

# **JAMES HOLLANDER, EARLIER YEARS, POLIO ALSO**

*Photographs by Mildred Willoughby Hollander, 1912-2009*

*Compilation 2021 by James Hollander*

J. Hollander Polio Presentation at Immunization Summit  
North Little Rock, AR 8/19/22

# James Hollander, born 1946, Connecticut



**Jimmy  
Hollander  
1946  
stands up  
2<sup>nd</sup> day,  
9 mo. old**

**Jimmy (3½)  
with  
brothers,  
1949**



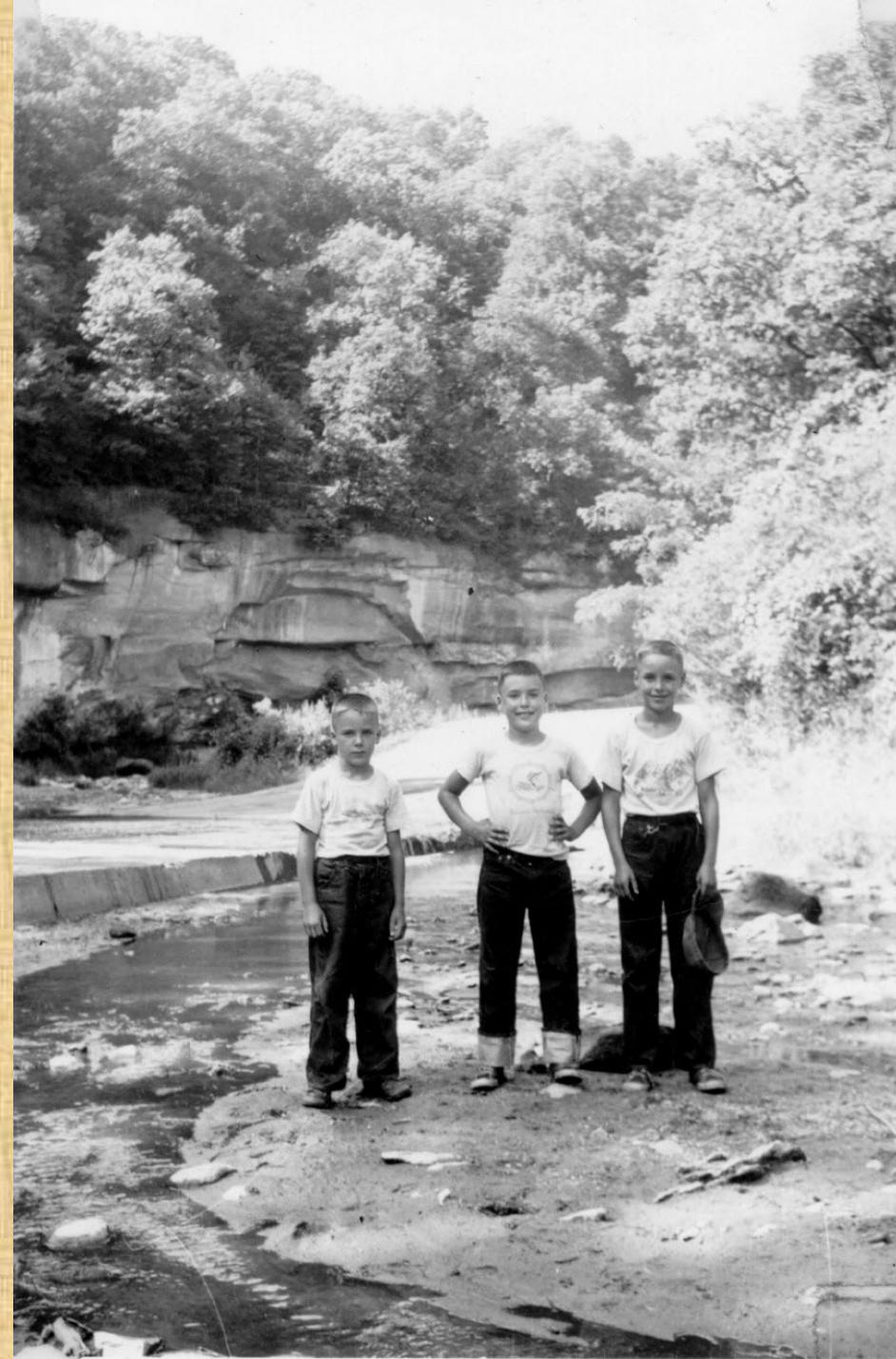
# GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE, Illinois



