

POLIO

SURVIVOR STORIES

**Personal Accounts of a Life with Polio -
The Experience and its Aftereffects**

This booklet contains the personal accounts of 22 individuals who were members of the Sandhills Post-Polio Health Group (SPPHG) in Pinchurst NC...this issue, Number 1, was compiled in July 2006

How and Why This Booklet Came About

The Sandhills Post Polio Syndrome Support Group was formed thru the efforts of Ray Taylor, Ethel Soladay, with the support of FirstHealth of the Carolinas, Moore Regional Hospital. Barbara Allred being the liaison between the group and the hospital. The organizational meeting was held in September 2003 at Moore Regional Hospital, Pinehurst, North Carolina. Attendees came from the counties of Moore, Cumberland, Hoke, Lee, and Montgomery.

The group has had a variety of programs and speakers, as well as group evaluations and group lunches. In the spring of 2005, the group was asked if they would like to compile a booklet with the member's personal stories as it would be a way to relate their story about the American polio epidemic of the 20th century. So with this in mind, it is the hope of the members that their stories could help educate those in the healthcare field, their friends, families and others who might benefit from their information to better deal with infectious disease crises in the future. This is their way of documenting for historical intent something that will be lost to future generations. Some wrote stories and others answered the questionnaire. A copy of the questionnaire is on the following page.

The 50th anniversary of the Salk vaccine and the eradication of the polio virus in the United States and most other countries of the world was celebrated in the year 2005. FirstHealth of the Carolinas published a very enlightening article on polio and post polio syndrome along with a couple of the group member's stories.

Through efforts of the Rotary International, the World Health Organization and others, we should see the complete eradication of polio throughout the world in the very near future.

Thanks is given to those who wrote their personal histories and willing to share them with the entire group. Each one has a different story to tell regarding how they were affected by polio, their method of medical treatment and how their lives were altered by polio. Each story is as interesting as it is different. It is hoped, these expressions of personal experiences will enlighten and inspire those who happen to read them.

**Members of the Sandhills Post Polio Group
July 2005**

Questionnaire

Questions to consider in recording your story could include but not limited too:

Year and month polio was contracted?

Age at the time polio was contracted?

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

Where you lived when you had polio?

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

How long were you hospitalized?

What method of treatment was used?

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

What grade did you attain in school?

What career(s) did you pursue?

Were you in the military?

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

What was/is your marital and family status?

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

Any other comments you many want to add.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pat Belskie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 5
Janet Buie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 7
Jane Davis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 9
Kenneth Davis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 11
Barbara DeMers	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 13
Gwendolyn L. Hartson	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 14
Frederick W. Heimrick	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 16
Sam Jones	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 18
Nathan McClure, Jr.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 20
Sharon Melton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 23
Mary Elizabeth Diggs Monroe	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 25
Robert Cecil Monroe, Jr.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 28
Virginia Richmond	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 30
John R. Rummery	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 32
Paulette Dietenhofer Scott	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 34
Ethel Soladay	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 36
Alice Stellwagon	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 39
Ray Taylor	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 41
Audrey Tourt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 50
Bob Urie	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 52
Jerry Allen Vaughn	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 54
Diane Weis	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	pg. 56

Pat Belskie

Year and month polio was contracted?

1951

Age at the time polio was contracted?

8

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

N/A

Where you lived when you had polio?

East Camden, New Jersey

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Right Leg

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

No

How long were you hospitalized?

N/A

What method of treatment was used?

Mother designed a PT program for me consisting of massage and bike riding around the block (2 Big blocks) everyday, rain or shine, for 18 months.

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

N/A

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

No, but my right leg was 1 ½" shorter and thinner than my left leg. After 18 months it started to grow again.

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

Yes

What grade did you attain in school?

College

What career(s) did you pursue?

Equestrian - bred, trained, showed world-class warm blood horses. Computers - 30 + years. Music - vocalist

Pat Belskie - (continued)

Were you in the military?

No

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

Numerous awards in the equestrian world horse shows, rodeo - breed internationally competitive horses.

What was/is your marital and family status?

Married 28 years with 2 wonderful children. Did not marry until I was 33 years old.

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

Age 49

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

No

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

Other than a brief period of illness at the original onset polio had little effect on my life until recently.

I was athletic and active but with PPS I've had to change my lifestyle dramatically. Although I appear "normal" I suffer a great deal of pain. I find most people do not understand and are not sympathetic. I am now on disability retirement.

Any other comments you many want to add. So because of PPS I had to leave the work force more than 5 years before anticipated. Consequently, I am not as financially secure as I would've liked to have been.

While I've modified my lifestyle I've still managed to do most of the things I love. However, my weakening legs threaten to take away many physical activities - most especially my horses - and I can't adjust to a sedentary way of life. This causes me to be depressed frequently. I feel I am not really "me".

This is very hard for me as I feel I don't get the support from my family that I'd like, it's been especially hard since the death of my mom last year. The support group has really been of tremendous help to me - just having others who are in the same boat understand. And having friends to talk to who empathize.

While there is a lot of focus on the physical I think mental and emotional support is often overlooked as in my case this is my strongest need.

Janet Buie



In June 1953, I was eleven months old when I became very sick and was treated for pneumonia for two-weeks before the doctor realized I had polio. At this time my brother was also diagnosed with polio, he was seen and treated but not affected in anyway. As for me I had to be taken to Asheville Orthopedic Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina. This is where everyone affected by polio was sent from Caldwell County. There were 159 cases of polio in this county. This was really an epidemic.

My mother said people were so scared to visit in the area. The outbreak was so overwhelming. I remained in Asheville, North Carolina, for six weeks without any family members until my parents were contacted to bring me home.

After coming home, I had to learn how to walk again and had to wear braces on both legs. I had a wonderful doctor, Dr. J. S. Gaul from Charlotte, North Carolina. Every third Thursday in each month I had to go to the cripple children's clinic in Lenoir at the Caldwell County Health Department.

When I entered the first grade with braces, I had my first corrective surgery. There after, it seems like every summer I had to have some type of surgery. This went on throughout my school days. My father would never let me take trips like my other sisters and brothers because of my affliction. I couldn't understand then, but I realize now why he was so protective over me. I always wondered why I had to have so many surgeries, but my doctor was always explaining why he had to do the surgery. My mom and dad were always willing to do everything they could to make things better for me. Things were really hard when you didn't have transportation. But my father was willing to sometimes get tickets to ride Trailways bus to Charlotte, North Carolina and check me into the hospital, on Sunday afternoon. Surgery was always on Monday morning, then he would come get me the next Saturday or Sunday. I remember so many summers having to sit with a cast up to my thigh wearing it for six weeks, then in my high school years, I thought my surgery days were over, but they were not. Still having surgery but not as frequent. The difference then was I had a chance to say whether I wanted the surgery and to find out if it was going to be best for me. The doctor was so supportive and encouraging to me. I am grateful to have had a doctor as nice and caring as doctor J. S. Gaul was.

In 1970, I graduated from Gamewell Colletsville High School, Lenoir, North Carolina. I loved nurses they were the most outstanding mentors in my life as a child, because I guess I saw nurses a lot. At the age of 15, I wanted to be a candy stripper at the hospital and yes, of course it was hard and sometimes very painful walking up and down the hallways of the hospital but I did it. It made me very proud to help someone. Then at the age of sixteen, I trained to be a nurses aide and I enjoyed it so much that I wanted to be a nurse. My guidance counselor, Mrs. Harriet Lipe and my mother tried to talk me out of being a nurse because they didn't think I was physically able to accomplish this.

Janet Buie - (continued)

Although it was a great task, I worked for a year after high school and then in 1971, I entered A&T State University in Greensboro, North Carolina.

I didn't know the stress I was facing with my condition, the long walks over the campus became extremely difficult, by my junior year, I was having to have shots in my ankle about every three-four months just to stay in school. After this stressful but happy accomplishment. I would always work during spring and fall breaks, holidays and summer working at the hospital.

After graduating I worked for about six to eight months then, yes, it was surgery time again. My ankle was in such bad condition they did tendon repairs and maybe this wasn't such a good choice for a career, but I did it, and loved serving the sick and needed..

In 1976, I got married to a God sent husband who I love so much, and he has been so understanding and caring. I have been through so much but he has been right by my side.

In 1993, in the month of May, I had an aneurysm of the brain, stayed in the hospital for 18 days. Later, I was told that maybe, it was because when I was a baby, this vessel may not have fully developed. I don't know why, but by the grace of God, I survived that scary time in my life.

Later, I was having trouble with my left knee, this was because a few years before, this I had to have an ankle fused. So I can't tell anyone how many times I have had surgery on this left leg. I lost count. But now the right side is giving me trouble.

It was in 1988 when I was diagnosed with post polio syndrome. I started falling at my clothesline and I can say I have experienced a lot of weakness and things that I could do five years ago is more difficult today.

All my surgeries were done in Charlotte, N.C., Charlotte Memorial Hospital, Charlotte Orthopedic Hospital, or Charlotte Presbyterian Hospital.

Today I am so grateful to be a survivor and I am so thankful for a loving husband and the children that we are so blessed to have, I am happy to have a mom that has always told me to keep my head up. My siblings have always been there for me. Because of these people, I don't know what the future holds, but with God on my side and the support of these caring people I can and will make it. And when I look back over my life the good outweighs the bad. I am more than blessed.

Jane Davis

So Much Has Been Given To Me



I was only eleven when I contracted polio in August 1955. The epidemic seemed to be coming to an end, enough so that my father had canceled the separate polio policy he had taken out to cover our family. He and my mother would never have guessed that I would turn out to be the only diagnosed case in Cumberland county that year.

When the viral symptoms appeared, my mother took me to the doctor and he prescribed medication. Like many children, I didn't enjoy doctor visits, and so I tried to hide the fact that the medicine wasn't helping. As I became weaker, there was no hiding the truth that I was getting worse. Still, it wasn't until I overheard the paramedics talking that I realized I may have polio. Even though I was too weak to move my head, I managed to ask my mother if I did have polio. I was eventually diagnosed with acute paralytic polio, yet my mother's response on that ambulance set the tone for how I would live my life. "Just a mild case," she said.

After arriving at Central Carolina Convalescent Polio Hospital in Greensboro, North Carolina, I immediately began what would be a long road to recovery. This would be my home for the next seven months. While there, I spent two weeks in an iron lung and then used a rocking bed. I also underwent rigorous rehabilitative treatments, including physical therapy and water therapy. I was even able to attend school part time in the hospital. Although all of my needs were met, I desperately missed my family.

