

Christie L. Rushing, Polk County

Interviewee: Christie Rushing

Interviewer: Wendy Riggerberg

Date of Interview: November 29, 2007

Location of Interview: Des Moines, IA

Audio CD

Biographical Data Form

Oral History Release

Medical Documents: 1) Original Iowa Methodist Hospital, Raymond Blank Memorial Hospital for Children Medical Records "Face Sheet"; 2) Original Correspondence and Records from Dr. Marvin Dubansky to Dr. Mary Louise Lyons, M.D. 3) Copy of Records from Iowa Methodist Hospital one day before first surgery to correct what the physician called a "deformity" on her left foot.

Transcript

Christie Rushing, one of the youngest participants in the collection, lived most of her life not knowing that she had polio. She caught the virus in 1954 when she was only 18 months old, but she was misdiagnosed with acute laryngotracheitis. She was treated with oxygen and antibiotics and hospitalized overnight. When she was two years old, her records indicate she was treated for a limp. Doctors thought she had cavus feet. At the age of six, Christie had an experimental surgery to correct her feet, but it was not successful. Between the ages of six and eleven, she wore metal braces. After another corrective surgery (triple arthrodesis) at the age of eleven, Christie started at Smouse School in Des Moines.

Christie remembered, "Dr. Dubansky did try to tell me when I was eleven that I must have had polio. But, all along, my mother did not believe it." In 1989, Christie began her own search for answers to her fatigue, weakness, back and neck pain. She sought the advice of an orthopedic surgeon. That day, when she turned to leave his office, he handed her medical records from the 1950s. "It brings tears to my eyes still. Because, if it was not for him I would have been lost. Those records show that I had polio – and, that took a lot of recycling for me to understand myself as a person who had polio. I don't know how somebody can be glad to have a diagnosis of polio, but it has helped me a lot. That was at the bottom of all my problems physically."