**My brothers and I in spring, 1952, got measles, mumps, chickenpox in rapid succession over several weeks. Mom and we boys were staying here. The childhood diseases may have then weakened my resistance to polio paralysis in July.**

**(Photo around 1960. )**

**Jimmy (6½), Paul and  
Ted. Ledges St. Park, IA  
July 20, 1952 the day  
before Jimmy was  
paralyzed from polio...**



# **COMING DOWN WITH POLIO JULY 21, 1952. MOTOR, NOT SENSORY, NERVES AFFECTED. NOT PAINFUL, NOT NUMBING**

**I woke up the morning of July 21, 1952, with a headache and feeling really sick like from a bad cold. I went in the kitchen and got a glass of orange juice. On my way back to my bed to put it on my sidetable, my left knee went out from under me and the orange juice went flying all over the carpet. Then my right knee. I let out a warwhoop. My folks helped me get back in bed.**

**By the afternoon, a doctor came and soon told them it must be polio and take him to the Ames hospital. There, the nurse put me in a bed with siderails up and told me to pull the cord if I should need to. I thought that was silly, but in a half hour I had vomited all over the bed and did pull the cord. Imagine the risk to the nurse cleaning up that mess. Polio is a GI tract virus.**

**That evening my folks drove me to Blank Memorial Hospital in Des Moines. I remember seeing the moon out the car window in the sky and wondering where I was going.**

# ISOLATION WARD AT BLANK MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

I remember being very sick in bed in the isolation ward in the basement and kept there a week. I waved up to my family who waved back from a ground level window. The nurses wore masks. I don't remember using a bathroom so bed-pans may have been used. But imagine the risk to the nurses with a GI virus like polio! This picture of another place gives an idea.



[https://www.google.com/search?q=polio+isolation+ward&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiB-iN6o\\_xAhVPOq0KHf2nBK8Q2-cCegQIABAA&oeq=polio+isolation&gs\\_lcp=CgNpbWwCQARgAMgIIADIECAAQGFDb3BhY-ecYYPH1GGgACAB4AYABqQKIAd8GkgEFOC4wLjGYAQCgAQGgAQQnd3Mtd2l6LWlFZ8ABAQ&scient=img&ei=yHjDYIH3Ec\\_0tAX9z5L4Cg&bih=483&biw=960&client=firefox-b-1-d#imgrc=tnZqVX8m-GNaZM](https://www.google.com/search?q=polio+isolation+ward&tbm=isch&ved=2ahUKEwiB-iN6o_xAhVPOq0KHf2nBK8Q2-cCegQIABAA&oeq=polio+isolation&gs_lcp=CgNpbWwCQARgAMgIIADIECAAQGFDb3BhY-ecYYPH1GGgACAB4AYABqQKIAd8GkgEFOC4wLjGYAQCgAQGgAQQnd3Mtd2l6LWlFZ8ABAQ&scient=img&ei=yHjDYIH3Ec_0tAX9z5L4Cg&bih=483&biw=960&client=firefox-b-1-d#imgrc=tnZqVX8m-GNaZM)

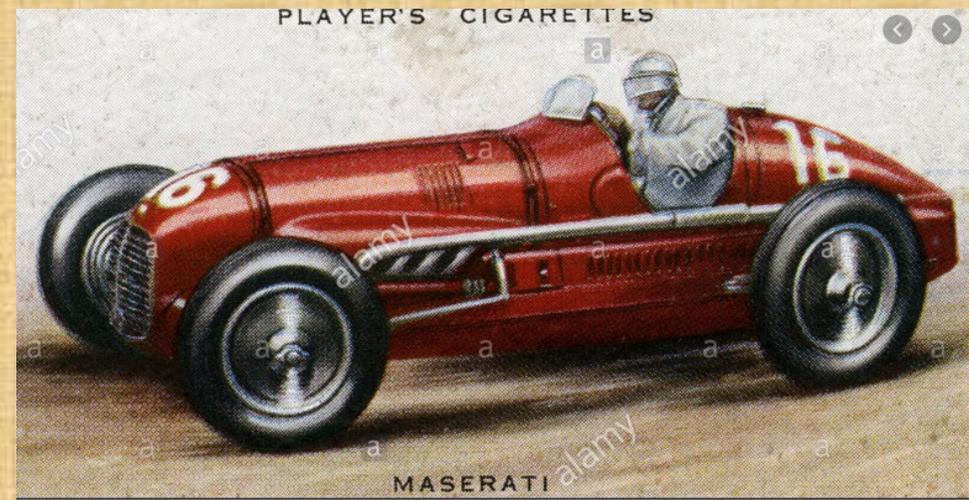
# SPRUNG FROM ISOLATION: ONTO A REGULAR POLIO WARD AT BLANK MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Out of isolation, I was on a regular polio ward. OK! Mom brought me a plastic model race car, white with blue trim. Also a philodendron in a yellow porcelain tricycle-form pot. I was happy. I also learned some cultures put crippled people out on a hillside to die. I was glad I wasn't *there*. Mom was pleasant but, once in a while, she looked tired and grim. At age 6½ I wondered "I'm the one who got polio, why is Mom grim?" Only later was that obvious to me. I sensed unpleasantness to have polio, not unhappiness nor foreboding.