Those seven months proved to be especially difficult for my entire family since I had never been apart from my parents and two sisters. Even though my parents drove up every weekend, I still worried that my two-year-old sister, Vicki, would not remember me. In fact, she and my older sister, Patsy, were only allowed to look through the window because hospital rules specified that visitors had to be sixteen-years-old in order to enter the room.

Although I would still require surgery on both my arm and leg, I was able to leave the hospital with leg braces and a back brace in March 1956. The staff was wonderful and I will always appreciate how much they helped me. In fact, my stay culminated with a surprise going-away party that I will never forget.

My first surgery, on my right leg, took place when I was fourteen. My leg was in a full cast, and since I was too weak to use crutches, I was bedridden for the entire summer. Two years later, I had surgery again, this time on my shoulder. Afterwards, I was in a cast from the waist up, with my arm bent and extended. Even though my pose resembled the Statue of Liberty, I was in better health and didn't remain housebound as before. In fact, that summer found me, cast and all, on many beach trips.

Jane Davis - (continued)

I continued school and was fortunate to never experience the teasing that so often accompanies being a child who is "different."

I think this is due to being from a small town where everyone knew just about everybody. I didn't let my "mild" case, as my mother had called it, stand in the way of doing things. I completed drivers education, even though the car was a stick shift, and even though my right arm was incredibly weak. I just shifted with my left hand. Thank goodness she didn't tell me I had such a severe case!

After graduation, I eventually met Guy Davis, who is my husband of thirty-nine years and the father of our four children. I consider Karla, Craig, Christian, and Corey to be my most outstanding achievements. I chose to stay home with them in lieu of a paying career, and I don't regret one moment of it. I thoroughly enjoyed the time I spent raising them. I am so proud that all four of them turned out to be compassionate and sensitive people.

I first began to notice post polio symptoms about fourteen years ago, around the time of my first grandchild's birth. Since then, more grandchildren have come along, and so have more symptoms. I now have eight grandchildren, but I have lost count of the symptoms!

Although I have always been very independent, I am having much more difficulty going places and my body has become weaker. I have also returned to using a back brace and a shoe lift. Still, I am so thankful for all that I have and I honestly wouldn't change anything. There is so much in my life that is wonderful, and if I were to change any one thing, who knows what impact that would have on all the rest.

In fact, my perspective is best summed up by Helen Keller, who said, "So much has been given to me, that I have no time to ponder over that which has been denied."

Kenneth Davis



Year and month polio was contracted?

June 1936

Age at the time polio was contracted?

4

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

No

Where you lived when you had polio?

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Right Foot

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

N/A

How long were you hospitalized?

N/A

What method of treatment was used?

N/A

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

N/A

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

High top shoes with 1/4" wedge under right foot.

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

I was out of school 1/2 year because of operation.

What grade did you attain in school?

12 + 2 years college

What career(s) did you pursue?

Accounting - CPA

Were you in the military?

No

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

N/A

Kenneth Davis - (continued)

What was/is your marital and family status?

Married with 3 daughters

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

1963

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

No

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

When I was first operated on about 1941, I went to Rex Hospital in Raleigh. When I first went in I thought I had problems, but after seeing other peoples problems I had none.

Any other comments you may want to add.

N/A

Barbara DeMers



It was in September 1954 that I contracted Polio. My husband and I, and our almost two year old daughter, were living in Norfolk, Virginia, where my husband was stationed with the U.S. Navy. We lived in an apartment complex, where two people we knew had died earlier that summer — one a doctor, and one an 8 or 9 year old girl. My husband was out at sea, and fortunately we had some very nice neighbors who kept in close touch with me. I was pregnant at the time. On the day I was taken downstairs on the couch, and was unable to go upstairs to get my daughter. The neighbor called our family doctor, and he came out to the apartment. (I'll always be grateful for such a caring doctor) The doctor himself drove me to the hospital!!!!. I remember him giving me the spinal tap, and saying that he was so very sorry, that I had Polio. I was then admitted to the hospital and it was my doctor who got in touch with the Navy, and my husband was brought home.

I don't recall too much about the next few days, but I do remember that I was in terrible pain. I was in a 4-bed ward. The woman across from me was in a rocking bed, the woman next to her was on her back, unable to get out of bed, and the woman next to me died. The polio had affected my body from the waist down, mostly my legs. The treatment at that time was to lie flat on my back, with my legs outstretched and my feet flat against a footboard, and not to let the hamstrings tighten up. And I remained like that for days, making sure I didn't bend my legs. The pain was intense, and all of us in the ward looked forward to the pain medication we got every 4 hours. I was in the hospital for about three weeks, during which time I had a miscarriage. I was able to get out of bed the last week, and then I received pool therapy. After I was discharged from the hospital, I went to weekly therapy for about a year. Shortly after I got home (and after my husband had gone back to sea), I had to go back to the hospital for a D and C. Neighbors again stepped in to help. I want to say that the March of Dimes paid for the entire hospital and doctor bills. And when I had to go back to the hospital for surgery, the March of Dimes again paid all the bills.

I had very little residual, for which I am thankful, and have remained active. It has only been during the past few years that I have noticed an increase in the pain in my legs and increasing fatigue. I did not know much about Post Polio Syndrome, until I joined the Support Group, at Ethel's suggestion. I was alerted to the fact that too much exercise was not good for the muscles that were affected by Polio. I now modify my exercise, with aerobic and cardiovascular workouts, and some strengthening exercises, but trying to stay within the boundaries of those which are non-fatiguing.

Gwendolyn L. Hartson



Year and month polio was contracted?

July 1945

Age at the time polio was contracted?

5 months old

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

No

Where you lived when you had polio?

Dillon County, South Carolina - Latta

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Left leg, right shoulder and foot. Bauiale in the hips.

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

I wasn't because when polio was diagnosed, I was only 5 months old and the doctor wanted me to go to a children's hospital in Charlotte, N.C. and no one could visit me until I was ready to come home.

How long were you hospitalized?

N/A

What method of treatment was used?

My mother kept my legs wrapped in hot towels for about 2 weeks and I started getting better.

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

No

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

No

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

Yes

What grade did you attain in school?

12th grade and graduated

What career(s) did you pursue?

Secretarial course. Did office work/bank teller all the years.

Were you in the military?

No

Gwendolyn Hartson - (continued)

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

Really do not have any. Did not get involved because I could not run.

What was/is your marital and family status?

Divorced with one child, a daughter, Charlotte H. Ewing married to Don Ewing, Jr. With one child, daughter Abigail H. Ewing, living in Carthage, NC.

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

My mother said I would cry every time she picked my legs up to change the diaper. After 2 weeks of that she took me to the doctor (Belke) who in turn sent me to Dr. Martin in Mullins, S.C. who told her it was polio.

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

No N/A

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

For years I resented it. But through filing for disability in Dec. 1999, I realized I was a lot better off than a lot of people; each one or two I knew personally.

Any other comments you many want to add.

I woke up on Tuesday morning, April 12, 1993 with Post Polio: diagnosed in May, 1994 by Dr. Jack Yang. It took me til December 1999 to realize I was as tired sitting in front of a computer 4 hours a day as I was standing on my feet 8 hours a day as a bank teller. Friends were telling me I had to do something about my health. I finally did!

Frederick W. Heimrick

Could my father's present to me on my 9th birthday have led to my polio? He gave me enough money to take my friend to the movies and to the local pool in August 1932. In those days, crowds and swimming were both suspected of spreading polio.

The weather was hot and the air conditioning in the movie and the cool water felt so good. A number of days later, I awoke one morning with a very stiff neck. My mother rubbed it with a very unpleasant smelling ointment. I went out to play as usual but came back soon and laid down and fell asleep.

Several hours later when my mother awakened me I had a bad headache and began to feel a tingling sensation in both legs and my right arm. Now she was alarmed and since we did not have a telephone, she went to a neighbor to make a call to Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, N.Y.

Within a very short while an ambulance arrived. The men on the ambulance wore white gowns and masks. Evidently my mother's description of my symptoms made them suspect yet another case of infantile paralysis, as it was called then. There were many cases already in the hospital and caution was being taken because no one was sure how it was being spread.

They placed me in a room where another child was sleeping. That night they came and moved me to another room. During my three months in the hospital, I was moved about five times. Much later I learned that I had been moved because each roommate had died.

While in the hospital the only people allowed in the room were doctors and nurses. My mother came to see me every day but had to look at me through a small window. She had to wear a gown and cap even there.

I don't think I received any treatment but do recall getting three spinal taps whose scars I still have.

When I left the hospital I was still unsteady on the crutches I was beginning to use. Fortunately, my mother had saved some money so that we could go home by taxi.

I was not confined to bed but I remember spending most of the day in an armchair, reading or listening to the radio. A few weeks later I had to return to the hospital for therapy. My mother and I began a very slow, two block walk to a trolley car that took us back to the hospital. I was using the crutches but I still had difficulty. I remember a very kind man helping me up the steps to a seat on the trolley.

At the hospital a nurse pushed me in a wheelchair to a large room that had children undergoing therapy. I participated with them for about an hour and then was wheeled to another room where they had iron lungs and what appeared to be metal containers. I was placed in one of the containers and began to feel the heat. It soon felt as if I was being baked in an oven.

Many years later when I told friends about this experience I said that if they had wrapped me in dough they would have pulled out a gingerbread boy!

Frederick W. Heimrick - (continued)

This treatment was done once a week and appeared to help. In addition, my mother used copious quantities of heated olive oil to massage my affected limbs. Slowly my muscles strengthened, although my right side was still weak I was able to give up the crutches.

Sometime during the next months my father left us, presumably to make his fortune. In May 1933 my mother realized that she could not work and take care of me alone so she made the decision to send me to her parents in Germany. I traveled alone by ship and was warmly welcomed by my Grandparents.

During my three year stay in Germany I joined a youth group that emphasized physical fitness through hiking, running and competitive sports. When I first joined the group, long distance walking was very difficult, but I gradually regained full use of my limbs and was generally able to keep up with the others.

My mother returned to Germany planning to stay and make our home there, but by 1936 the country was changing rapidly under the new Chancellor. Her time in America convinced her that even though it would be hard, she and her son would be wise to go back to New York.

I was able to finish high school in 1942, and in August I tried to enlist in the U.S. Army. The doctor wanted to disqualify me because of my having had polio but I convinced him that I was just as physically able as any other man in that room. He approved my application.

That was the beginning of a 32 year Army career which included fourteen months in Burma where I walked over 1600 miles; the greatest part being a two month trek from central Burma to the outskirts of Kunming, China.

I am now in my 80's and cannot say that I have any specific effects from my childhood polio other than a slightly shorter right leg. However, I have a variety of physical ailments, including generalized neuropathy and I wonder whether some of my problems may be connected to this childhood illness.

When I reflect upon my past, I am very thankful that I am able to get around the way that I can.

