

## FREDERICK COUNTY REWIND

# From best friend to worst enemy

By JAMES RADA JR.  
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In early 1913, man's best friend became man's worst enemy in Brunswick.

"The whole town has been alarmed by mad dogs and a canine is more feared than a wild animal of the jungle," The (Frederick) News reported.

It began with a dog approaching people on the street and snapping at them on the morning of Jan. 28. Townspeople worried that something was wrong with the dog. Then around 1 p.m., people saw the dog bite a horse. Convinced the dog was rabid, the townspeople began chasing the dog.

"Some in the crowd carried sticks and stones and several men soon appeared with shotguns and other firearms," The Frederick Post reported.

The dog evaded his pursuers, and rampaged through the streets of Brunswick, biting six people (five of whom were children, ages 4-16), three horses, two cows and several dogs before people in town were able to chase it to an area between the B&O Railroad and the C&O Canal, before it was finally killed.

The dog's head was sent to the Pasteur Institute in Baltimore. Opened in 1897, it was one of several medical facilities in the U.S. named after Louis Pasteur and modeled after his famous Institut Pasteur in Paris. The institute focused on providing Pasteur's rabies treatment. Before this treatment, rabies was nearly always fatal if a person contracted it.

The Pasteur Method, developed in 1995, used an attenuated live rabies virus grown in rabbit spinal cords. This was used to create a series of vaccine doses, starting with the weakest vaccinations in the abdomen and progressing to stronger ones to build immunity during the disease's incubation period. The series of vaccines could last 10 to 25 days, depending on the severity of the bite. For it to be effective, the treatment had to be started before



An undated photo of Potomac Street in Brunswick.

Courtesy photo

the patient presented any symptoms.

A telegram arrived in Brunswick, Jan. 30, saying that the dog had had rabies. It was decided that the six people bitten would need to go to Baltimore for daily treatments at the Pasteur Institute. The other dogs that were bitten were also killed, and the horses and cows were muzzled until it was determined whether they had contract-

ed the disease.

Meanwhile, the Brunswick Town Council appointed five men as special deputies to kill any dogs running loose in town. Within a week, Hilleary Kidwell had filled 26 dogs; 14 were killed at the town council's request and 12 were killed at the owner's request. Some people were so nervous about rabies that the slightest unusual from their dogs caused the owners to

have their pets put down.

Kidwell didn't work fast enough, though, because another rabid dog was shot in Brunswick near the end of February. Luckily, this dog didn't bite any people, but it did bite three other dogs that had to be killed.

Then, on March 5, Kidwell and Ephraim Swader, another special deputy, cornered a rabid pet dog and shot and killed it. This was not

before the dog bit two young boys in town. These boys also had to start daily trips to the Pasteur Institute. It was noted that the dog had a scar across the nose where it was believed that it had been bitten by the original rabid dog.

The following day, 4-year-old Gladys Utterback was sitting on a swing in her yard when a dog rushed up to her, bit her on the hand, and ran off.

The dog then ran through town and bit another girl, a boy, and a man. It also killed a cat, killed pigeons, and attacked other dogs. The girl, Mamie Cummins, and the man, John Stewart, were able to fight the dog off without being bitten. However, Gladys and the boy, George Campbell, had to start going to Baltimore for treatments.

Because so many people needed to go to Baltimore for treatment, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad offered to cover their travel expenses. The State of Maryland also paid for the treatment at the Pasteur Institute.

On March 7, the Brunswick Town Council took additional action. They passed a local law requiring all dogs without muzzles to be off the streets unless they were being led by a person. They also allowed anyone to shoot any dog, muzzled or not, that was running loose, to be shot on sight.

"The members of the council realize that until the danger of the frightful disease among the canines has been checked the lives of persons in the town will be in grave danger and they deem it best to carry out the strict rule above mentioned," The News reported.

Townspeople remained nervous, but it gradually abated the longer the town went without any reports of suspicious behavior in dogs. By the end of March, nearly all the victims had finished their treatments in Baltimore, and things began to return to normal.

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