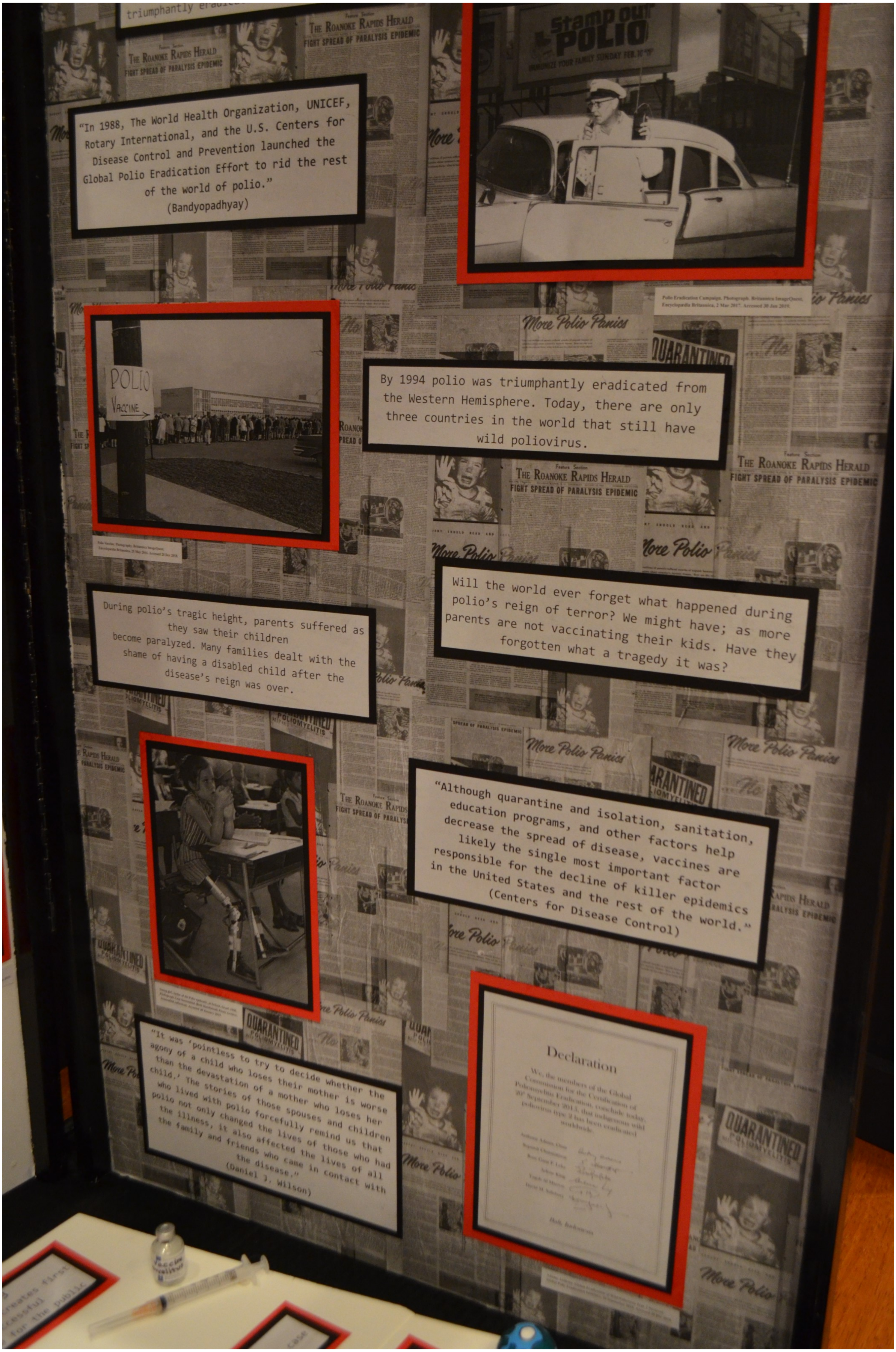
in the United States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Stamp out POLIO
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POLIO VACCINE
The Roanoke Rapids Herald
Fight Spread of Paralysis Epidemic
More Polio Panics
QUARANTINED
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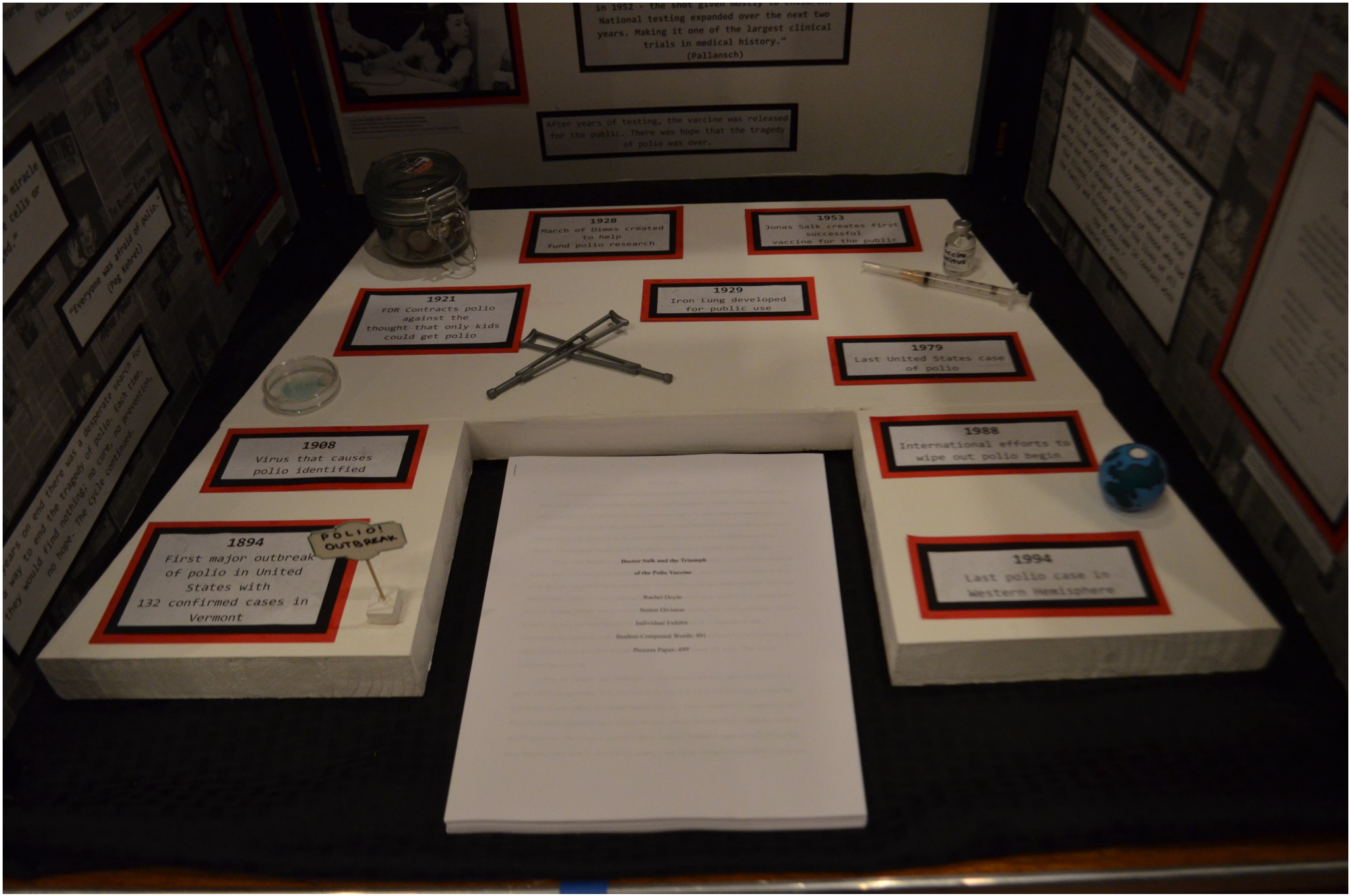
Will the world ever forget what happened during polio's reign of terror? We might have; as more parents are not vaccinating their kids. Have they forgotten what a tragedy it was?
"Although quarantine and isolation, sanitation, education programs, and other factors help decrease the spread of disease, vaccines are likely the single most important factor responsible for the decline of killer epidemics in the United States and the rest of the world."
(Centers for Disease Control)
"It was 'pointless to try to decide whether the agony of a child who loses their mother is worse than the devastation of a mother who loses her child.' The stories of those spouses and children who lived with polio forcefully remind us that polio not only changed the lives of those who had the illness, it also affected the lives of all the family and friends who came in contact with the disease."
(Daniel J. Wilson)
Declaration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1894
First major outbreak of polio in United States with 132 confirmed cases in Vermont
POLIO OUTBREAK
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Virus that causes polio identified
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1988
International efforts to wipe out polio begin
1994
Last polio case in Western Hemisphere
Doctor Salk and the Triumph of the Polio Vaccine
Rachel Doyle
Senior Division
Individual Exhibit
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Process Paper: 499