

Hans Zinsser Encyclopedia Article

Hans Zinsser

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1878-1940

American microbiologist, epidemiologist, and immunologist whose main research concerned epidemic louse-borne typhus and other rickettsial diseases. His recognition that a form of typhus, described by Nathan E. Brill as endemic, was actually epidemic but recrudescent (reactivating after recovery) led to its being named Brill-Zinsser disease. In the 1930s he and his associates at Harvard developed killed-bacteria vaccines for typhus. He is best known as the author of *Rats, Lice, and History: ... the Life History of Typhus Fever* (1935).