In a wheelchair they let me use, I could zip down the hospital tile floor down the hall; that was great--to go as far as the iron lung ward wide window. There, big black cans with motors faintly whirred and sounded like when you breathe deeply over and over.



[https://www.google.com/search?q=philodendron+images&client=firefox-b-1-d&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=GlwxEmiReto61M%252C2zegEYjZQMayOM%252C\\_&vet=1&usg=AI4\\_-kQxXwrGzrWLFDO550a-oM4JLMg1g&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwh8vPlopPxAhVUG80KHcdfAVUQ9QF6BAGGAE&biw=1920&bih=966#imgrc=GlwxEmiReto61M](https://www.google.com/search?q=philodendron+images&client=firefox-b-1-d&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=GlwxEmiReto61M%252C2zegEYjZQMayOM%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_-kQxXwrGzrWLFDO550a-oM4JLMg1g&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwh8vPlopPxAhVUG80KHcdfAVUQ9QF6BAGGAE&biw=1920&bih=966#imgrc=GlwxEmiReto61M)



[https://www.google.com/search?q=race+car+1930s+image&client=firefox-b-1-d&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=pTKNO5NwfrtEyM%252CKlexV79EYKBF5M%252C\\_&vet=1&usg=AI4\\_-kRr5SNQ6XMA12\\_wR3rN1uM8KnT9JA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjgreq1opPxAhXOU80KHb5QDncQ9QF6BAGOEAE#imgrc=pTKNO5NwfrtEyM](https://www.google.com/search?q=race+car+1930s+image&client=firefox-b-1-d&tbm=isch&source=iu&ictx=1&fir=pTKNO5NwfrtEyM%252CKlexV79EYKBF5M%252C_&vet=1&usg=AI4_-kRr5SNQ6XMA12_wR3rN1uM8KnT9JA&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjgreq1opPxAhXOU80KHb5QDncQ9QF6BAGOEAE#imgrc=pTKNO5NwfrtEyM)

# BLANK, BROADLAWNS, HOT PACK TREATMENT

I was a month in Blank Hospital and then got overflowed to the Polk County Broadlawns Hospital when the influx of polio patients filled up Blank. In August, on the muggy hot Iowa afternoons (windows open, no air conditioning) they put on the very hot, wet scratchy hot packs for an hour or so. I didn't like it much, but it was "Sister Kenny treatment" they said would keep muscles going until maybe nerves returned.

One dark night in the big polio ward I remember falling out of my bed onto the cold tile floor and being miserable. I don't remember when they came to put me back.

After about two months all told, I got out of the hospital. I think it was snowing lightly. 2 months would only be late September, too early for snow even in Iowa, so my recollection must be faulty.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/american-masters-polio-and-iron-lungs-1950s-le-clercqs-illness/>



<https://www.alamy.com/poston-arizona-registered-nurse-mrs-edythe-sasser-is-assisted-by-yoshiko-konatsu-nurses-aid-scope-and-content-the-full-caption-for-this-photograph-reads-poston-arizona-registered-nurse-mrs-edythe-sasser-is-assisted-by-yoshiko-konatsu-nurses-aid-and-tomiko-kitasaki-nurses-aid-in-the-treatment-of-infantile-paralysis-all-patients-suffering-from-this-dread-disease-are-treated-by-the-kenny-method-hot-packs-are-applied-to-the-stricken-limbs-and-this-is-followed-by-muscular-and-nervous-reeducation-image259160979.html>

# Following a Des Moines IA Trolley in the Rain

Mom would take me for physical therapy. We hated being held up behind trolleys. I thought of my physiotherapist as “an ankle breaker.” I hated the pain from that woman.