Sam Jones

Year and month polio was contracted?

January 1921? 1943?

Age at the time polio was contracted?

15 years old

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

Yes - only sister

Where you lived when you had polio?

Port Washington, Long Island, N.Y.

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Arms and legs

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

Too poor for hospitals

How long were you hospitalized?

N/A

What method of treatment was used?

Home remedies & prayers

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

Of course

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

Crutches, but not too long

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

Yes

What grade did you attain in school?

Graduated High School - Began first year of college.

What career(s) did you pursue?

Art, changed to Civil Engineering

Were you in the military?

No

Sam Jones - (continued)

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

N/A

What was/is your marital and family status?

Married 54 years - 3 children

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

Began at age 14 or 15 - then in my 50's began to return.

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

N/A

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

Breathing, Arm & leg strength lacking.

Any other comments you may want to add.

I recall the physical difficulties as though it all happened only a few days ago - really a strange thing. Sometimes for no reason at all, my legs will simply collapse - after which, I can stand again and continue .. on my way for a while and so it goes - affected my lungs very badly with emphysema, which affected my heart.

Nathan McClure, Jr.



I contracted polio in July 1934 at the age of 14. Fortunately it was a mild case, affecting mainly my right leg.

I was quarantined at home and had a full time nurse taking care of me. None of my family was allowed in the room and my father had to move out so he could continue to work. I believe the quarantine period was several weeks.

I do not recall having any special treatment, but apparently devised my own therapy. Later in the summer I was out in a pasture leading a horse on a long rope and the horse started to take off and the rope got tangled in my legs. I was dragged quite a distance and the result was a broken left ankle. In order to get around on crutches I had to use my right leg (the one where I had polio) to get around. This did help to strengthen my right leg.

My doctor was afraid that going back to school in the fall might not be good for my mental system, so he had me stay out of school for a year.

For many years, my slightly weakened right leg gave me few problems. I gave up horseback riding because I no longer could grip the saddle properly. My horse had realized this so that when we came to a jump he would stop suddenly and I would fall off. I was a Scoutmaster for a few years and could outlast the boys on hikes. I tried out for school swimming teams but was not very good, due to not having enough kicking power.

After graduating from college in 1942, I was drafted into the Army, and classified as limited service mainly due to eye problems. As a result the physical activity was not too strenuous so my leg gave me few problems. After being discharged in 1946, I spent over 36 years in the banking industry as a trust officer which did not require strenuous physical activity. On occasions my right leg would buckle and I might fall down without any damage.

My first wife and I moved to Sanford, North Carolina in 1985 and during the warm season, I used to swim laps almost every day in the pool in our area. That seemed to keep me in good shape. When we moved to Pinchurst in 1994, and after my wife's death, I did try to continue the swimming program and also started walking, instead of riding when I played golf. After remarrying in 1994 and moving to Knollwood Village, I continued walking while playing golf and my wife and I tried to walk a mile or so several times a week. I began to have trouble with my leg buckling and started wearing knee braces which seemed to help.

For quite a few years, when we went on cruises we would never take an elevator on a ship, but used the stairways. About 2 years ago we began to slow down and take the elevators. Since then I find that I have difficulty going up and down hill, and have had to give up walking on the golf course, using a golf cart instead. I also find that it is more difficult to get up out of a chair.

Nathan McClure - (continued)

Perhaps part of my difficulty is due to old age, but a good part of the problem is the weakening of my right leg muscles. I do wear knee braces which seem to help. I still manage to get out on the golf course at least three times a week (one round usually being 18 holes and the others, nine) and bowl during the winter, so I guess I am in pretty good shape in spite of my age and being a polio survivor.

BEACON-NEWS, SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1934.

GENEVA YOUTH STRICKEN WITH DREAD MALADY

Nathan McClure Jr., 14, ill of
Infantile Paralysis, Hunt
Source of Infection.

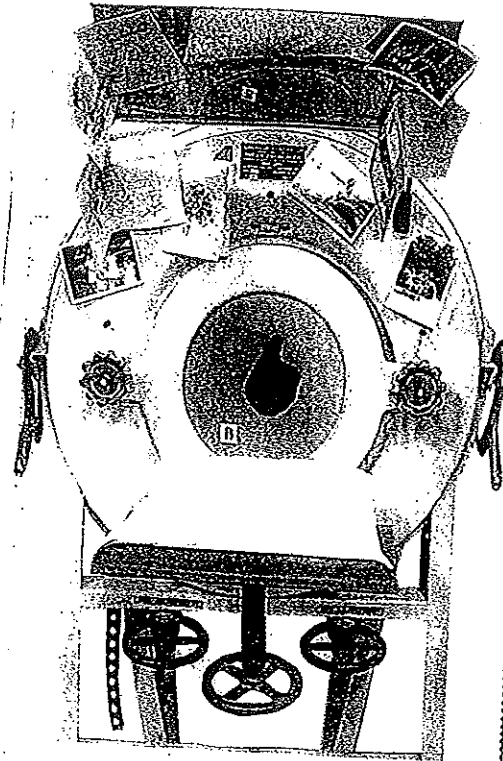
Geneva, Ill., July 28.—Nathan D. McClure Jr., 14, son of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan D. McClure, 325 South Street, is suffering with infantile paralysis at his home, it was learned today. He was taken ill about a week ago with a slight temperature. No further symptoms developed until two days ago when paralysis became apparent in a muscle of the right leg above the knee.

Dr. H. W. Carpenter, the attending physician, stated that the case is mild and will probably leave the youth with no lasting ill effects. Neither Dr. Carpenter nor Dr. J. W. Gray, city health officer, were able to say where the disease could have been contracted. No cases of infantile paralysis have been reported in Illinois outside of Chicago where three cases were on record last month. Dr. Gray pointed out that infantile paralysis is a disease which springs up periodically, frequently leaving no trace of its source.

Two children, suspected of having been exposed to infantile paralysis who canoed at Good Templar park recently, were reported to Dr. Gray by Dr. Herman H. Bundeson, Chicago health commissioner who asked that the boys be returned to their homes immediately. The children had left Chicago without permission after exposure to the dread disease, Dr. Bundeson said. The boys were returned to Chicago immediately, and it is believed that no local children were exposed to the paralysis in the short time they were in camp here. McClure had not visited the park or the camp.

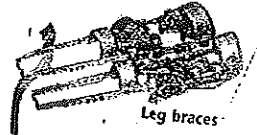
McClure is an outstanding horseman among the young riding enthusiasts in Geneva. He is a student at St. Albans' academy, Baltimore.

A polio survivor's story



• An iron lung, used around 1945-1950, is on display at the Hickory Polio Tent at the North Carolina Museum of History.

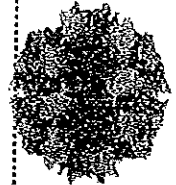
Staff photo by Tracy Wilcox



Leg braces



POLIO VIRUS



- Polio is an infectious disease caused by a virus.
- It can strike at any age, but affects mainly children under three (50% of all cases).
- The disease causes paralysis, which is almost always irreversible. In the most severe cases, polio paralysis can lead to death by asphyxiation.

Sharon Melton

Winning the Fight Against Polio

**To encourage you, sometimes, life can feel like too great a challenge.
Let God be your strength.**



It was the summer of 1948, the year of the worst polio epidemic in North Carolina's history. By the end of the summer, polio had crippled children and some died. The health officer made the newspaper nearly everyday with reports of how many new cases of polio had been reported. They closed any place where children gathered, such as movie theaters, parks, swimming pools and Sunday schools. Children were forbidden to go into the streets or gather in public places. I was three years old when I burned with fever, could not move and was rushed to the hospital in Pinehurst, North Carolina. They suspected that I had the dreaded virus on July 2, 1948. I was whisked away to the Isolation Ward of the Polio Clinic in Greensboro, North Carolina. I remained there ten months and the doctors would not allow anyone to see me because they did not know how polio was spread. Doctors feared that I would give polio to my family so I was unable to have any contact with them other than seeing my parents through a window. I was then sent to a General Hospital for several additional weeks; soon I was allowed to return to the Moore County Hospital in Pinehurst, NC.

Polio victims whose breathing muscles were paralyzed, had to be placed in an iron lung. The iron lung was a long tubular machine designed to help patients breathe. It looked like a water heater turned on its side with valves, windows and a switch. An electric motor powered a bellows at one end of the machine and it pushed air into and out of the chamber. The patient lay inside with only the head sticking out of a plastic cuff around the neck. The air pressure expanded and contracted the lungs allowing the patient to breathe. I ended up with braces on my legs , special shoes and crutches.

I remember being wrapped in steaming wool blankets because moist heat was considered one of the best treatments. When I was diagnosed with polio in 1948 and spent nearly a year in the hospital, the doctors told me that I would never walk or sit up again.

I have had many operations on one ankle to stabilize it and I had the bone removed in my left hip leaving that leg unable to bear weight. I lay in a cast that covered my body for an entire summer. Then a metal plate was put into my knee.

During all this hectic time, I kept up with everything. I previously had a record of six years perfect attendance, rarely missing a football game, where I kept score and was given a school letter coat. I was a Bible student, also with perfect attendance in Sunday School at First Baptist Church in Carthage, where I was a member. However, I was able to attend school and graduate in 1961. At the ceremony, I was able to walk down the aisle without the use of my crutches.

Sharon Melton - (continued)

After High School, I met a wonderful man named Wayne Melton. We were married July 2, 1961 at the First Baptist Church, Carthage. That was the day my mother told me that July 2, 1948, was the day I was stricken with polio.

I worked for years as a secretary and God blessed us with one daughter, Donna Lynne and three grandchildren. I had accepted my life with polio, but the disease changed it again.

In 1998, I started having pain and I did not have any strength. I was having a lot of trouble walking and because of muscle weakness I started to fall frequently. The doctors were unable to determine what was happening. I went to the hospital in Greenville, NC, where the doctors diagnosed me with Post Polio Syndrome. Consequently, I had to retire from my job and facing the prospect of losing my ability to walk, I had to return to the use of crutches.

Polio is with you all the time, you have bad days where it is hard to get up, but you have to let God be your strength to get through every day. By the grace of God, He will give me the strength. When all hope was gone, God took over and gave me life, a life with blessings. Proverbs 3: 5-6 says that I must trust in the Lord with all my heart. God has been good to me and He will be with me until the end. My husband of 44 years is a blessing from he Lord.

Mary Elizabeth Diggs Monroe

1926-1977



Editors Note: Although Lib did not have the opportunity to participate in the Support Group, she would have been a strong supporter of the participates and the program. With this in mind, we share her story as printed in the Sandhill Citizen Newspaper on January 14, 1960, written by Lenora Thompson.

