

*Your dimes
did this
for me!*

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MARCH
of DIMES
JANUARY 14-31**

THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR INFANTILE PARALYSIS, INC.
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, FOUNDER

“To many, April 12 [1955] resembled another V-J Day—the end of a war. . . .We had conquered polio.”

It is hard to remember now how terrifying “polio summers” were for Americans. Dr. Jonas Salk’s announcement of a successful vaccine felt like an American victory in a long-fought war, especially since much of the funding for that vaccine came from the efforts of volunteers in the March of Dimes. “We,” the American people, truly had conquered polio.

On Tuesday, March 7, we will be discussing [Polio: An American Story](#) by David M. Oshinsky. This book is a fascinating study of the long battle to cure polio. It is a story of strong-willed men and women who fought a disease that defied classification and prevention. It is a story of a false scientific conclusion that

held research back for over forty years. It is a story of scientists who, like so many of their polio patients, never gave up. It is, as Oshinsky tells us, a uniquely American story.

Oshinsky is a gifted historian and writer who strikes a perfect balance between giving the reader enough scientific background to understand the discoveries in polio research while not overwhelming the lay reader with too many esoteric facts. He brings to life the volunteers who fought polio in the only ways they could, the president who became the public face of polio, the foundation head who was determined to defeat polio in his lifetime, and the dedicated men and women who fought polio on the scientific and medical front. These are stories that need to be told and remembered.

With this book, we are in history that I remember, and I suspect many of you do as well. Compare your knowledge to the events that Oshinsky describes. Does his book reflect what you remember? If not, what is different? Do you have any personal or family stories of polio and the people it affected? What did you learn about the struggle to find a vaccine that you did not know? Having read this book, what will you remember and why?

Polio: An American Story is social history at its best. Come prepared for an interesting discussion, especially since questions about the efficacy of vaccines are in the news today. I look forward to talking about the book with you on Tuesday, March 7 at 6:30. See you there!

Donna McBride