# GEORGIA WARM SPRINGS FOUNDATION FEB.-APRIL, 1953

Admissions Office, (unrelated car)  
Georgia Warm Springs Foundation.  
Feb. 11, 1953



Georgia Hall (Warm Springs  
polio meeting center)  
Feb. 12, 1953



# WARM SPRINGS FOR A MONTH WITHOUT FAMILY, AGE 7



The bed rails were pulled up and clicked into place for the night. With my Rome, GA, friend in the next bed, we would see how fast we could say the Lord's Prayer. One evening he was talking loudly. The nurse said Shush "the boogeyman'll get you!" He got louder and got up on his knees. The nurse yelled at him and he got even louder yet. Then she went and got the straightjacket and tied him up in it. I learned how to be a good patient by avoiding this. We didn't have any radio and I don't remember any other friends like this picture shows. I do remember two nurses pushing my wheelchair outdoors on the sidewalks one afternoon and I had my first Coca Cola in the classic bottle. I drank it like water at first; the pain felt like my head would blow off!



Margaret Bourke-White/Time & Life Pictures — Getty Images (1938)

<https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/05/books/review/Combes-t.html>

## **WHY WARM SPRINGS, SO FAR FROM IOWA?**

**The purpose of me being taken to Warm Springs was to get fitted with aluminum braces instead of steel braces that would be too heavy for a 7 year old child. I recall seeing the brace shop with several tables in a long room, braces in various states of repair or completion, and plaster of Paris dust around.**

**A long leg brace was fitted by the brace man wrapping my leg with athletic wrap and then covering it by hand with hot plaster of Paris. After a while the plaster cast would set and then he'd saw off the cast to have a reverse mold of that leg.**

# BRACE MAKING AT WARM SPRINGS



# My Full Length Braces

During my 1<sup>st</sup> grade year, Mom brought home phonics work so I would read better. The school needed time to put in stair railings on the split flight up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade room. I used Grandpa's child's wooden desk in my room to study phonics. I felt I earlier learned to read from comic books.

Even though no kid living in town could take the school bus, I was allowed to. The bus driver would lift me up into the bus each school morning about 8:13am. (By high school I could pull myself up.)

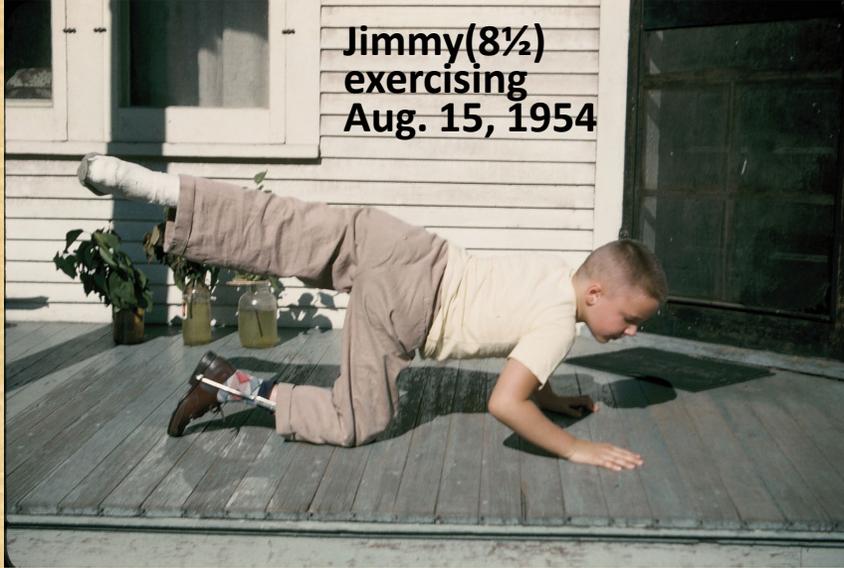
In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade I stood up from my desk and my brace knee lock snapped with a "bang!" I told the teacher I had "mechanical difficulties." I was embarrassed. I got taken home until a knee lock could be put on. This is life with braces unless you have backup braces.