Training through the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and medical care from the March of Dimes were indispensable aid to an ambitious Aberdeen paralytic polio victim. Mrs. Robert C. Monroe, who lived at 404 Seymour Street has even specialized in making unique flower designs for more than a year.

"As long as I can remember I have enjoyed fixing flower arrangements," the pretty young mother said as we watched her strap a white carnation corsage. She has a natural gift for flower arranging and with the knowledge that she acquired from a six-week course in floral designing arranged through the V.R. her talents have turned into a profession.

The skilled florist is affectionately known in the Sandhills as "Lib" received her training at the Art Flower Shop in Charlotte. After she completed her training she worked part-time for Carolina Gardens, Southern Pines. While she was helping out there, her husband Robert sharing his spare time, converted a side porch and their living room into a flower shop.

She had her opening on September 27, 1958, with approximately a hundred friends and spectators calling. A door prize, which was a bud vase with a red carnation, was presented to the first 75 prospective customers. For the grand prize she gave one dozen red roses arranged in white glass vase.

Lib has a wonderful personality and a remarkable sense of humor that is crowned with an ambition and determination which far exceeds her physical abilities. She is blessed with a great imagination that "comes in mighty handy: when she has a lot of unreal pieces to make. For instance, only a few days ago she got thirty-two orders for one funeral and when she had finished them there were no wreaths or sprays designed alike and yet every arrangement was a master piece and very beautiful.

Besides paying for her room and board during her six weeks of training, the Vocational Rehabilitation Program set her up in business, providing her with a florist refrigerator, equipment for a complete wedding and other necessary tools.

She puts her whole heart into her work and like a small boy who has out grown his pants, Lib's business is blossoming right out of her crowded flower shop.

Mary Elizabeth Diggs - (continued)

But modest as she is, she said she could never have accomplished what she has had if it had not been for the wonderful understanding and cooperation from her husband, who, we might add, is learning the trade fast and pitches in with a sleight of hand when she is swamped with orders. She is a member of the Southern Floral Association.

1948 Epidemic: It was June 28, 1948, and during that summer of the terrible polio epidemic here in the Sandhills, which caused the theaters, swimming pools and all public meeting places to be closed, that Lib was stricken with poliomyelitis.

Polio struck heavy and hard in the Monroe home that summer. Their five and a half-month old son, Robbie was stricken with the crippling disease exactly one week before his mother came down with it.

At that time there were only three hospitals in this territory, one each in Greensboro, Raleigh and Wilmington, that were equipped with facilities to treat polio patients. So through the help of their family physician, Dr. J. P. Bowen and the March of Dimes, they were rushed to James Walker Memorial Hospital in Wilmington where they spent six weeks. During that time the first three weeks in isolation.

Completely paralyzed and in severe pain, which was almost unbearable those first six weeks, Lib often became depressed and felt that she would never walk again. But with prayer and physical therapy, that was administered to her daily, her muscles gradually responded to the treatment.

No one, not even Robert was allowed to visit her during the isolation period, but, through a "secret channel," he learned that her bed was "stationed on the ward nearest the fire escape which he could climb. So, when he had a chance to "visit" her, he could be seen perched on the fire escape chatting through an open window to her. This, perhaps is an unusual way to comfort the sick but those few encouraging words from him gave Lib a needed morale build up.

When polio facilities were available at Moore Memorial hospital, Pinehurst, Lib and Robbie were transferred there. After four months of treatment Lib was sent home and later taken to the Warm Springs foundation for Infantile Paralysis at Warm Springs, Georgia.

There she continued to receive physical therapy and was taught occupational therapy. She improved rapidly from this treatment and within a few weeks she was wheeling herself around the place in a wheel chair. When she was discharged on May 27, 1949, she was walking with crutches and wearing a long leg brace which she discarded about a month later.

Mary Elizabeth Diggs - (continued)

About five weeks after she returned home she was light house keeping and helping care for little Robbie who had lived with relatives at Lilesville after he was discharged from Moore Memorial Hospital.

Their hospitalizations, all medical expenses and their regular check ups, which cost a lot of money, were financed by the March of Dimes. The Monroe's have a high regard for this wonderful organization and for the Vocational Rehabilitation Program. They are very grateful for the indispensable aid each contributed to them.

Athletic at heart, Lib said she was a "whiz" at basketball during her high school days. She likes all outdoor sports and despite her lame leg and crippled arm, she goes fishing every time she gets a chance. She also likes to sew and cook fancy dishes.

She was reared in the red hills of Anson County at Lilesville and is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Coleman Diggs. Following her graduation from Lilesville High School she was employed by the Seaboard Airline Railroad as a ticket agent and came to Aberdeen to live. Here she met Robert and they were married in 1945.

Except for a slight impairment to his left arm, Robbie has grown up to be a fine, healthy, husky lad of twelve. They have another son, Rickie, who is seven years old.

Robert Cecil Monroe, Jr (Robbie)



I was born January 11, 1948, at Moore Memorial Hospital in Pinehurst, North Carolina. Son of Robert C. Monroe, Sr. And Mary Elizabeth Diggs. We lived a normal healthy life in the town of Aberdeen, North Carolina, until I was five and one half months old. In June 1948, I contracted polio and was diagnosed with a mild case. The polio affected my left arm and side. After the diagnosis of polio I went to James Walker Memorial Hospital in Wilmington, North Carolina for treatment in July 1948. Returned to Moore Memorial Hospital in August 1948, after the polio treatment center opened in Pinehurst. I was in the hospital for six months and was release to go home in December 1948.

I had daily hydrotherapy, warm soaking baths and was wrapped in warm steamed army blankets (hot packs) which would make us to go to sleep and get plenty of rest. Later on I remember I had a small rubber ball that I had to squeeze a lot.

After being released from the hospital and while my mother was still hospitalized, I went to Lilesville, North Carolina where I stayed with my great Aunt Mae Knotts and cousin Mildred (Mimi) Knotts. I returned to Aberdeen when my mother was released from the hospital at Warm Springs, Georgia.

I attended Aberdeen Elementary and Aberdeen High School, where I graduated from the twelfth grade in 1966. During high school, sports was a big part of my life, especially base ball. I did not feel any different than the other kids in class as I felt I could do anything they could, I just had to figure out a different way of doing it. Example was while playing baseball I would have to throw and catch with the same hand.

In 1964, while in the tenth grade I took a class called ICT (Industrial Cooperative Training), learning a skill while still in school. I went to work for the Sandhill Citizen Newspaper office, as a printing trainee.

In 1970, I left the Citizen and went to work for Golf World Magazine in the printing department. I started on the printing press and worked my way through the machines - stitching machine, address labeling machine, job printing presses and eventually ended up in the stripping department as a four color process stripper.

In 1980, I left Golf World Magazine and went to work as a Correctional Officer with the North Carolina Department of Correction at Hoke Correctional Center. In 1992, I was promoted to Correctional Sergeant and retired on disability in December 2004, from Hoke Correctional Institution. While working at Hoke Correctional center, I was selected as Officer of the Year in 1988 and Officer of the Year at Hoke Correctional Institution in 1993.

Robert C. Monroe, Jr. - (continued)

I was expected to do the same work as all the other employees and to some degree more was expected of me.

I played church league softball until I injured my right knee and was advised by the doctor to quit playing ball.

I was a Boy Scout leader for troop 861 and was tapped out for "Order of the Arrow" honor in 1975. I have been active in several other organizations over the years.

The love of cars has always been a part of my life. In 1969, I was fortunate to be a co-owner of the Lil Brown Jug, (a 1958 Ford Anglia) an NHRA Drag Racing team. It was an NHRA national record holder for two years. Chevrolet Chevelle's have been my favorite car since they came on the market and I have owned many of them over the years. The last being a 1966 Chevelle S/S, which I entered in many car show's and won many trophies and awards. Due to health reasons I had to give up my Chevelle in 1998 as I was no longer able to care for it. I still enjoy going to the car shows and every spring I get the urge to get a new car, and I am not sure that I won't get another one in the future.

I married Jewel Thompson on October 29, 1971 and amazingly we are still married. We did not have any children.

I began to notice the post polio symptoms in 1999. They began when I had a stroke in March 1999 and a second one in July 1999. Then in April 2001, I had a diagnostic scope on my left knee and in May 2001, I had a total knee replacement on my right knee. In August 2001, I was diagnosed with Post Polio Syndrome and in November 2001, I was diagnosed with sleep apnea. In December 2002, I had a diagnostic scope on my left knee again and in November 2003, I had a total hip replacement of my left hip. In 2006 I had a scare with cancer, when I had to have my right kidney removed due to a large mass.

Living with the after effects of polio is what I have lived with all of my life and is the only way I have known. I really did not notice that I had a disability when I was growing up.

God has really blessed my entire life, and I am truly thankful for my many blessings.

Virginia Richmond (Ginny)



I was four years old in 1933. My parents and I were visiting my grandparents' farm in Indiana. I became ill with a high fever, pain and developing stiffness. My parents drove all night with me to home in Pontiac, Michigan. My doctor immediately put me in "Contagious Hospital".

I was tested including a spinal tap. The diagnosis was Infantile Paralysis. I remained in "Contagious Hospital" in isolation from everyone, including my parents for seven weeks. Only staff nurses and doctors were my only contact. I could see my parents through a window into the hall. I could not even have my favorite teddy bear or toys from home.

I had acute paralysis on the entire left side. Neck, spine and left leg most involved. When I was released the form of treatment included long hot baths three times a day followed by strong massages with very warm olive oil. Baby oils etc. were not yet on the market. It took me almost 60 years to tolerate the odor of cooking with olive oil.

I could not walk or stand at Christmas (1933). I received a brand new tricycle. This whole time was a time of great recovery both for myself and my parents' hard times during the "Great Depression".

It was winter in Michigan and the "trike" was my most prized possession. My feet were tied to the pedals and my folks would push me around the apartment to make my legs move and exercise. When spring came I could stand and walk on my own. I could ride circles around all the kids with my "trike".

Special shoes and some massage therapy continued until school started in September 1934. I wore out my left shoes from dragging my foot for many years.

My major problem throughout school was gym class or "P.E.". Many of the activities I could never do; tumbling, swinging from my arms, high jumps, running or any targeted form of exercise. I did well pitching softball and swimming. Academically, I was an "A" student until my senior year in high school. I contracted strep throat and was out of school six weeks.

I graduated from high school, got married and had two children. My education is an ongoing thing. I have taken many classes, seminars, adult education and private instructions in all art media.

My post polio symptoms began in my early 40s. More neck problems, pain and stiffness on the left side and slight dragging of left leg when fatigued.

