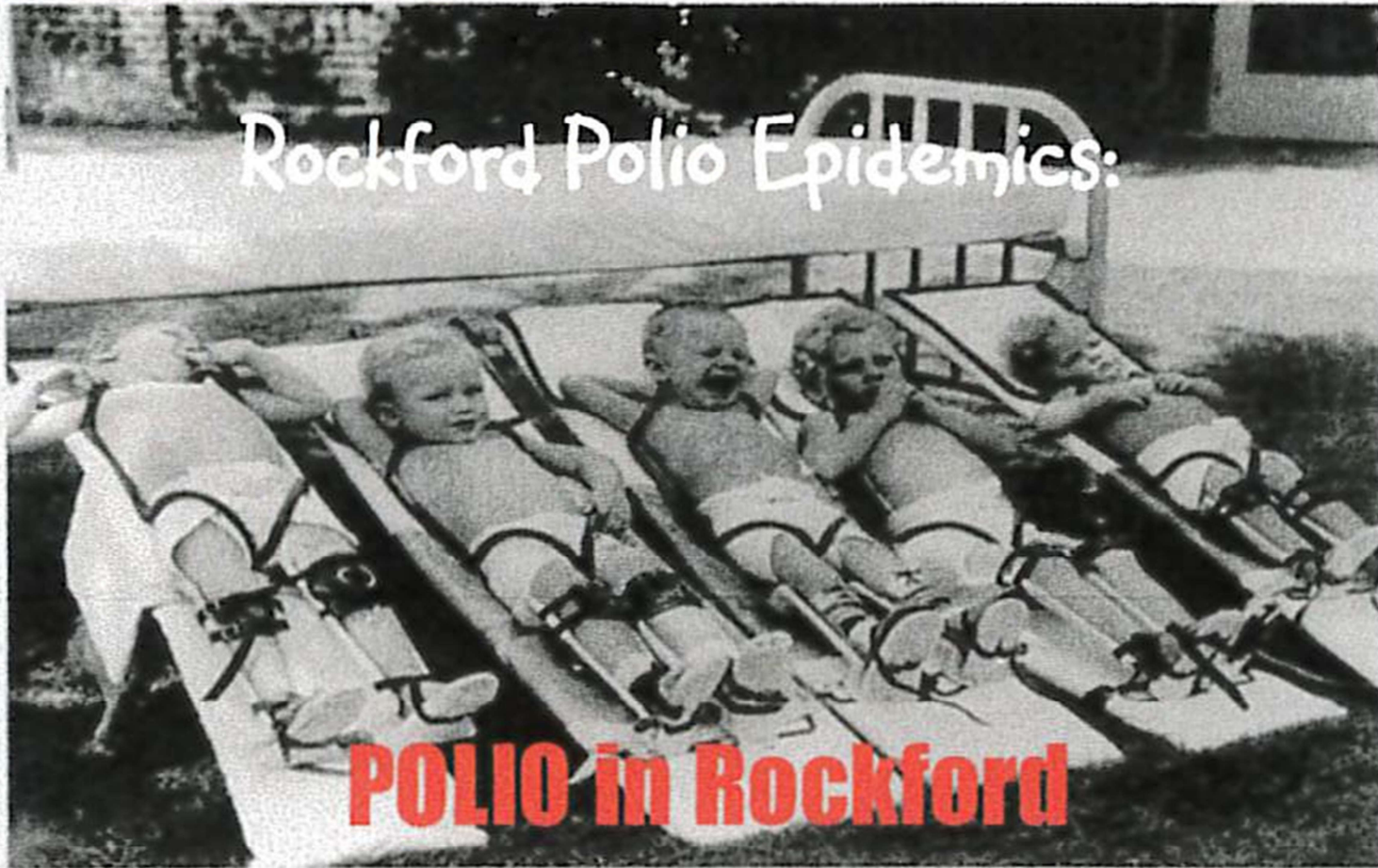


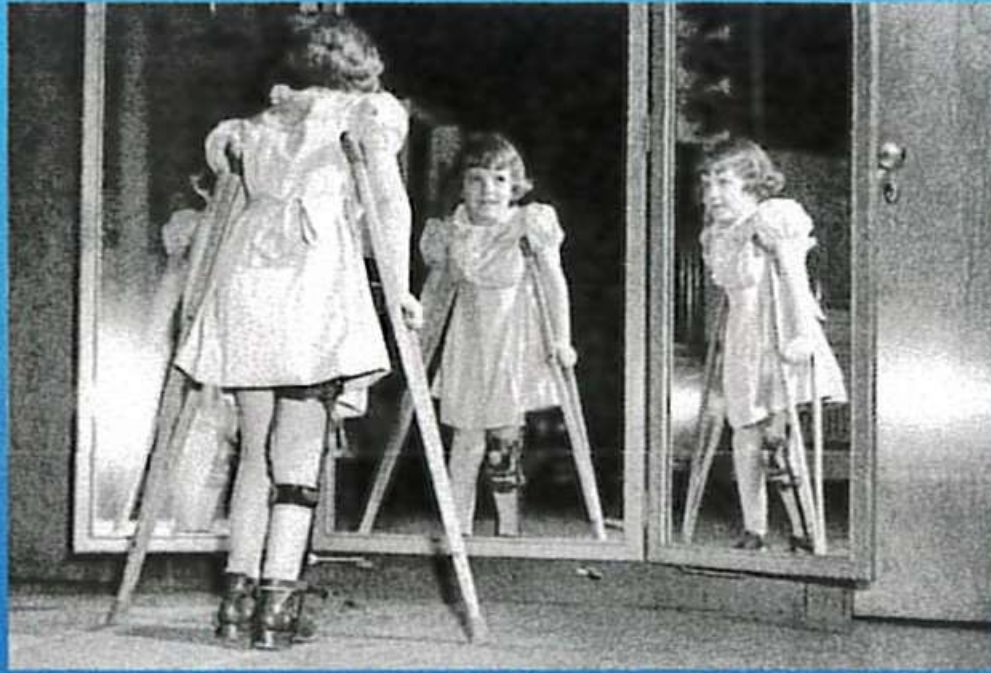
Rockford Polio Epidemics:



**POLIO in Rockford**

By Don Swanson, Retired Principal of Walker School, Member of the Board of Trustees of Midway Village Museum, and a polio survivor.

## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945 REHABILITATION