Iowa, April (May?), 1953, home from Warm Springs

# WHAT I COULD DO

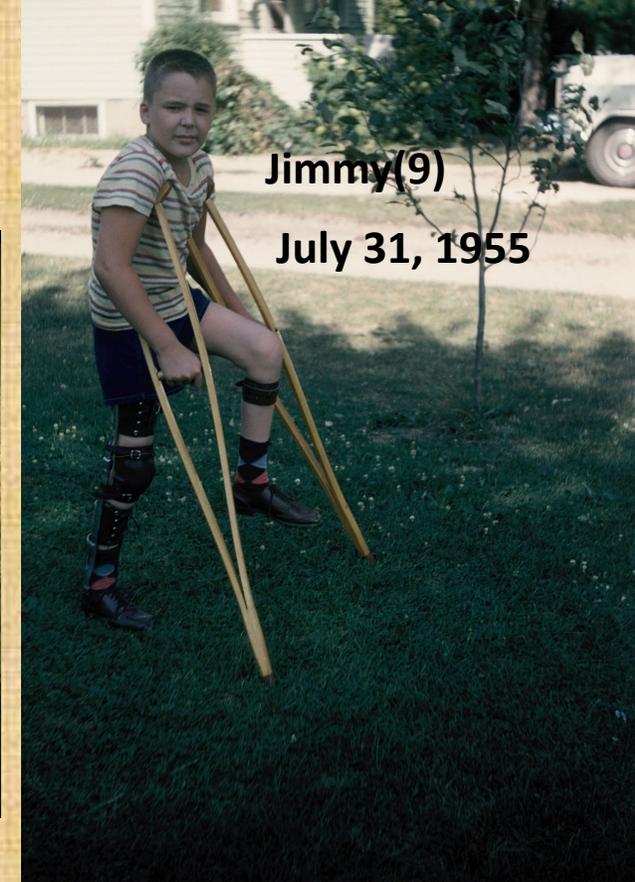
Jimmy(8½)  
exercising  
Aug. 15, 1954



Chinning bar  
Jimmy(10)  
Sept. 27, 1956

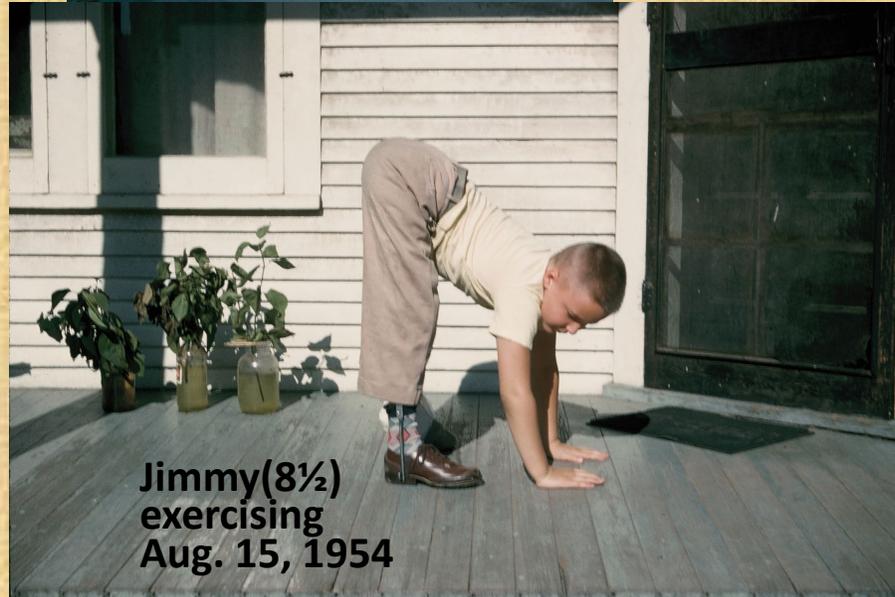


Jimmy(9)  
July 31, 1955



Jimmy(9) July 31, 1955

Jimmy(8½)  
exercising  
Aug. 15, 1954



Today, you might wonder if I was being shown off like a circus act; isn't this a bad thing for a disabled kid? At the time I didn't think anything of it. I was proud to have contortionist abilities as shown in the two lower photos.

# Growing Up with Polio

June 11, 1954.

My “Canadian crutches,” with upper arm cuffs and handgrips only, lie on ground.

Jim, Ted, Paul at a covered bridge near Winterset, IA. I’m using the “Canadian crutches.” Aug. 23, 1953.

