

Lila Stierwalt Ruch, Warren County

Lila Stierwalt Ruch

Interviewee: Lily Stierwalt Ruch

Interviewer: Kate Scott

Date of Interview: October 5, 2007

Run Time: Approximately 50M

Cassette

Biographical Data Form

Oral History Release

Photographs: 1) Lila in physical therapy; 2) Lila with crutches

Newsclippings: 1) Newsclipping about the Infantile Paralysis Foundation featuring Lila in wheelchair; 2) Des Moines Register, March 5, 1989, [n.p.]; Mike Kilen, "Countdown to a Polio Vaccine," Des Moines Register, January 28, 2007.

Miscellaneous: 1) Lila to her grandparents while she was at Blank Memorial Hospital in Des Moines; 2) Diary Entries, "Can Disappointment be Overcome by Dwelling on the Problem?" 3) "Blank News" by Lila Stierwalt; "Requirements and Specifications for Sandbags;" Copy of Lila's Iowa Polio Survivors' Book.

Transcript



Ruch was diagnosed with polio at Harkin Hospital in Osceola, Iowa in 1950. She was only ten years old. Ruch recalled, "I just remember being in the basement and my parents having to get down on their knees to look in the window at me. I was in isolation for quite some time. But, I actually only have good memories of [Blank] hospital. I felt comfortable there and well cared for... Lee Forest Hill was the main doctor. We had fun times, too, as we got better. We got into big wooden wheelchairs with high backs and it would take two of us to operate it." Ruch's experiences with polio have made her a more compassionate and empathic person. "It has made me aware of people," said Ruch. "I have no prejudices toward people because of their differences, no matter what that difference is. All of us are different in one way or the other and so I take people just as they are."