

The Year

They Canceled

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by

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Introduction

For fifteen years Kids' Day had been the largest event in Prophetstown, but there came a time when it was canceled. It was a collective decision, made after much counsel. The problem was that polio cases had grown in Whiteside County. It was hoped that our kids could have an event later that year, but those plans fell through.

Today few of us know much about that disease, but it was a much feared scourge at one time. I recall those days. Waking up with a stiff neck gave me instant concern about having polio. Fortunately, it was only a stiff neck. However, we read of cases and saw pictures of children in iron lungs, who could not breathe on their own and some walking with leg braces, the result of having had polio. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ended up in a wheelchair because of it.

A number of years ago one newspaper reported it this way:

Mention polio to anyone born before 1955 and they instantly recall the reign of horror that held the country hostage for over a decade. Thousands of children and adults who had full, active and healthy lives were almost instantly crippled by the horrible disease known as polio.

Small polio epidemics actually began in the early 1900s, but it wasn't until the late 1940s and early 1950s that the disease reached epidemic proportions. In fact, the polio outbreak in 1952 brought 58,000 cases. Of those, 3,200 died and 21,000 were left with mild to disabling paralysis.

In the late 1950s Dr. Jonas Salk developed a vaccine which protected against polio. What a relief it was for us to know that now we had some protection.

You can read about the decision to halt the 1946 Kids' Day on the next page.

BOOSTERS CALL OFF KIDS' DAY THIS YEAR

Annual Event is Polio Victim as
First Break is Made in
16-Year Series **1946**

The difficulty of securing rides and concessions and the increased gamble on the weather on an October date led the executive board of the Prophetstown Boosters to decide against attempting to hold Kids' Day this year, the group taking action last night at the regular meeting after dinner at the Home Restaurant. Originally scheduled for August 22, the big annual event, held in an uninterrupted series since 1930, was postponed at the July meeting because of the polio scare, the Boosters hoping at that time a date later in the season could be set. The general consensus of the board, however, was that the day would have to be held on a Saturday and that the chances of making it a success comparable to those of other years were not so good, and rather than take this risk it was better to pass up Kids' Day until 1947, holding the day earlier in the summer next year if possible.

Children of the Prophetstown trading area will not be entirely neglected by the Boosters this year though in spite of the cancelling of Kids' Day if plans can be worked out with the American Legion for their entertainment on the day of the Legion homecoming and fall festival, Saturday, Sept. 21. President W. M. Layman appointed Dean Gardner, M. J. Olsson, Everett Presnell, C. A. Conrad and Frank L. Dudley as a committee to meet with the Legion and see what plans could be made as to rides and an afternoon program of some kind. Announcement will be made later as to the outcome. Kids' Day funds have already been generously donated by Prophetstown business men and the Boosters felt that the great majority of the donors would rather see some entertainment provided in conjunction with the Legion festival than to have the donations returned or no attempt made to be hosts to the kids this year. Treasurer Ogden Perrin was, however, instructed to refund the donation of anyone dissatisfied with the arrangement and requesting his money back.

KIDS' DAY AND LEGION HOME-COMING POSTPONED

At meetings held Thursday evening the Prophetstown Boosters and the local American Legion post decided it would be advisable to indefinitely postpone both Kids' Day which was to have been held Thursday, the 22nd, and the Legion Home-coming, which was scheduled for August 31 and Sept. 1 and 2. **1946**

Action of the two groups was taken after a canvass had been made of business houses and citizens, the majority of whom agreed that because of the presence of some 30 cases of polio in Whiteside county it would be advisable to postpone both celebrations to later dates, perhaps in October, as was suggested in The Echo last week.