Virginia Richmond - (continued)

All forms of treatments and medications were tried; heat, massage, exercise, ultrasounds, etc. All kinds of pain relievers, muscle relaxants and therapies were little help, too. I gradually gave up all and learned to deal with the symptoms.

When I was in my sixties I had a bone fusion and tendon transfer on my left foot for correction of drop foot. I kept tripping and falling down.

Finally, with tremors, weakness and much fatigue returning to my left side, the Neurologist performed all the tests; EMG, EEG, MRI - you know all those letters! Result: Peripheral Neuropathy Poliomyelitis.

My story is only part of my history. It's a lot of "I", "me" and "my", but without the support and love of my parents, my husband Ron of 57 years and family, the "I" and "my" wouldn't have nearly the happy ending.

Finally after seventy-six years of age, I know and understand my limitations and have learned through our support group and educational material that I'm not alone. I've learned to manage some of the problems we survivors have to face. I am one of the more fortunate ones. My condition is manageable if I follow the rules! And if I don't go into "AAA" overdrive I hope to make it to ninety!

John R. Rummery

Year and month polio was contracted?

October 1935

Age at the time polio was contracted?

19

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

No

Where you lived when you had polio?

Short Hills, New Jersey

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Left arm and leg

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

No

How long were you hospitalized?

N/A

What method of treatment was used?

Rest and massage

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

No

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

Crutches - 6 months

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

Yes

What grade did you attain in school?

Senior High School, Grad Virginia, 1941

What career(s) did you pursue?

Sailing

Were you in the military?

Navigator Civilian Northeast Airline

John R. Rummery - (continued)

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

Led a very normal life.

What was/is your marital and family status?

Married

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

About seven years ago.

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

Yes, a cane.

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

Good, slowed me down. And taught me that I must go at my own pace and harbor my strength.

Any other comments you many want to add.

This is a good idea. It is getting closer to the core of post polio.

Paulette Dietenhofer Scott

Polio Epidemic of 1952

April 27, 2005



I began to feel ill while returning home from Texas, in July 1952. Our family doctor in Pinehurst misdiagnosed me even though polio was epidemic at the time. Shortly, I became critically ill, was properly diagnosed and rushed by ambulance to a polio hospital in Greensboro, N.C. My family was immediately quarantined in their home by Moore County Health Department. I still have the large yellow quarantine sign attached to our home. Fortunately, none of them became ill. Even at age eight, I was aware of the gravity of my illness as I was rushed into isolation at the hospital. There began my nine-month odyssey. I was diagnosed with acute paralytic and bulbar polio. Those first few days were a blur of lumbar punctures, pain, shots and fear. I went into renal failure and the nearest dialysis machine was in Pittsburgh, Pa. I was too fragile to make the trip. Shortly, the crisis abated and I finally realized the polio had affected my entire body. I was moved from an iron lung to a rocking bed and finally to a regular ward bed as my breathing became better.

There were very large wards separated only as to gender. Later, a children's ward opened. There was no air conditioning, t.v., or phones. Even a fan would have been a godsend in August. It was here in the heat and humidity that my rehab. began. Initially, this consisted of twice daily heat packs. A large centrifuge was wheeled to my bedside. Inside was a wool army blanket spun down in hot water. It was removed with metal tongs and placed on my back from neck to toe. Two dry blankets covered the wet one. In August, this can only be considered cruel. People actually passed out from the heat. The packs remained on for 20-40 minutes, although it seemed forever.

What followed were twice a day baths. I was lowered on a canvas lifts into large vats of hot water to soak. This was followed, by the stretching of muscles by therapists. These sessions were horrendously painful and frequently left your muscles in spasms or shaking so badly you could not even hold a glass of water without spilling it. But, the therapists were unrelenting and the patients were left dreading the next sessions.

I had come to the hospital with long hair but water activities necessitated a haircut. More precisely, my head was shaved, so it didn't need drying. Clothing was also minimal, a G-string was the only thing we were given to wear. Later, I was given a hospital gown at night and I was given a choice as to position for sleeping. Then, I was tied down wearing a modified straight jacket. This was removed in the morning. Also, a knee roll and a plywood footboard were used to position my legs and feet.

When it was time to try walking, I started in a pool using water braces and handrails affixed to the sides and bottom of the pool. When I completed water walking, I was finally fitted for a long leg brace, metal corset and crutches. Actually using them, took weeks of intensive training to walk, to fall, to go up and down stairs, etc.

Paulette Dietenhofer Scott - (continued)

Finally, nine months of hard work over, I walked out of the hospital. While in the hospital, I was tutored and was able to join my class even after missing most of the school year.

Through the years, I was able to do without the crutches and corset. The brace became a short leg one. I finished elementary and high school and went on to the University of North Carolina. It was tough to do before the American with Disabilities Act was made into law. When my sons attended UNC, I was amazed at the changes made to assist the handicap. I became a cyto-technologist, married, had two sons and worked in my chosen field for many years. However, in 1980 I began to notice more muscle pain and fatigue than usual. Doctor after doctor diagnosed it as everything from "overworked housewife" to ALS. Finally in January 1983, Dr. Peter Jacobson realized something neurological new was happening. The neurology clinic at UNC agreed and thus began my journey to find out what was wrong and what to name it.

Emotionally, the diagnosis of PPS was much harder to accept than the polio itself. Slowing down and being unable to do things I have done all my life is frustrating. Going back to assistive devices that were discarded years ago is not an easy task. For most of my life, once I was rehabilitated, polio was a condition I managed to ignore. My friends and family did the same thing. So, it has come as a shock to them, as well, that the polio I had beaten is back only in a more insidious way. Just one more thing to cope with - but PPS people are the best in the world at coping. We have had years of practice at it.

Ethel Soladay

In 1932, at the age of 5 and in kindergarten in Cleveland, Ohio, I contracted polio. No other family members or relatives were affected, even though I had a very close relationship with my cousin who is a few months younger than I. During my recovery, she would often stand on the front porch of my grandparents' home where my parents and I were living at the time, and played with me through the glass window as I sat on a sofa that backed up to the porch.

My type of polio appeared to be paralytic, with paralysis mainly from the lower hip area and down both legs. I couldn't walk. A touch of stiffness was felt in my arms. I was not hospitalized, and the condition lasted about one year. My home care consisted of massaging my legs with oils, which continued to near the end of the year. At first I remained upstairs in my bed, but as time progressed, my parents or grandparents would carry me downstairs so that I could be with everyone during the day. They took turns holding me up and gradually helped me begin to use my legs to try to walk. I did not wear any braces and never used a cane until many, many years later!

One day I asked to be seated at the piano and I began to "play by ear," imitating some of the pieces I heard my mother play or picking out little tunes I had learned to sing. This was a big surprise to my family and caused excitement as I used both hands for accompaniment, not just my right hand to pick out a melody.

I returned to school after I could walk, but had difficulty running or getting up from the floor or ground if I fell. I would push myself up on all fours before being able to stand. Once, while walking to a relative's home, I fell on a sidewalk and had to push through weeds to reach a telephone or light pole in order to pull myself up again! Through the years, gym classes were frustrating, and the teachers were never very sympathetic or understanding of my condition, even though my doctor would send in supporting information.

I completed high school and went on to college - Chicago Musical College - in Chicago, Illinois. At that time it was considered the "Julliard" of the Midwest. Shortly after graduation, it became the Music School of Roosevelt University. During college and for many years after, I performed with trios, was a two-piano concert performer, and played for special events, style shows, and various organizations' programs. I held a teaching position at Laurel School for Girls in Shaker Heights, Ohio (a private girl's school), for four years. While there, I taught elementary music classes and piano.

During my teaching years, I met my husband, Charles Soladay, and at that time he was a CPA and manager for Price Waterhouse in Cleveland.

Ethel Soladay - (continued)

After the birth of our two children, my husband's work took us to Deerfield, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, where I decided to accept private piano students at home - and also was involved in raising funds for the Chicago Infant Welfare Society.

Later, when our two children were in college and we were then living in Cedar Falls, IA., I started my second career. I accepted the position of assistant development director for public radio stations KUNI/KHKE at the University of Northern Iowa where I sold underwriting to various businesses. Additionally, I worked on-air in the twice-a-year fund-raising efforts and was responsible for keeping the fund-raising programs staffed with volunteers.

While the children were growing up, my husband and I began to play golf, which I loved. Being out-of-doors was something I truly enjoyed. We didn't have much time for it, but I was just learning! By the time we moved to Iowa, we joined a small country club where we had a lot of fun with golf. Our children had part-time jobs at the club while in school, working in the pro shop and grillroom. Since I couldn't garden due to weakness in my legs and difficulty kneeling on the ground, golf gave me the opportunity to exercise and enjoy fresh air!

After several years in Iowa, my husband took a position in Baltimore, MD, and although I had not planned to continue working, I received a phone call offering me the position of development director of NPR station WBJC. There I sold underwriting contracts, worked the on-air fund-raisers twice a year, managed the staff of volunteers, and planned social events for contributing members of the station.

Through the years, we lived mainly in two-story houses and once in a three-story house. Eventually, I noticed steps were more tiring, so from about 1976 on, at age 49, we chose to live in one-floor homes. I noticed that I fell a bit more often and realized I had to be more careful on steps. I didn't know that this was the beginning of Post-Polio Syndrome. Probably in my 60s, my doctor suggested I start using a handicapped-parking permit, which was most helpful.

In April 1986 at age 59, while living in Baltimore, MD., I had a partial mastectomy on my right breast followed by radiation 5 days a week for 6 weeks. Then in late November, it was discovered that I had a malignant tumor that had broken through the uterine wall, and after surgery, I had 8 months of chemo - one day a month. During that time, however, I was able to function normally and played golf once a week! In addition, at that time, I had been offered a position with Maryland Public Television as assistant to the development director, but I declined because we had decided to retire to Pinehurst, NC.

Ethel Solday - (continued)

We moved to Pinehurst in 1989 to Pinehurst Trace - a 55 and over Active Adult retirement community where both of us have participated in the homeowners association. By 2001, at age 74, I realized that my legs were simply not as strong as they had been and gold became more of a problem. I also found it necessary to use a cane. In 2002, after attending two post-polio seminars that were made available by the Triad Support Group, I knew I needed to get an evaluation. This was accomplished at the Charlotte (NC) Rehabilitation Clinic with Dr. Bockenek. I have continued to see him once a year.

I immediately began using the electric carts at grocery stores, an emotionally difficult decision, but one that makes me grateful and enables me to be out and about! Additionally, we agreed that I should begin using a motorized chair, so my husband and I purchased a Pride Jazzy, which was measured for correct size. The doctor felt I should use it as needed to preserve what strength I still have in my legs. We have installed a Bruno motorized lift in our Honda Odyssey van (it has a remote control for operation), and we can take my Pride chair with us when going to large malls, museums, concerts, and when visiting our families. We also bought a small folding/portable lightweight wheel chair to carry in the car for quick trips and short errands, and a scooter could be used with the motorized lift, should we decide to add that piece of equipment later.