Going home day was really exciting for children who had not had direct contact with parents during their entire hospital stay. For me the stay at the Contagion Hospital was 13 months!

# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

## REHABILITATION

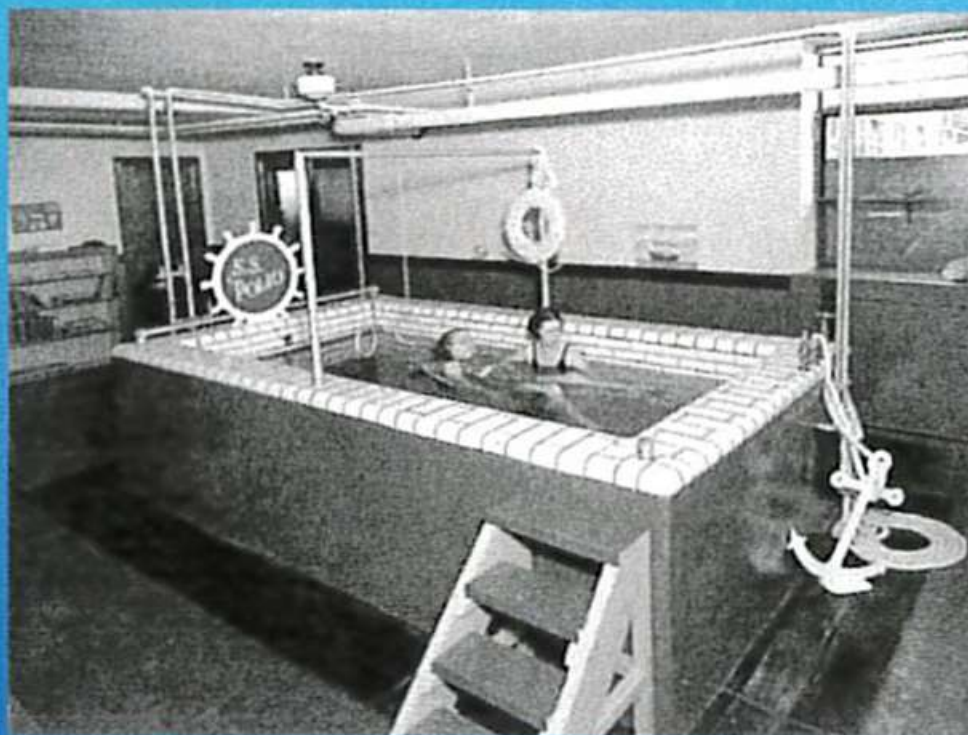


I attended Freeman School for Grades 1-3 to participate in a rehabilitation program for polio patients.

## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

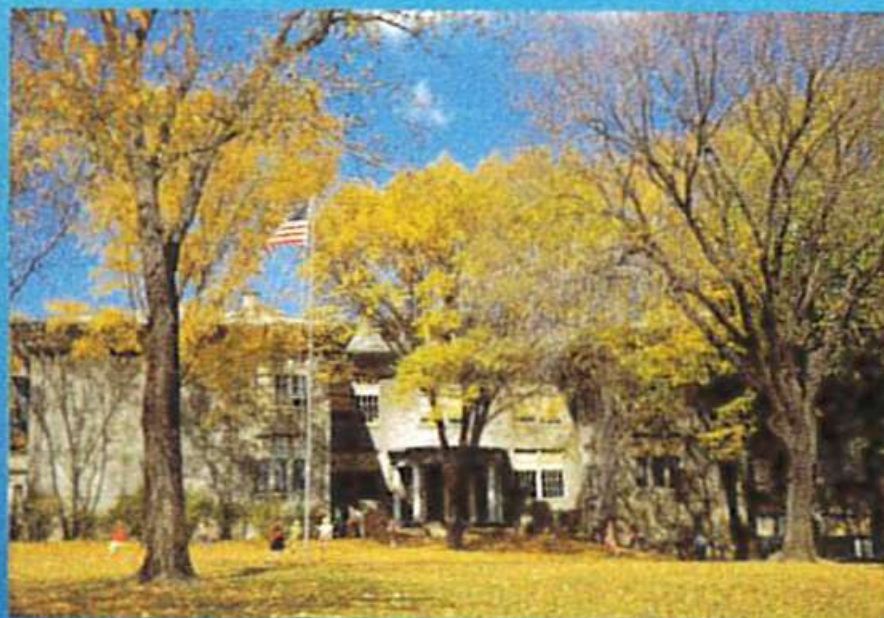
### REHABILITATION

At Freeman, my hydro-therapy program continued. I received therapy twice a week. I also went to the Rockford Children's Home for therapy



## ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMIC- 1945

### REHABILITATION



I moved to Highland School and regular classes for grades 4 and 5. I still had a  $\frac{1}{2}$  leg brace on my right leg but walked 6 blocks to school, crossed E. State by means of an underpass, and climbed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to my classroom.

# POST POLIO SYNDROME

## REHABILITATION

At this time as a 9 year old I began one night per week taking swimming lessons with Paul Peterson in East High's swimming pool.



# POLIO AFTERMATH

## MARCH OF DIMES

In 1946, we became aware of all President Franklin Roosevelt had done to establish the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis and the March of Dimes.



# **POLIO AFTERMATH**

## **MARCH OF DIMES**

Here is a photo of FDR's cane and braces that are now in the Smithsonian Institution collection.





# POLIO AFTERMATH

## MARCH OF DIMES

Tear-jerker photos like this one were used to promote the March of Dimes poster child.



## **POLIO AFTERMATH**

### **MARCH OF DIMES**

This is another  
Child of the  
Year photo  
from the  
March of  
Dimes.



# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMICS

## ROCKFORD 1950 EPIDEMIC

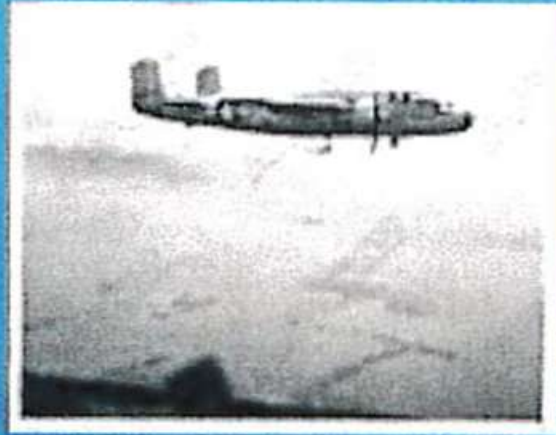
In the 1950s epidemic DDT spraying continued over the city. DDT was considered a panacea that could prevent many polio cases.



# ROCKFORD POLIO EPIDEMICS

## ROCKFORD 1950s EPIDEMIC

In the 1950s epidemic  
DDT spraying continued.  
The short video here  
shows spraying of the  
entire city of Rockford  
with an US Army B-25.



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJs1tITof\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJs1tITof_s)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJs1tITof\\_s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJs1tITof_s)

## POST-POLIO SYNDROME



These are some of the therapies used with Rockford post polio patients. A plan of therapy is usually developed with the help of an Orthopedic Physician.



# POST-POLIO SYNDROME

## MY THERAPY



I swim daily for 20 -30 minutes, 5-7 days/week to maintain and strengthen my leg and back muscles. The 4 hydro-jets also provide therapy for sore muscles.

For 30 years, I swam laps at the YMCA in Rockford as therapy for polio. About 5 years ago the Y eliminated the Men's Fitness Center with showers. Some of the scheduling features beneficial to post-polio therapy were eliminated, I could no longer go to the YMCA to swim. Four years ago we built an addition to our home. It includes our indoor Endless Swimming Pool so swimming can be done at any time!