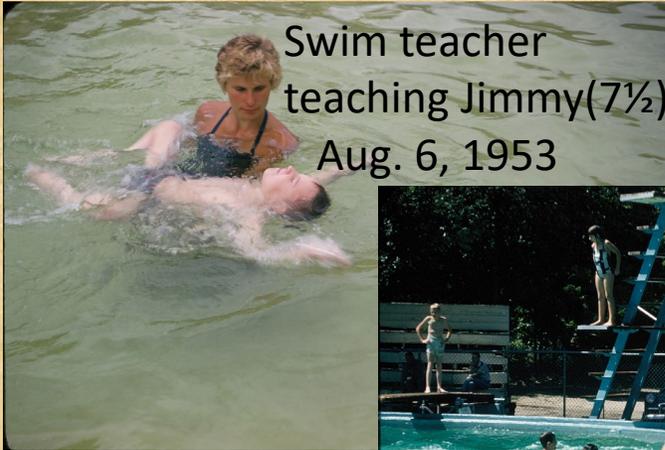


Our front yard, neighbors' house



# SWIMMING LESSONS, CARR'S POOL, AMES, IA

I was literally terrified of diving even off the 4-foot springboard, not to mention this tower. It took at least two summers of swimming lessons before I could dive.



Swim teacher  
teaching Jimmy(7½)  
Aug. 6, 1953



Last day of lessons  
Jimmy(10½), 4' dive  
Aug. 3, 1956



Jim(11) back stroke  
July 22, 1957



Jim(11) ladder to 6'  
July 22, 1957



**Jimmy (8) on new  
chain drive exercise tricycle  
May 10, 1954**



10-R43

zz-Rxx

**Jimmy(9) with  
bass I caught at  
Fish Derby  
July 17, 1955**



# **POLIO VACCINATION—3 TYPES OF POLIO**

**Did I get vaccinated after the Salk vaccine came out in 1955? Of course I did!**

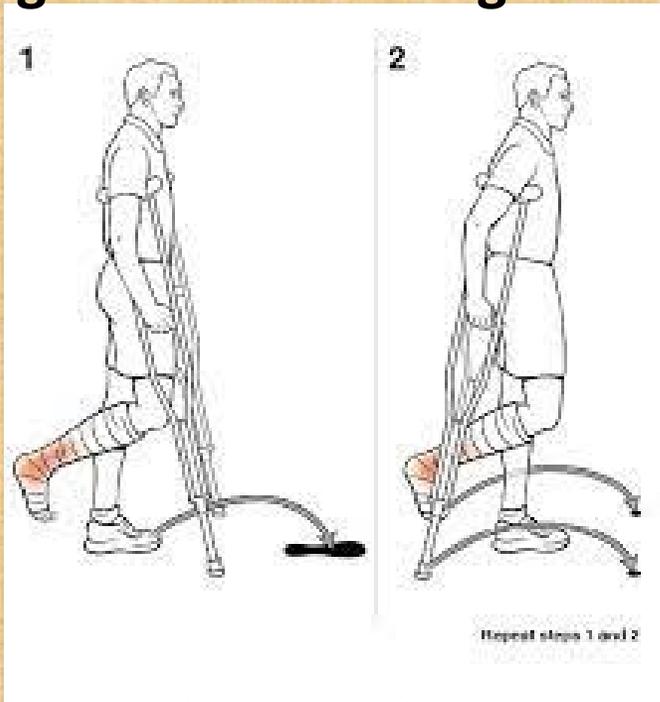
**I was told there are three types of polio virus, and I could get polio again.**

**In spring 1952, my parents had had me injected with gamma globulin ahead of that polio summer season, but it either didn't work or gave out after perhaps 6 weeks.**

# HOW TO USE CRUTCHES. FALLING DOWN OVER YEARS.

4-point gait confers stability, but it's slow. It's like walking with 4 legs. I use it now that I need more stability.

Swing-through is fast, but you need lots of arm and shoulder strength to avoid falling.



Once, age 8, I fell on my rear soundly due to a waxed wood floor in an Ames shop. I have fallen many times since then; it just comes with the territory of polio and is not like what people think of an “old people’s” fall. One learns safer ways to fall. With age, falls do get riskier on shoulders, rotator cuffs and wrists. I fell in a store in 2008 and tore my right rotator cuff. Other polio people can tell lots of injury stories. But athletes get injured and go in and out of hospitals, and nobody besides them thinks anything of it. A full flight of stairs, however, at that time really scared me.

