

## Diphtheria Had Large Impact in 1880

As I was reading the 1880 Sentinels, I kept coming across article after article about people (mostly children) who were ill with or dying from diphtheria or croup. It made me realize how sad it was for the families when there was not enough medical knowledge to save these people.

January 14: Mrs. Isely has four children very sick with diphtheria. Henry Durst has a very sick child. Dr. Byers has a child very sick with diphtheria. Henry Gould is down with diphtheria. There are several others reported. It is well to be very careful these days.

January 21: Ella, aged 16 years, daughter of the widow Isely, died of diphtheria on Thursday 1 p.m. after a few days illness. [This was the day after the previous article was written.] She was a bright, happy girl beloved by her schoolmates and all others who knew her. Several other members of the family are down with diphtheria.

January 21: Joshua Trickle lost a child by diphtheria on Sunday.

January 28: Died - At Martin[town], Wis., Jan. 22nd, 1880, Mattie E. Deal, daughter of H. and M. E. Deal. Little Mattie was aged three years, six months and thirteen days. Her disease was diphtheretic croup and she was the sixth victim of that treacherous malady from the same village within a short time. Mattie was a bright child of affectionate disposition and tender sensibilities.

February 4: There were five children lying dead in Monroe from diphtheria last Thursday morning. Most of the deaths occurred within 24 hours. W. W. Chadwick's son, 4 years old; Dr. Byers' infant [Freddie was 14 months old.]; Mrs Isely's child; Mr. Stolp's little boy; and one other name we have forgotten.

February 4: Died. - In this village on the 28th of January 1880 of diphtheria, Clement Howard Chadwick, (son of Mr. W. W. Chadwick and Mrs. May Chadwick) aged 4 years 5 months. Little Clemme, as he loved to be called, was sick but nine days, during which time he patiently suffered, as only children suffer, when his beautiful spirit passed into the bright world beyond. The family express their grateful appreciation and heartfelt thanks for the devoted kindness of neighbors and friends.

March 10: DIED. Tuesday, March 2, 1880, of diphtheria, Johnnie, aged 2 years and 6 months, son of H. D. And Maggie Becker, of Monroe, Wis. The bereaved family wish to return their thanks to the friends for their kindnesses and disinterested help in their time of sorrow.

April 21: C. J. Simmons' daughter, age 18, is lying at the point of death with diphtheria. She may possibly recover.

October 27: Mr. and Mrs. Frank Stone and family have the deep sympathy of all their friends in the saddest affliction that can visit a family circle. Their little daughter Allie, the light of the home, died last night of the diphtherial croup after a few days [of] intensest suffering, at the age of 5. The funeral will be held tomorrow at 10 a.m. Friends are invited.

November 10: Diphtheria has made its appearance in malignant form in 2 or 3 families in Monroe during the past week, and two cases have proved fatal. The strictest sanitary rules should be observed to prevent the spread of the disease, and as much care and precaution as possible taken in regard to clothing and food. The sudden changes prevalent this season of the year are a great strain on the physical constitution of both mankind and the domesticated beasts. Remember the adage that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

I found no more deaths from diphtheria in the newspaper for the next six months. I did make a trip to the courthouse and found the following deaths recorded there. One death that happened in January was not recorded until November, which was common at that time. The doctor may not have made the trip to Monroe more than once each year to record the events. That is also why the doctor may not have remembered a first name or the exact date of death.

Three daughters of Jeremiah and Leona Staley died this year. A female at 20 days old on January 19, Mary who was 1 year 10 months on February 3, and Hannah who was 8 or 9 died on February 25. All three died in Exeter township. Also from Exeter township, William Loughead, 2, died on September 8.

From Monroe, Daisy May Duerst, 4, died March 16; Ernest Scott, 7, died October 15; Emma Stevenson, 12 years 9 months, died December 14; Minnie Isely, 2, died in January as did Ellie Isely, 16; a Palmer boy, 3, died in February; a male Davis, about 3, died on March 13; a 4-year-old Stolp boy died on January 29.

Annie Disch died in New Glarus township on January 16 at 4 years 3 months. Also recorded from New Glarus were Barbara Hefti, 6, who died January 29; Marcus Hefti died at 3 months on October 1; Anna Figi, 10, died January 26; and Lousa Regertz, 11 months 2 days, died October 13.

Mary Tschabold, 25, died in Washington Township on January 19. A 17-year-old female Wagner died in Jordan on February 19. Sarah Membery, 22, died in Clarno on May 7.

I also found two deaths recorded late in 1879. Julia Kempfer, 3, died in Monroe in November and Minerva Wells, 5, died in Jordan in December.

As you can see this disease affected most of the county. Many more people may have died due to diphtheria, but the deaths were not recorded in the newspaper or the county records since it was not required to file death records in Wisconsin until 1907. I have heard of children being buried on the farms where they passed away.