

Lyle DeGraw, Floyd County

Lyle DeGraw

Interviewee: Lyle E. DeGraw

Interviewer: Kate Scott

Date of Interview: November 8, 2007

Run Time: Approximately 40M

Cassette

Biographical Data Form

Oral History Release

Photographs (2)

Lyle DeGraw Family, Rosemary (wife),
Joe, Steve, and Sarah, Circa 1978,
Rockford, Iowa.

Lyle DeGraw Family, "Kristina's Baptism"
in Hayward, Wisconsin, Circa 2005.

Transcript



Lyle DeGraw, standing right in picture, was diagnosed with polio at Mercy Hospital in Mason City, Iowa in 1952. He was treated in isolation for spinal polio at Iowa City at the age of 16 years old. He was treated in Iowa City for the three months. Half of the time, he spent in isolation. He attributes his passion for football as an important thread of hope in his recovery and remembers a special hospital visit from his high school football coach. He wanted to get back home to resume his football season. But, he also recalls being so weak the nurses had to feed him. The "eerie" sound of the iron lung will not escape his memory. He went on to graduate from Iowa State in 1957 with a degree in farm operations. Lyle reflected, "I am fortunate from the standpoint that I have never considered myself as handicapped. I have done everything within my life that I probably would have done had I not had polio... we did have some boys out side the dormitory – they named me as 'One Arm DeGraw' but like I say, I knew my right arm was my disability. At least I know my disability. Some are not so lucky." Lyle and his wife Rosemary have three children and several grandchildren. They currently reside in Rockford, Iowa. Lyle interjected this comment at the conclusion of his interview, "I didn't mention the fact that one of the underlying thoughts that I had when I left the hospital was praise God that it was I that had the polio rather than someone who did not know God."