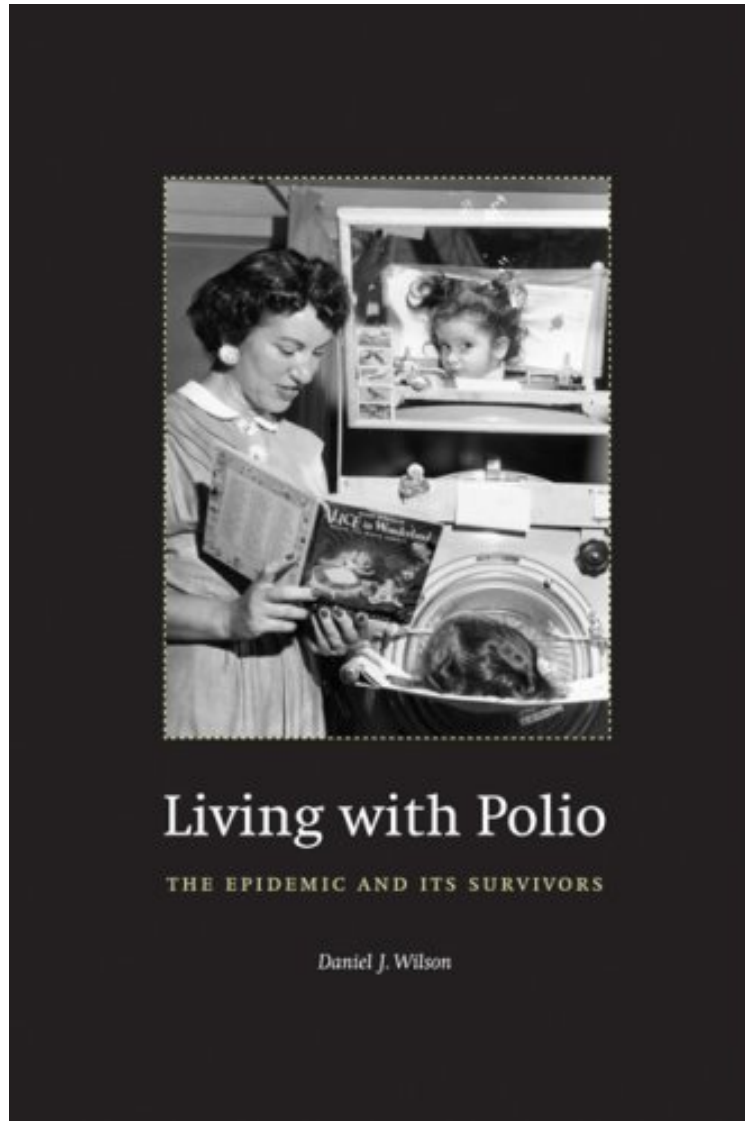


(Mobile book) Living with Polio: The Epidemic and Its Survivors

Living with Polio: The Epidemic and Its Survivors

Daniel J. Wilson

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Daniel J. Wilson : Living with Polio: The Epidemic and Its Survivors before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Living with Polio: The Epidemic and Its Survivors:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. I am Living with Polio By Concerned Having had polio in 1953, I can relate to many of the items in this book. It is a great read. 19 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Living with Polio By Thomas H. Burns This book is well written, as you would expect from a professor of medical history. The author's experience with polio makes this more than a historical exercise, it is a very personal journey. It brought back my memories of cold, itchy "hot packs", the love-hate relationship with our P/Ts. This book brought a tear to my

eyes. It brought back memories of pain but also of victories. Every relative of a polio survivor should read this, to understand where we came from and where we are. Tom0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very informative book. By Angela Menton This was a very good book. It will only have interest to someone who had polio or had a family member with polio.

Polio was the most dreaded disease of twentieth-century America. Whenever and wherever it struck, hospitals filled with victims of the virus. Many experienced only temporary paralysis, but others faced a lifetime of disability. *Living with Polio* is the first book to focus primarily on the personal stories of the men and women who had acute polio and lived with its crippling consequences. Writing from his own experience as a polio survivor, Daniel J. Wilson shapes this impassioned book with the testimonials of more than one hundred polio victims, focusing on the years between 1930 and 1960. He traces entire life experiences of the survivors from their alarming diagnoses all the way to the recent development of post-polio syndrome, a condition in which the symptoms of the disease may return two or three decades after they originally surfaced. *Living with Polio* also details each physical and emotional stage of the disease: the loneliness of long separations from family suffered by hospitalized victims; the painful rehabilitation as survivors tried to regain the use of their paralyzed muscles; and the return home and readjustment to school or work with the aid of braces, crutches, or wheelchairs. Poignant and gripping, *Living with Polio* is a compelling history of the enduring physical and psychological experience of polio straight from the rarely heard voices of its survivors. "[Daniel J. Wilson] has done an admirable job of assembling more than 150 first-person accounts into a coherent narrative. . . . In the America of 2005, new cases of polio are extraordinarily rare; the World Health Organization hopes to eradicate it completely by 2008. But Mr. Wilson reminds us that more than half a million Americans are still living with its consequences." Gordon Haber, *New York Sun* "For readers who . . . did not live during the prevaccine period, *Living with Polio* provides an excellent survey of the stories of those who had the misfortune of being struck by the disease." Mark Pallansch, *Science*

