

Jannis Kaye Larson, Floyd County

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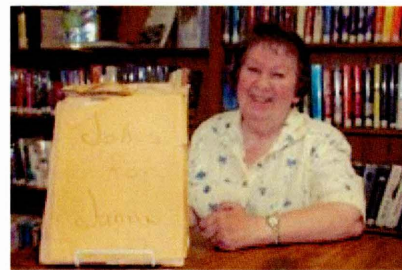
Interviewee: Jannis Kaye Larson

Interviewer: Annette Wetteland

Date of Interview: 11/15/07

Location of Interview: Rudd Public Library

Run Time: Approximately 35M



Cassette

Biographical Data Form

Oral History Release

Photographs (3)

Transcript

One night in 1950, when Jannis was 12, she began running a fever. Hallucinations set in as the fever accelerated. She was diagnosed in Charles City and sent to Iowa City for six weeks of treatment. Shortly after she was admitted to the hospital, her lung collapsed and doctors performed a tracheotomy and placed her in an iron lung for two or three weeks. "I had my neck cut open on Halloween night," Jannis remembered. "The strange story about that is they did not put me to sleep for the surgery. They deadened it – four corners – and basically did it. When they let my mom come back in, they put this 'Y' shaped tube in the opening of my neck. One end was hooked into oxygen. The other end was open and the third end went in. Mom came in and tried to talk to me. I could not speak unless the open end on the "Y" was covered. She got upset because I could not talk. So, she got the nurse and the nurse explained to her that she had to cover that hole. Well, mom covered the hole and kept talking and she did not take her finger off so I could not breathe...that is a memory that I still have."

When she was released from the University of Iowa Hospital, her arms were paralyzed but she was able to walk. She exercised daily and her family hired a carpenter to build her a "frame with ropes hanging down and slings for each arm" so she could exercise her weak muscles. Doctors warned her she would never be able to use her arms again. But, like many of the survivors in this collection, she was determined to prove them wrong. In 1957, she was even named Rudd High School homecoming queen. Jannis noted, "I've always been spunky enough that if you tell me I can't do something, I am going to try it or prove you wrong. I've been able to get along with a normal life. I've been married, I had children, I live on the farm, I drive the tractor, I do everything – perhaps in a different fashion. I showed them."