When I had my evaluation with Dr. Bockenek, he suggested that I not use a motorized scooter that requires my arms to be in an extended position for too many hours on a daily basis; Strength needs to be maintained for getting up and down from chairs. Since I was having more difficulty rising from low chairs that did not have arms, it was suggested that I use a toilet seat riser every day at home. This has been most beneficial. The doctor also recommended exercise for my legs with water aerobic classes, which I have done, and have also worked periodically with a physical therapist on a one-to-one basis.

Three years ago, fellow Post-Polio Survivor Ray Taylor and I co-organized the Sandhills Post-Polio Health Group (SPPHG) at First Health of the Carolinas - Moore Regional Hospital, and that has been most gratifying. It has made the community-at-large aware of the special needs of our physical beings. We are thankful for the tremendous help the hospital gives to support groups like ours. In addition, the hospital offers wonderful opportunities for volunteering. I have been able to use my musical talent by playing piano in the outpatient area for several years.

Life isn't always easy or perfect, but there is so much for which I am grateful - a very loving husband who has been so understanding and is a constant care giver in many ways, and the love and understanding of our son and daughter, their spouses and our grandchildren.

Alice Stellwagon

Year and month polio was contracted?

November 1923

Age at the time polio was contracted?

2 ½ yrs of age

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

No

Where you lived when you had polio?

Garden City, Long Island, NY

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Both legs

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

Murray Hill Sanatorium, NY

How long were you hospitalized?

One month

What method of treatment was used?

Massage and heat therapy. A private nurse was at our home for 6 months and I had a therapist weekly.

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

No

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

Yes, I wore a brace on my right leg below the knee for 5 years.

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

Yes, I never missed a day.

What grade did you attain in school?

College Graduate

What career(s) did you pursue?

I did Investment Banking at Central Hanover in Wall Street for many years. Had my own Realty Office in G.C. for many years.

Were you in the military?

No

Alice Stellwagon - (continued)

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

I enjoyed sports, excelled in swimming, have many wonderful friends, I believe in the Serenity Prayer.

What was/is your marital and family status?

Bob and I will celebrate our 56th wedding anniversary August 13, 2005.

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

About 5 years ago.

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

Yes, a leg brace and now I do depend on a walker.

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

Perhaps it is my nature to believe that I can do anything, of course I realize that I am limited but I can try.

Any other comments you many want to add.

I am so happy to be a member of the support group - You do devote so many hours to have every thing planned so well.

Ray Taylor



Editors Note: These question and answers were given when Ray was interviewed by Anna Rubin on May 14, 2004, for the Polio Oral History Project - International Rehabilitation Center for Polio at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital.

Today is Friday, May 14th. This is Anna Rubin (in dark print) interviewing for the Polio Oral History Project. Could you please state your name and tell me where you live. (Ray's response in light type).

My name is Ray Taylor, I live in Pinehurst, North Carolina and have lived here since 1982.

Can you tell me about your own polio experiences?

Sure. I don't know too much about it. The beginning, I was nine months old and was diagnosed with th flu, summer flu. It was perfectly logical, I guess, that it would have been, because I had all the vomiting and the fever and that sort of thing. And then when it was determined that my legs were affected, they decided I had infantile paralysis. That would have been in 1925.

My early recollection is my mother rubbing my legs at night with cocoa butter. Now, I have no idea what the cocoa butter was all about, but it was undoubtedly believed that by rubbing my legs they were improving the circulation, and very possibly did.

In my case, I had one of these wonderful things happen where in my legs wound up as essentially the same length. On the right side I have an overdeveloped thigh; on the left it is atrophied and have virtually nothing. The left calf, very good calf; right calf, affected, but not badly and not as badly atrophied as the left thigh, but certainly not good. Left foot very good; right foot, the typical tendon pull, which pulled my foot under. My shoe sizes are two sizes different; I'm a ten-and-a-half "A" and an eight-and-a-half "B", or was.

So as a result of all of this, I learned to walk, I was told by my mother, sometime after I was two years old. I could walk and run, move around, mostly falling down. I remember having wonderfully scarred knees. They were always banged, or any picture that was ever made of me standing in my short pants always showed a bandage. And I had the typical experiences that other people that are either too little or too slow or something. Children laugh, you know, when you chose up sides to play baseball or something, and that was - well, I didn't like it, but I was glad to play. But I was able to participate.

Nothing was ever said, of course. Now, you've got to remember this was in the thirties. It's between 1920 and, say, 1942 when I graduated from high school. My family didn't - polio was never mentioned, and I suppose that was partly the custom or the way people looked at any kind of crippling or abnormal behavior in those days. You just ignored it. And I think probably that was my defense.

Ray Taylor - (continued)

I probably just used denial. I probably just said, "Well, there's nothing wrong with me. There's no reason I can't play basketball or baseball or whatever," and tried, and did succeed to some extent.

And by the time I got to, oh, I guess a junior in high school, I had been going to the James Whitcomb Riley Clinic, which was a free clinic in Indianapolis, and available for children who had physical problems. And, of course, in the thirties there were a lot of polio patients there. I went through the normal - what I believe were normal - procedures, where doctors were trying to figure out what they could do. And I went through, I don't know, we did heat packs and I really don't remember too much about it.

But the worst thing it did was to try to turn my foot by putting it in a plaster cast and then hold it there. I remember one cast was too tight and shut off the circulation, and that was, well very unpleasant. Finally they decided they could do a tendon transplant, and they did that, I think, about 1940. And that required, you know, taking and cutting off the tendon of the big toe and pulling it out the front top of my ankle and reattaching it on the lateral side on the outside. And it worked. Well, it worked pretty well. I could certainly walk and run and do things, and did all the way through college.

In fact, I could do well enough that when I got drafted in 1943, or when I was called up, I actually passed the physical. It was fast. You have to remember that was a different day. And while I was standing in the back of the line getting ready to be sworn in - I made it a point to always get in the back, so you're standing there in your underwear, people don't notice that one leg's the wrong size - the doctor who did the operation, his name was Casely - I don't remember whether it was a S-L-E-Y. Casely. Anyway, he was the surgeon who did it; he was there. Now, I had seen him, recognized him, and that was the other reason I was at the back of the line. By some quirk, he walked through the room, saw me, and I'm standing there, you know, got the papers for Sergeant whoever it was. And boy, everybody's papers, and the doctor says, "What are you doing here?"

I said, "I'm in the army."

"Oh, no," he says. Well, he had another doctor with him and he says, "You come with me."

So he wanted to brag on his work, and he showed this doctor - he had me walk and twist my ankle. And then he went back to the desk and says, "Here, this guy's not fit for the army," and I get a big fat 4F. That was - I believe that was the lowest point of my - in fact, I know that was the lowest point in my young life. I didn't want to be a 4F. Not that I was interested any more than anybody else was in going to kill people, but it was the thing to do, and my peers were going. I felt that the government was very stupid, that there were many things that I could do. I have forgiven the doctor and I have forgiven the federal government, but it was a bad thing.

Ray Taylor - (continued)

So then, see, I got through college. I played intramural sports, became - actually, when I got out of college I taught in high school for four years and was the basketball coach, the track coach; a little school in Illinois where you did almost everything.

I became a good golfer; I had shagged balls for an uncle, the uncle who really brought me up in Indiana. I could play to about an eight, a six to eight handicap, until, well, age and work and that sort of thing interfered.

So my life after the operation and after college was never really affected by the polio, except the trick knee. I would fall frequently, because in order to stand I have to lock my left knee, and, occasionally, unexpectedly, if I stepped or failed to step on something, I'd fall, so I experienced a lot of falling through the years.

But I went through - I worked thirty-one years in the corporation, traveled all over the world, had a number of jobs, and was a division president for a couple of the small divisions, and was able to retire early then, and come to Pinehurst.

I started my own marketing services business, helping people start new businesses or develop whatever they had started and act as their sales, marketing effort. I did that until about 1999, and, finally, by then I was really beginning to have the post-polio problems of fatigue and falling. By then I had to use a cane and that sort of thing, and so it wasn't practical to travel and climb. One of my products, you had to climb an embankment fifteen feet tall, and I couldn't do that any more.

So I re-retired and I'm a full-time Rotarian now and spend all my time on either my post polio fellowship or polio survivors fellowship, and then I helped another lady here in town and we've started a post-polio support group with the help of the local hospital, and we have a little meeting once a month and they've been very successful. We have a good time together and have been able to get pretty good programs, people coming to talk to us and staying for questions and so forth. That's turned out to be very successful, so that's a victory for us.

That's wonderful. How many members do you have in the group?

In our local support group we have approximately thirty-five. We get somewhere - see, this is a very small, isolated - you know, we're down in the pine - not the pine barrens, but we're in the land of the long-leaf pine, and Pinehurst, all there is, is a golf resort. So we draw from - let's see. The three towns together probably have a population of something like 20,000 people. So, so far we've had the attendance at our support group has been good. The people come back whenever they can, and we get approximately thirty people every time. Last time we had a picnic on May 1st after our regular meeting and we went to one of the members' home and they celebrated my birthday. So we sang and put the hat on and did all that stuff.

Ray Taylor - (continued)

So it's successful. I'd say we're happy and doing well.

That's great. Tell me about when you started to experience the symptoms of post-polio. Well, I think it occurred - you know, I'm not sure when I started experiencing the symptoms of post-polio, but my wife and I were going to a meeting early one morning,

at approximately seven-thirty, and we're stopped, making a turn left turn, and a young lad on his way to school, having just gotten his license the week before, hadn't learned about the brakes and he ran into us while we were waiting for the traffic to clear. I didn't know it was going to happen until the very last second, I realized, looking in the mirror, I knew that this guy wasn't going to stop.

So I was pumping the brake, and when he hit us, I severely sprained my right foot, which is my bad ankle.

And, you know, they hauled us off on the gurney's and took us to the hospital, and we were there for a day and did all the tests, and decided nothing was broken. But I don't know whether it was trauma or what, but I never was up to par after that.

We had built a house on the golf course and we had a fairly good-sized yard, and I found out pretty soon that I was falling and I wasn't able to stand on ladders and trim trees and that sort of thing. I guess that was approximately five or six years ago. I'm now eighty, so around the age of seventy-five, which I understand from the literature now, so if you figure that I was not quite a year old when I had the polio -

You've done well.