From Publishers Weekly If you were an American child in the 1940s and early '50s and contracted a "summer flu," there was real cause for worry because the initial signs of polio resembled flu symptoms. More than 400,000 American children in those years did get polio, and many of them survived including Wilson, a professor of history at Muhlenberg College. This volume, unlike others marking the polio vaccine's discovery, tells the survivors' stories: the difficult, painful journey from diagnosis to recovery, including paralysis, hospital isolation wards, grueling physical therapy, living with disability and, most recently, the emergence of postpolio syndrome, the recurrence of symptoms decades after recovery from the disease. Wilson's account, drawn from more than 150 polio narratives, is perhaps most affecting in highlighting the less well-known moments and facts: a doctor's futile attempt to downplay the harshness of the diagnosis; the double burden on African-Americans when hospitals would not admit them; and children being children even in the hospital wards, as they have spitball fights and play pranks. Wilson's account is a fitting testimony to the survivors' suffering and courage. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "Moving and informative, personal and universal—a highly readable account of the plague of poliomyelitis by a fine writer who has experienced the illness himself." -- Richard Selzer "Richard Selzer" (11/29/2004) "Polio survivor Daniel J. Wilson takes a different and frequently poignant approach by recounting the experiences of the sufferers and their families. Head of the history department at Muhlenberg College, Wilson spends little time on the background of polio and the vaccine program, devoting most of his book to its victims. . . . While Jonas Salk and, to a lesser extent, Albert Sabin are seen as 'conquerors,' it's the survivors who proved to be the real heroes." -- Bob Hoover "Pittsburgh Post-Gazette" (04/13/2006) "Daniel Wilson's *Living with Polio* is an excellent history of this important disease. Wilson's scholarship is evident, as is his personal polio story, which makes this book one of a kind and truly worth reading. This book will appeal to scholars, health care providers, polio survivors, and anyone interested in history. It is a remarkable book that gives the real story of what happened during those frightening years in the first half of the twentieth century when polio ran rampant." -- Julie K. Silver, author of *Post-Polio Syndrome* -- Julie K. Silver "Julie K. Silver" (11/29/2004) "A polio survivor himself, Daniel Wilson has scoured America's polio narratives in order to distill the essential polio experience from the onset of the disease through to the late effects. In focusing on those individuals who have felt driven to recount their experiences of coming to terms with differing degrees of disability, he provides valuable insights into the history, not just of a disease, but of a generation—those postwar, pre-Salk vaccine baby boomers who succumbed to the annual epidemics of what was still sometimes called 'infantile paralysis.'" -- Tony Gould "Tony Gould" (09/23/2004) "Mr. Wilson, a history professor at Muhlenberg College and a polio survivor himself, has done an admirable job of assembling more than 150 first-person accounts into a coherent narrative. He recounts every stage of the disease, including a chapter on 'post-polio syndrome,' a mysterious resurgence of muscle weakness that assails many polio victims decades after they have accepted—and often overcome—their disabilities. . . . In the America of 2005, new cases of polio are extraordinarily rare; the World Health Organization hopes to eradicate it completely by 2008. But Mr. Wilson reminds us that more than half a million Americans are still living with its consequences." -- Gordon Haber "New York Sun" (04/26/2006) "This book captures