Other gaits are described at:

<https://baycare.org/health-library/step-by-step-using-crutches-with-swing-through-non-weight-bearing>

<https://quizlet.com/343076851/axillary-crutches-gait-patterns-flash-cards/>

# **HOW WAS I TREATED BY THE FAMILY AFTER POLIO?**

**I think Mom knew she had her hands full raising four boys, and planting, weeding, harvesting, canning and cooking, not to mention being wife to Dad.**

**Almost immediately after my polio she had to coordinate my physical therapy in Des Moines, get me to Warm Springs and back, get my 1<sup>st</sup> grade phonics reading work, supervise my exercises, and get the school to put in railings. In 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, she put me in the church children's choir.**

**In 3<sup>rd</sup> grade she and Dad had to decide whether to follow the teacher's suggestion to skip me to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. That meant having me do all the 4<sup>th</sup> grade work over the summer.**

**She also was involved with getting me back and forth to ham radio classes and helping me set up the ham radio table and equipment when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade.**

# **EASTER SEAL CAMP AT YMCA CAMP NEAR BOONE, IOWA**

## **Two weeks, Aug. 5, 1957**



We didn't have words like "special" or "ableism" then. Normal people were able-bodied; we were crippled. This is my cabin, age 11, with a counselor and other kids. Reveille would wake us up and Taps meant lights out.

We had lapidary, whittling chopsticks, one evening of sex education, a mess hall and singing, and activities. I met other polio kids. Also thalidomide kids had arms off with fingernails growing out of shoulders or elbows where an arm would be. I found a mercury switch in a trash bin—that was nice!

I got physically sick after the first week. My parents took me to the Boone IA hospital. I was diagnosed with homesickness and sent back to camp. An all-day canoe trip paddling 5 miles down the Des Moines River was our big event, and I really liked that.

# OUR MESS HALL, CAMP MITIGWA, WOODWARD IA



Two summers I went to Camp Mitigwa, the Boy Scout camp where we had archery, target shooting with .22 rifles, and a swimming competition. I came in far last, of course, but I finished and got a big ovation. Notice that Blank Dining Hall has the same donor name as A.H. Blank Hospital in Des Moines where I was treated for polio in 1952.

<https://www.unitypoint.org/blankchildrens/the-blank-family.aspx>

(When I was at Mitigwa, there were no girls, no technology, no zipline, no climbing wall. The promo "Mitigwa Strong," last half below, somewhat portrays my camp experience.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYcUmaj91r0> (Mitigwa 2020) See also: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf-6Jym\\_2Ko](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rf-6Jym_2Ko) (Mitigwa 1992)

**Andy and  
Jim(14) picking  
cherries in the  
yard. June 24,  
1960.**



# **ORTHOPEDIC SURGERY Aug.1962, AGE 17**

**Dr. Wm. A. Baird saw I was standing crooked and recommended orthopedic surgery to stretch connective tissue, to be out of the hospital in 3 days. In Ames' Mary Greeley O.R., rt. leg incisions went crosswise forward of my hip and lengthwise out above my knee. They stretched it and put me in a plaster waist cast with a 4-inch pin crosswise through the femur above the left knee to keep stretched leg and cast in place, see next slide. Cast openings for voiding were provided. While I was under anesthetic, they decided on the fly to surgically remove a digit from my left index toe to avoid it elbowing against its shoe.**

**About a week after surgery, I had not voided so an enema was ordered to start me again, and that worked. In Iowa August, the weather was muggy and hot.**