Oh, I have had a wonderful life. Polio was probably the best thing that ever happened to me, because I understood early, very early as a kid, that I was a lot better off than many of the others. If you spend any time in a children's orthopedic ward, you see some pretty rough cases. And people that you knew, some of them didn't make it, and a lot of them would never walk or never do anything. So I didn't have to be very old or be there very long to know that, well, I'm okay. And it gave me a good perspective. I never felt it was a handicap, never felt handicapped. As I say, I think that was my defense mechanism; I just denied. As far as I was concerned, there was nothing I couldn't do. And now when I read the books about they say, well, you're a high achiever and driven and all that, I didn't realize I was, but maybe I was.

So post-polio was not a factor in the early retirement that you took the first time around. No, no. I had a fellow trained and prepared and our company that was your first goal. If you were the division manager or something, you had to have people trained in case you stepped in front of a train. So I had a young guy who was anxious to go, and I thought, well,

Ray Taylor - continued

I've worked for this company thirty-one years, had a wonderful time, a lot of good jobs, and why don't I go do something else.

We had bought a lot down here in Pinehurst. Just why we bought it I don't know. Well, I know why: because I'm susceptible to salesmen and we were down here playing golf and, I don't know, they had some kind of a deal, so we bought a lot.

About three years later, the company came up with an early retirement program, so I said, "Whoa, I think I'll have the first ticket," and did and never looked back.

It was a good move for us, we've enjoyed, as I said, the first couple we lived beside, the lady just died this week, so we've had a great friendship for twenty-two years; couldn't have been better. It was a good move for all concerned.

When you first were experiencing the symptoms of post-polio, did you find ready access to information about post-polio and did you find doctors that were able to help you? I guess you'd say no on both counts. I had to have my shoes made, and I found a shoemaker in Massachusetts who made these special shoes for me. So through the last twenty years, I had an association with somebody who was in the business of helping people with disabilities of some sort.

The answer is no. When I went to the orthopedic guy when we had the wreck, he said, sort of in quotes, "Well, this ankle is not good and it's not going to get better. About all we can figure we can do two things; give you a triple orthothesis, which is going to freeze that thing solid, or hope that arthritis sets in and potentially freezes it in place."

And so we left it that way, but then I began noticing, boy, I'm just not doing as well. I don't remember, actually, the breakthrough, but my wife and I go to Elderhostel programs, we like to keep learning, and one of them was open and at Warm Springs. When I was there, I realized, you know, this is a home for people that take care of, or did, so I asked someone there and they said, "Yes, there's a Dr. Gawne here."

So I called. I didn't actually see her that time, but I called later and made arrangements to go down there. So Betty and I went down and went through her post-polio diagnosis and all that, all the electrical - let's see. Yes, I think I've got the sequence. Yes, we did that, however - oh, I know one other thing. When we had that wreck, they decided maybe I should go see a neurologist, so that was the first time they put me through the shocking process where they -

Ray Taylor - (continued)

The EMG testing?

Yes, and did that on my arms and legs and, you know, they said what I knew, "Well, you've got problems here."

Then Dr. Gawne and her group went through their procedures and she concluded, "Well, you had more polio than you think you had. It affected your chest muscles," and that's one of the reasons I don't have very good lung capacity now, and I don't recall what it was, but it's not good. So I huff and puff a lot and can't really walk any kind of distance. You know, 200 yards is laborious and long and painful.

So knew then, well, I've got this, and then I began to read, because reading is something that I do, and I got acquainted with Dr. Bruno's book, and then I found out about a post-polio group in Greensboro and I talked to a lady up there. And then, as a matter of fact, I had her come down and

did a program about the polio group for the Rotary Club. I began to read and bought - well, I have Bruno's book, I have Julia Silver's book, I have the pamphlet that I belong to the Post-Polio Health International in St. Louis. But the truth is, most of the people in our support group have a single complaint that, "Well, my doctor doesn't know anything about it."

I said, "Well, there's no reason why he should." Doctors who practice are forty or fifty years old and there haven't been any cases, so they don't know anything about it. But we have literature, so some of the doctors are interested in knowing, so we tell them, "Well, here's the place you can look." And, of course, now, with the web and the Internet, they can get - there's a very good health library here at the hospital and so they refer to them. We've found them quite willing to learn. We also find many people whose story is, well, their doctor pooh-poohed the whole idea, said, "Oh, you're just getting old."

My doctor, my family doctor, and we've been going to him ever since we came to Pinehurst, says, "Well," he says, "there's got to be something to it because I have too many people who go through here who have the same symptoms." So empirically he's convinced, and we've talked about it some. He knows that I'm not dreaming this up.

So initially, though, it was difficult for you to get the information you needed.

Oh, it was impossible. You know, well, if you don't know what - if there's no name for it, if you don't know what it is, you sort of randomly describe things, and doctors not trained in that would not look for that so they'd look someplace else for a symptoms. And they were doing what doctors do, they statistically eliminate, "Well, it could be this, it could be that." but nobody diagnosed post-polio until I actually got to Warm Springs, and it was basically accidental.

Ray Taylor - continued

Yes, that's very interesting that you went to an Elderhostel program at Warm Springs. Do you think that perhaps you were drawn to that because of the history of Warm Springs? Oh, yes, I think so. And, of course, one of the programs was about FDR (Franklin Delano Roosevelt), and in the classroom, the instructor who was doing the FDR part of the program was describing some of FDR's responses, what he did, how he tried to cover it up. I thought, well, hey, you know, (a), he was trying to get elected to office and people were not - well, they were not - I don't know how to say it exactly, but in the thirties, if you were crippled, you weren't going to be on the A list, and he knew and so did his advisors. So he was going to do what the rest of us did; you just say, "I'm not going to stop, there's no reason I can't do this. I'm going to do whatever I'm going to do." So he just set about doing what was in him to do, and I said I think that we probably just practiced denial, that was our strength.

We just, "I don't have anything wrong. There is no reason I can't do whatever everybody else does, and I'm gong to run the race, and that's too bad about (unclear)."

One, you know, it's hard to say what's going on; so many things are going on in your mind. I can't identify that I specifically said, "Oh, that's the place to go." I didn't really know they had a Polio

Institute there. It's the Georgia Rehabilitation Center or something, I don't remember. But, of course, I went there to do the Elderhostel, and we have a secondary reason for doing them. People that my wife went to high school with in Indiana, there are four couples, and that's our way of getting together every year is to go Elderhostel programs, and the eight of us are still living. I suggested the idea of doing Elderhostels and I don't think - I think that was the second one.

I don't think it had anything to do with polio. I'm sure it didn't. But once I got there and started - you know, you go through the old bathhouse and all that sort of thing, and I've read very widely, biographies of FDR and Eleanor (Roosevelt), and I lived through the early thirties; obviously I wasn't his age, but I know some of the things, the conditions in Georgia and the conditions in southern Indiana were similar. So I could relate to everything that was going on during that time. And, of course, there were newsreels or whatever, you'd see FDR splashing in the pool. Obviously there's a connection, an affinity, to that place, and Anne Gawne was, I thought, very understanding and capable. I enjoyed being with her staff.

I don't know, it's not frightening at my age. You don't really get frightened about things, but, well, you're apprehensive, you don't know what's coming next. And then, of course, when they did the shocking machine, I went, "Oh, boy." I wasn't that interested in that. I don't think I'd want - I wouldn't want to do it a third time. I never have seen anybody, heard anybody say they would like to have that done.

Ray Taylor - (continued)

I think you're right about that. Ray, do you have children?

We have one son who lives in Los Angeles. He's a teacher. And we have a granddaughter who just became a - oh, excited about going to college this fall. She lives in California, too.

So, yes, that's our - actually, another thing went wrong. The first year of - well, he wasn't quite a year old, my wife - I was a teacher, and she got hasty TB. We were in a little town in Illinois and a "carrier" apparently got loose and three women, young women, got tuberculosis. I was told she would die in thirty days. She was going fast and they gave her the streptomycin, I believe, and she was out of business, then, for two years, recovering pneumothorax and all that sort of thing, and she was able to stay with her mother and dad and they were able to take care of the baby while I was in Illinois.

And that's what moved me from teaching to the corporation, because, of course, there was no insurance and that was 1948. There wasn't anything, so I couldn't pay the doctor bill with a teacher salary. So that's how I happened to move from teaching to the corporation. And, also, that's the reason we didn't have any more children. She wasn't able to do that. So we've had a wonderful, happy life, fifty-seven years together, and we're very fond of each other and enjoy each other's company, and we understand how lucky we are.

I have one question. You mentioned one of your first memories as a young boy was your mother rubbing cocoa butter on your legs. Do you know why she did that or how she came to do that?

No, but I have in some of my reading, back a long time ago, it was believed that massage was good for you, and I understand that was probably a standard practice. Now, where the cocoa butter came in, I don't know unless it was a type of a lubricant or something.

I remember it was a bar, sort of a - you know how distorted your young memory can be - but I can remember, I don't know how old I was, but I could have been, well, five, and maybe earlier, I can remember the sessions of doing that. She was a wonderful lady and took very good care of me.

Ray, do you think your experiences with polio and now post-polio syndrome have contributed to your passion for Rotary and for your involvement in Polio Plus and now the PSA?

Oh, yes, I'm sure it did. And I had a dual motive because I grew up in a Quaker family where you learn that what you're supposed to do is help people and take care of yourself, but help others that need it and brighten the corner where you are, you know, just whatever you can do. It doesn't have to be great, but there are people that could use support, moral support, and a lot of times I try to - well, I'm optimistic and cheerful, and believe that while there are lots of problems in the world, you don't look at the hole in the doughnut and get anywhere.

Ray Taylor - (continued)

And, yes, I think the fact that - well, the fact that I understand how really fortunate I am to have gotten, to have become eighty years old; I've lived, oh, I've lived in Australia a couple of years. We've lived in - I think this our twentieth, nineteenth or twentieth home. We've met all kinds of people. I can sing and dance, I still can read, write, hear.

So Rotary does offer me the possibility. Well, Rotary is built on service, and my interest in fellowship is because the first order of getting to know people is acquaintance. You can do better in a group, because as a group activity you're empowered by whatever number of people there are to do a little bit more good than you are just by yourself. That doesn't excuse you from doing something yourself, not at all, and you should.

But Rotary, working together with people who truly are in the business of service, who truly want to help, such as this polio eradication program - we have, in one day in India - I know they inoculated 45 million people, boys and girls, in one day. Well, you can only do that with an organization. Now, it took Rotary and WHO and the health societies in India to do that, but as a group, we can accomplish a great deal. Small pox is the only other disease that has ever really been conquered by man, and so it's a stretch and it's a reach, and many people say, "That's crazy. You're never going to get that done." And I still have people tell me, "Oh, you can't find every kid."