the nightmare of polio and its aftermath through the experiences of its victims. A polio survivor himself, Wilson has drawn on 150 personal narratives, published and unpublished, weaving quotes from those accounts with historical information on polio treatment and rehabilitation. The result is a vivid portrait of a devastating disease and its repercussions, as well as a glimpse into the physical, social, and psychological challenges of being physically disabled in mid-20th century America. For readers who did not experience the polio epidemic firsthand, this book dramatically demonstrates why the polio vaccine is such a significant milestone in modern medical history." -- Janet A. Crum "Library Journal" (04/15/2005)"Wilson goes beyond the superficial images of polio wards, iron lungs, braces and crutches. His book presents in vivid detail the history of the disease and its impact on its victims and their families. A polio survivor himself, he skillfully draws on more than 100 personal narratives to present the varied chronologies of lives affected by the disease. No two experiences with polio are alike, but they all follow the same progression: diagnosis, acute symptoms, rehabilitation, life on the polio ward, going home, resuming life, living with limitations, and facing post-polio syndrome. Though Wilson is clearly a biased observer, his research benefits from asking questions that could only come from one who has lived through the disease." -- Fred Bortz "Arkansas Democrat-Gazette" (04/24/2006)"Daniel Wilson. . . pieces together the experiences of 150 patients into a moving picture of the disease, from early symptoms to the alarming emergence of post-polio syndrome, a sort of neuronal exhaustion which sets in decades after the original episode. The pain, fear, guilt, isolation and tenacity of polio's victims, and their families, are powerfully described and are in many ways reminiscent of the latest greatest plague, AIDS. Like today's AIDS patients, polio survivors had a significant impact on attitudes towards illness; as Mr Wilson explains, the determination of polio survivors helped break down barriers for the handicapped, spurring 'a civil rights movement to free people with disabilities from cultural assumptions, from medical control...and to make their own decisions about how they would lead their lives.'"-"Economist""Based on personal narratives, the book follows the experience of having polio chronologically from the diagnosis-one which doctors were often understandably reluctant to make, and rarely seemed to handle well-through the acute crisis, the gradual process of rehabilitation, all the way to the patient's return home and subsequent life. . . . Overall, Wilson succeeds admirably on his own terms-taking ownership of the disease from medics (and from the academics and theoreticians) and giving it back to the patients who actually experienced it. . . . It is a valuable source of information on how the various treatments were experienced by the patients. . . . Daniel Wilson's book is a sobering indictment of the treatment of disabled people in mid-century America that can be read with profit, and, it is to be hoped, without complacency, by any practitioner today." -- Seamus Sweeney "Times Literary Supplement" (05/27/2005)"Living with Polio joins a growing list of books in which patients tell their own illness narratives. It gains authority because Wilson himself is a polio survivor, and his presentation of his own diagnosis at age 5, lengthy treatment, gradual recovery and relapse into postpolio syndrome, forms the core from which the others' stories emanate. Because the tale of polio's conquest is so dramatic, and the public presence of its famous participants so familiar, it has been easy to lose sight of polio's everyday, private victims. Wilson shows us 'the range of experiences of individuals lacking Roosevelt's advantages of wealth and power.' It is a bracing approach. Wilson spent nearly a quarter century completing the book, which 'is based on over 150 polio narratives.' Many poignant moments bring the polio experience to life. . . . For its abundant humanity and its rescuing of so many otherwise lost individual stories, Wilson's Living with Polio is an important book." -- Floyd Skloot "Chicago Tribune" (04/24/2006)"If you were an American child in the 1940s and early '50s and contracted a 'summer flu,' there was real cause for worry-because the initial signs of polio resembled flu symptoms. More than 400,000 American children in those years did get polio, and many of them survived-including [Daniel] Wilson, a professor of history at Muhlenberg College. This volume. . . tells the survivors' stories: the difficult, painful journey from diagnosis to recovery, including paralysis, hospital isolation wards, grueling physical therapy, living with disability and, most recently, the emergence of postpolio syndrome, the recurrence of symptoms decades after recovery from the disease. Wilson's account, drawn from more than 150 polio narratives, is perhaps most affecting in highlighting the less well-known moments and facts: a doctor's futile attempt to downplay the harshness of the diagnosis; the double burden on African-Americans when hospitals would not admit them; and children being children even in the hospital wards, as they have spitball fights and play pranks. Wilson's account is a fitting testimony to the survivors' suffering and courage." -- Publishers Weekly "Publishers Weekly""Best Consumer Health Books of 2005"--Library JournalFrom the Inside FlapPolio was the most dreaded childhood disease of twentieth-century America. Every summer during the 1940s and 1950s, parents were terrorized by the thought that polio might cripple their children. They warned their children not to drink from public fountains, to avoid swimming pools, and to stay away from movie theaters and other crowded places. Whenever and wherever polio struck, hospitals filled with victims of the virus. Many experienced only temporary paralysis, but others faced a lifetime of disability."Living with Polio" is the first book to focus primarily on the personal stories of the men and women who had acute polio and lived with its crippling consequences. Writing from personal experience, polio survivor Daniel J. Wilson shaped this impassioned book from the testimonials of more than one hundred polio victims, focusing on the years between 1930 and 1960. Wilson traces the entire life experience of the survivors-from the alarming diagnosis all the way through to the most recent development of post-polio syndrome, a condition in which the symptoms of the disease may return two or three decades after they originally surface. "Living with Polio"

follows every physical and emotional stage of the disease: the loneliness of long separations from family and friends suffered by hospitalized victims; the rehabilitation facilities where survivors spent a full year or more painfully trying to regain the use of their paralyzed muscles; and then the return home, where they were faced with readjusting to school or work with the aid of braces, crutches, or wheelchairs while their families faced the difficult responsibilities of caring for and supporting a child or spouse with disability. Poignant and gripping, "Living with Polio" is a compelling history of the enduring physical and psychological experience of polio straight from the rarely heard voices of its survivors.