

The Bandera PROPHEET

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Today in Texas History

By Bandera Spirits of Texas
The Bandera Prophet

On this day in 1898, doctors in Laredo began noticing an outbreak of smallpox among the city's children. The first death occurred in late October, and by January 1899 physicians reported more than 100 cases. Texas health officer W. T. Blunt advocated strict measures to control the epidemic, including house-to-house vaccination and fumigation and the establishment of a field hospital to function as a quarantined area. When some Laredo residents resisted the vaccinations, Blunt requested that the Texas Rangers assist with the health care measures. Friction between some of the residents and the rangers culminated in a gunbattle and ensuing riot in March 1899, and the Tenth United States Cavalry was called in to help maintain the peace. By May the quarantine was lifted.