I say, "well, you can try." And if you don't find every kid, if you get enough people inoculated, people are the host for the virus and if it has no host, it'll stop, just like the flu does. So, yes, to answer your question, Rotary and polio for me have been a natural fit. And I've met a lot of people, great Rotarians, who themselves have no knowledge of polio, but they want to do something that's going to make the place better and this is what they do.

Audrey Tourt

Year and month polio was contracted?

July 1946

Age at the time polio was contracted?

7 years old

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

None

Where you lived when you had polio?

Uniondale, Long Island, NY

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

Brain - could not speak or relate to others.

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

Meadowbrook Hospital, Long Island, NY

How long were you hospital?

Approximately one month.

What method of treatment was used?

Isolation

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

No

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

No

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

Yes

What grade did you attain in school?

12th Grade

What career(s) did you pursue?

After school clerical and Administrative (after my children were grown)

Were you in the military?

No

Audrey Tourt - (continued)

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

No outstanding achievements - normal wife/ mother of three and eventually a job as village clerk for a large municipality.

What was/is your marital and family status?

Married with 3 children & 6 grandchildren

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

Afternoon headaches; approximately 15 years ago - more body pain in last 5 years.

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

No

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

I never really thought about it to much.

Any other comments you many want to add.

I do feel fortunate to have heard about our support group. It is nice to know there are others who believe and understand your discomfort.

Bob Urie



Year and month polio was contracted?

July 1956

Age at the time polio was contracted?

25

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?

No

Where you lived when you had polio?

Monmouth, Illinois

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)?

What parts of your body did the virus affect?

All

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?

Peroria, Illinois

How long were you hospitalized?

4-5 months

What method of treatment was used?

Sister Kenny put hot packs (accidental 3rd degree burns on calves) Iron Lung

Did treatment include rehabilitation?

Yes

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?

Braces and crutches - abandoned after a year or so, for FT wheelchair.

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?

More or less.

What grade did you attain in school?

Ph. D. Following polio

What career(s) did you pursue?

Ordained Presbyterian minister and career and personal counselor.

Were you in the military?

No

Bob Urie - (continued)

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

Solo airplane at age 56 (hand-controls)

What was/is your marital and family status?

55th wedding anniversary - June 2005: 5 married children, 14 grandchildren.

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

1987

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

Added new ones, i.e., ramp van first then power chair, bathtub lift.

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

Good

Any other comments you many want to add.

**N.C. "Outstanding Handicapped Citizen of the Year" (late 60s) N.C. Director, White House
Conference on Handicapped Individuals - 1976-1977.**

Jerry Allen Vaughn



Year and month polio was contracted?
May 1953

Age at the time polio was contracted?
12 - turned 13, June 12th

Were other family members also affected by polio and if so who?
No - quarantined approx. 350

Where you lived when you had polio?
High Point, N.C.

What type of polio did you have (mild, moderate, acute) (paralytic, non-paralytic, bulbar)
Spino-bulbar, paralyzed head to foot 5 to 6 months while hospitalized.

What parts of your body did the virus affect?
Neck to feet - weighed approx. 108 lbs when afflicted, weighed less than 50 lbs when discharged

Where were you hospitalized when you had polio?
Polio Hospital in Greensboro, NC

How long were you hospitalized?
Approximately 7 months

What method of treatment was used?
Oxygen tent and rocking bed - whirlpool bath and wrapped with steam towels (both between 130 to 140 degrees) every hour with therapy around the clock.

Did treatment include rehabilitation?
Yes, almost 12 years - during time in hospital and rehab at home - round the clock nurses at home for about 6 months (1954)

Did you have to wear braces, use crutches, etc. and for how long?
Yes, but only time in hospital

Did you attend school uninterrupted by polio effects?
No, only attended 8th grade part time - school friends brought homework to house and wrote down answers I provided and turned in.

What grade did you attain in school?
Graduated High School - 2 years college

Jerry Allen Vaughn - (continued)

What career(s) did you pursue?

Manufacturing, marketing, sales, management

Were you in the military?

No, 4-F qualification due to polio

Outstanding achievements in spite of disability?

Never really considered myself being disabled, just slowed slightly - built two companies from scratch to excess of \$40 million annual sales.

What was/is your marital and family status?

Married to first and last wife May 1, 1964, three children, 9 grandchildren

When did you first begin to notice post polio symptoms?

1993 - 94 (possibly early 1980's)

Have you had to return to assistive devices long ago given up?

Yes, leg and wrist braces 1994

How has polio influenced your life (good or bad)?

Increased my drive to succeed at all things.

Any other comments you may want to add.

Given me the opportunity to excel as a leader, father, and achiever of what I set out to accomplish in all aspects of life.

Diane Weis



I was diagnosed with "Infantile Paralysis" in the summer of 1939, when I was 4 years old. I awakened one morning, with a high fever, headache and was unable to stand. The Dr. First thought that I had Rheumatic Fever, but soon realized that it was Paralytic Polio that involved both lower limbs. My family consisted of mother, father and a sister that was two years younger. No one else in our family or extended family was ever diagnosed with polio. We lived in North Bristol, Ohio, which is a small rural town in Northeast Ohio. Where I may have been exposed to the polio virus was never determined. I was taken to a hospital in Elyria, Ohio, which had been converted to a "Pediatric Polio Hospital" where I remained for 10 - 11 months in a large ward with many other children. During that time I was treated with hot packs, water therapy and numerous wheelchair races. I have no bad memories of my hospitalization during that time except for extreme homesickness. My family lived 75 miles away, in the days before fast cars and super highways. My mother came to visit at least every other week and of course I always cried when she left. How hard that must have been for her. My father took care of the home front during those weekends.

Upon leaving the hospital, it was recommended that I continue with the exercises and water therapy locally. Also, that when I became 5 ½ to 6 years old, I should return to Elyria and have the new surgical treatments performed, that consisted of muscle and tendon transplants. During this time, my parents could not afford my costly care, so sought help from the "March of Dimes", which helped immensely, not only monetarily but also with emotional support.

In the early 1940's, we followed their advice and over the next six years I had multiple muscle and tendon transplants done on both legs by Dr. Clarence Heyman, M.D., an orthopedic surgeon from Cleveland, Ohio. During this time I wore metal braces on both lower legs attached to my shoes or a cast post surgery. I had my last surgery in 1947 and was then able to walk without any braces or supportive devices.

My mother was my biggest advocate, and, although it was determined by those in charge, that I should attend the special school for physically disabled students, primarily those with polio, she refused and insisted I go to the public schools, which I did. The school system was very cooperative, especially during my time off with surgery, and, with determination, I was able to do most everything the non-polio student could do. That's probably when the type "A" personality clicked in. In high school I played baseball and basketball. I was a member of the National Honor Society, and outside of a slight limp and my skinny lower legs, my life was very normal.

I was so impressed with the nurses who cared for me during my many hospitalizations, that after high school, rather than studying journalism as I had planned, I decided, at the last minute, to become a Registered Nurse. I applied for and won a full scholarship by writing a paper on "Why I want to become a Registered Nurse". My topic concerned my polio experience.

At the beginning of my senior year, in 1955, we spent 3 months as student interns, at Children's Hospital in Akron, Ohio. It wouldn't be long before the vaccine was available for all children, but at that time I spent much of my time working with polio patients that were in a converted church next door to the hospital.

Diane Weis - (continued)

There wasn't enough room for the patients and iron lungs in the Hospital itself. I worked many hours in all areas of the hospital and gradually developed a drop foot that became very pronounced. One of the paralyzed tendons that had been inserted when I was a child from above the ankle to the front of the foot had stretched and had to be replaced.

I took 2 months off from nursing at that time and Dr. C. Heyman performed what was to be my last polio related surgery. Since I had initially been one of his first patients, and had entered nursing, he refused any payment. I did well and graduated with my class.

In 1959, I drove throughout the West with my nursing school roommate. She returned home, and I went to Del Norte, Colorado where I worked at a small community hospital, in the Southwestern mountains. It was one of the highlights of my nursing career. I also worked in Upland and Laguna Beach, Ca. And Mesa and Phoenix Arizona. I loved being a nomad, meeting new people and seeing different parts of the country! I returned home in 1962, in my VW Bug and moved to Akron, working at Akron Children's Hospital. I met my husband to be in Akron in July of 1963 and we were married that November. We'll celebrate our 43rd wedding anniversary this year. We had 4 children in the next 6 years, 2 girls and 2 boys. I had normal pregnancies. In 1967, we moved from Akron to Mount Vernon, Ohio where I continued to work as an R.N. at the local hospital a few hours a week. My husband was transferred to Grove City, Pa. In 1978, where we lived for 27 years before moving to NC in July 2005. When my children were older I returned to work as a Home Health Care Nurse to help pay for all those college educations. In 1986, I began to catch my toes on my right foot while walking, and after tripping a few times became fearful of falling. I stopped walking in Malls, etc. , but continued to work at the hospital on the night shift. I happened to catch a one minute reference to PPS on a Pittsburgh Channel. I had never heard of it before. I eventually was able to obtain the name of a Dr. Who was a physiatrist, and was acquainted with this new "Phenomenon" called PPS. She immediately braced my right lower leg and the following year, the left. I didn't have to worry about tripping and falling anymore and my independence returned. It was a blessing. I then began to work as an RN in Home Health, which I loved. I worked until 1994, when walking gradually became more difficult with increased weakness in my legs, I retired on disability later that year.

I was helped a great deal in 2002 at a Post Polio Clinic in Johnstown, Pa.. I attended a 5 day workshop with approximately 20 others who also experienced Post Polio symptoms. It covered Alternative treatments as well as Conventional. The most meaningful class for me was learning to do "Yoga in a Chair" which I try to make time for at least 3-4 times a week at home. It teaches one to do mild stretching and some relaxation techniques to improve muscle tone, flexibility and decreased pain. It has been very helpful for me. I also began using a cane. During the last 8 years I have developed a "Chronic" Rotator Cuff problem of both shoulders. I have had each repaired two different times and the left now has a full tear again, which is not repairable.

I have given a lot of thought to "How has polio influenced your life, good or bad", and have to say good. Sometimes it can be a real pain in the neck, but overall it's taught me to be grateful for what I have. I can look in any direction and see someone who doesn't have the freedoms and quality of life I so. Pain happens to most of us in our later years. Mine could be worse. I love to travel and see new things, regardless of my inability to climb and walk long distances.

Diane Weis - continued

I have a very understanding and caring husband, my 4 children plus their spouses, and 5 grandchildren who like to spend time with me.

I am grateful that in the Sandhills there are such friendly and caring people who belong to the "Post Polio Support Group". Many try to understand PPS but it means a lot to be with those who experience it themselves. Thank you!