

Jeanne Palmquist Schenk, formerly of Montgomery County

Jeanne Schenk

Interviewee: Jeanne Schenk

Interviewer: Kate Scott

Date of Interview: 12/05/07

Run Time: Approximately 60M

Cassette

Biographical Data Form

Oral History Release

Photographs (6) Jeanne Palmquist seated by swimming pool – “Summer before polio,” September 1952; 2) Laura Caffrey and Jeanne Palmquist, Spring 1953 – “one month before Laura died”; 3) Laura Caffrey, Age 5, Spring 1953; 4) Harold Richardson (Modale), Terry Hughes (Council Bluffs), Jeanne Palmquist (Villisca), December 17, 1952; 5) “Carnival King and Queen,” March 25, 1954; 6) Jeanne Palmquist, 1955, “After surgery and one month in full body cast in new brace.

Letter (original) from Sister Elizabeth Kenny to Mrs. Grace Palmquist, November 20, 1942

Newsclippings: Osterholm, Richard. “Villisca Girl Combines Her Talent With Courage to Win,” Omaha World-Herald, May 9; “Report Two New Cases of Polio”, Omaha World Herald; “Tap Dancer Attends Classes - Unseen After Polio Attack”, Omaha World Herald, n.d.

“Villisca Speech Contestants - Wins Top Rating”

“Winners In Industrial Committee Contest”

“Scene from the Magic Flute”

“Villisca’s All State Musicians”

“Villiscans Rank High in National Merit Scores”

“Announce Eight Scholarship Winners”

“Most Polio Patients Are Going Home for Christmas,” Council Bluffs, Iowa, December 21, 1952.

“Bay Area Rehab Center Offering New Programs”

Transcript



For as long as she could remember, Jeanne always wanted to be an entertainer. Born in Villisca, Iowa in 1941, she contracted polio in 1952 when she was in the fifth grade. She was an active child. Her favorite hobbies were tap dancing, acrobatics, and swimming. “I was in the swimming pool at the municipal pool every single day, rain or shine.” According to Jeanne, “The first week of school, I developed a virus and it did not get better. It got worse. My doctor, who was an elderly man, made house calls for a couple of weeks. By the time I was diagnosed on September 22, I was pretty much paralyzed. I did not go to the hospital until September 29th and by the time I got there I was pretty much paralyzed from the neck down and having great difficulty breathing and swallowing. For two weeks, I remember crying, hearing crying and screaming. It was a nightmare. I was running a high temperature, but I was still aware.” After the first six weeks at Mercy Hospital in Council Bluffs, Jeanne started making a marvelous recovery. She enjoyed playing on the mat and when she got a wheelchair, she began having fun and mobility allowed her to have a great social life in the hospital. “One of the boys on my floor