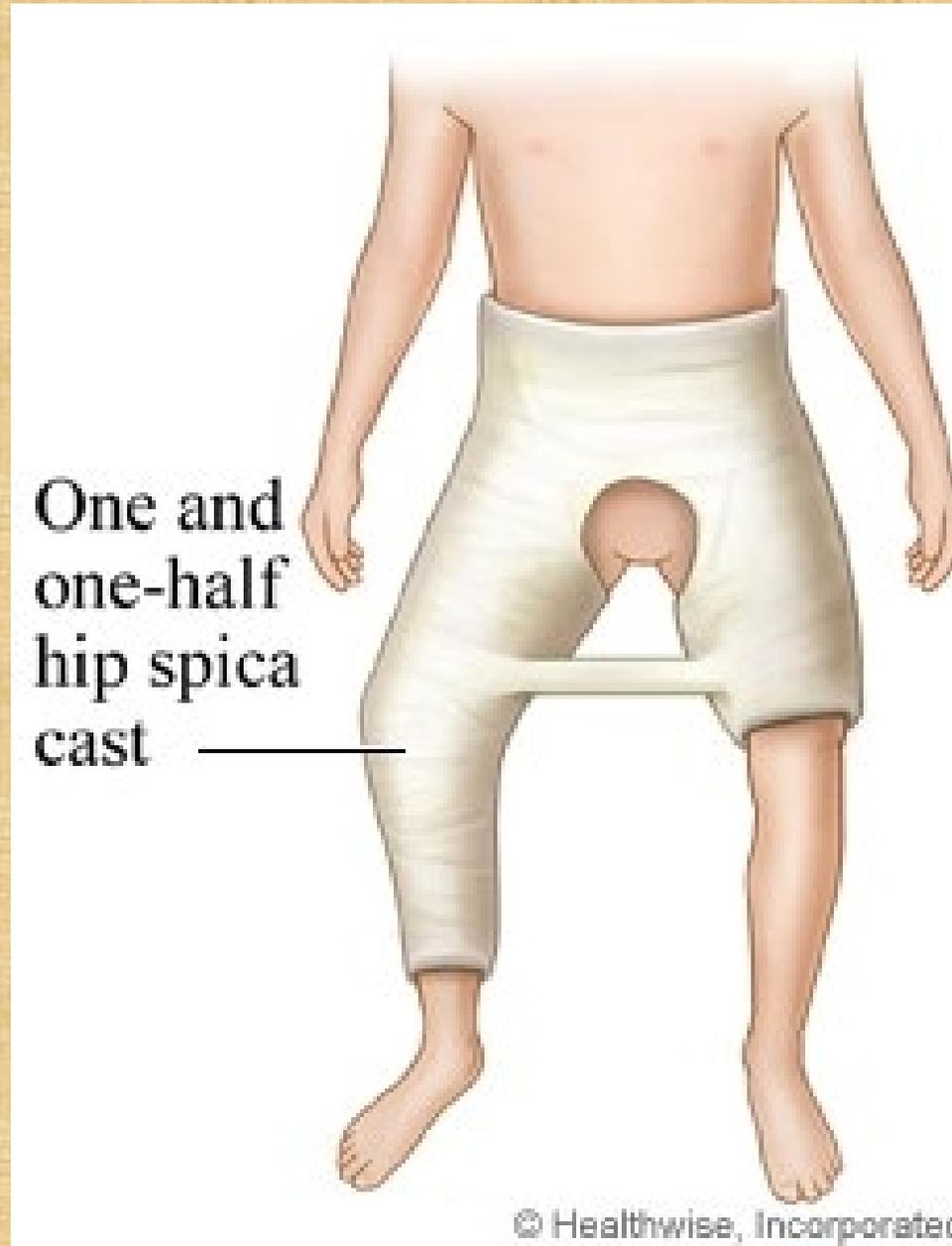
**Ames ham radio club got me a 6-meter transceiver so I wouldn't be bored. The hospital let them put a short wire antenna out a window over the roof for it.**

**After three weeks, they used a pliers to pull out the 4-inch pin through the bone w/o pain killer (oof!) and then sawed off the cast and released me later. The surgery worked; I could stand straight after that. The stitch marks are still visible. Surgery-disturbed nerves have remained numb in places since.**

For an article on soft tissue release surgery as of 2015, see:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4619376/>

# My Cast for Three Weeks, August, 1962



One and  
one-half  
hip spica  
cast



**Jim (17) 1963 at  
Ted's wedding in IA**

# **BOOK BAG IN COLLEGE & LAW SCHOOL**

**What was it like to go to college with polio? For the first two weeks, I was way out of shape so felt tired muscles going from class to class using swing-through method on crutches. Also, there were stairs with railings to climb.**

**Mom made me a canvas bookbag to hold the heavy college books and notebooks. Her design was important. The wide canvas strap went over my right shoulder. Extra-long strap length put the book bag down by my left knee. That gave clearance for the crutches and a natural rate of swinging of the bookbag itself. That approximately synchronized with the rate I'd swing with the crutches to go forward, and it worked well.**

**In law school I also used that bookbag and we had stairs down and up from the tunnels between buildings in the winter. For typewriting at exams, I would simply grasp the zipped carrier handle with the heavy manual typewriter inside and lug it. I would put it up the stone steps progressively to get into Langdell Hall and sit in the top row of seats.**

# LATER YEARS IN THE FIRST PART OF MY LIFE



**Jim (28) at his  
Harvard Law  
School  
graduation.  
With  
Rosalie Otters,  
Mom, Andy.  
June, 1974**

**JAMES HOLLANDER,  
EARLIER YEARS, POLIO ALSO**

***Thank You!***

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