

A Summer Plague: Polio and Its Survivors (ISBN 0-300-06292-3) by Tony Gould published by and available from Yale University Press, P.O. Box 209040, New Haven, CT 06520, or from your local bookstore (\$30). *Polio Network News* is pleased to excerpt from *Part I: The Rise and Fall of Epidemic Poliomyelitis*. In *Part II: Lives of the Polios*, polio survivors from England and America tell their own stories. The book concludes with *A Civil Wound*: an autobiographical coda. Gould's own story was placed last in the book as he explains in the introduction:

“ For what I discovered in the process of researching and writing this book was that I, too, had been so busy ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘denying’ my disability over the years that I had simultaneously both overvalued and undervalued it. I had overvalued it in the sense of regarding my experience of polio as somehow unique (hence my original intention of giving it pride of place here), and undervalued it by not allowing that it had made any substantial difference to my way of life and thinking. Certainly, I’d always regarded this as a pivotal episode in my life, one that had changed its direction; but I had also thought of it as over and done with.

... Yet I have learned that, however impressive a recovery you make, you don’t ‘conquer’ or ‘overcome’ polio in any meaningful sense, you merely adapt to the limitations it imposes and — if you’re fortunate — discover within yourself resources you might not otherwise have found.”

Excerpts from *Part I: The Rise and Fall of Epidemic Poliomyelitis*

“ Cats and dogs were suspected of being carriers of the disease; strays were rounded up and pets put down. In early July animals were being destroyed at a rate of ‘300 to 400 a day.’” *New York 1916*, Chapter 1

“ As his presidency would demonstrate, FDR was a past-master of the art of ‘divide and rule’; he would habitually set up two individuals or departments in opposition to one another, leading both to believe that they had his personal backing. People often made the mistake of imagining that he agreed with them when he was merely being agreeable and keeping his real thoughts to himself.” *FDR*, Chapter 2

“ In 1925, when the first ‘polios’ (as I shall continue to call them for convenience) were drawn to Warm Springs, regular patrons of the Meriweather Inn resented their presence in the public pool. They complained ... that it exposed them to the disease (regardless of the fact that these were ‘old’ polios long past the infectious stage). As a result, Roosevelt had another pool constructed nearby, so that ‘he and his “gang” ... could continue their unsupervised, unregulated, groping efforts to reduce their afflictions in the warm water of the Springs.’” *Warm Springs*, Chapter 3

“ The upshot was that, in 1939, Basil O’Connor announced, on behalf of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, that it had decided ‘to grant the sum of \$161,350 to Tuskegee Institute (in Alabama, half a day’s drive from Warm Springs) to provide the first polio center for negro people.’” *Polio Crusaders*, Chapter 4

“ ... Sister Kenny’s attempt to persuade the hospital doctors of Brisbane to abandon their splints and plaster casts set the pattern for many future encounters with officialdom: her words were greeted with at best incomprehension and, more commonly, derision; her demonstration of her method — until she became adept at it — with embarrassment.” *An Angel Abroad*, Chapter 5

“ ... In the Summer of 1954, when Salk, the members of the vaccine advisory committee and the staff of the National Foundation could do little more than hold their breath and hope or pray that no disaster would overtake the largest mass experiment in the history of medicine, O’Connor took an amazing gamble with money he did not have but was confident he could raise, and ordered twenty-seven million doses of vaccine at a cost of \$9,000,000 so that the pharmaceutical companies would continue to manufacture it pending the outcome of the field trial. If the vaccine failed to obtain a licence, it would be nine million down the drain; but if, on the other hand, the field trial was a success and no vaccine was available, there would be hell to pay.” *A Planned Miracle*, Chapter 6

“ Everything to do with polio in Britain — not least the disease itself — was on a minor scale. Outside Scandinavia, no one in Europe had been unduly concerned about polio until after the Second World War.

... In Britain, despite the continuing prevalence of polio, a campaign launched in 1958 to encourage the take-up of Salk vaccine made little headway against public apathy. It was not until the Spring of 1959, when the Birmingham City and England international footballer, Jeff Hall, died of polio, that the message got through.” *The Quick and the Dead*, Chapter 7

“ Many respiratory centres produced mimeographed newsheets in the Fifties. They had punning titles like *The Croaker’s Chronicle*, *The Res Parader*, *The Rocking Report*, *The Rock ‘n Roll*, *The Vital Capacitator*, *The Weakley Breather*, and *Gulpers’ Gazette*. The one that outstayed them all was originally known as the *Toomeyville Gazette*. By 1957 it had been ‘shelved and forgotten’, but it was revived under a new name, *Toomey j Gazette*, in 1958 (providing Dr. John Toomey with a measure of the posthumous fame he deserved for being right about polio in the Thirties — even if he could not prove it — when almost everyone else was wrong).

... In 1958, when Dr. Robert Eiben, Medical Director of the Cleveland centre, asked Gini Laurie* and the only other surviving volunteer in the Toomey Pavilion to revive their newsletter — ‘because each polio outpatient who came in for a checkup or a bout with pneumonia plied him with questions about all the other outpatients’ — they wrote to the medical directors of the other fourteen respiratory centres and drew in polios from all over the country.”

Born Too Soon, Chapter 8

*Founder of Gazette International Networking Institute, publisher today of *Polio Network News*, *I.V.U.N. News*, and *Rehabilitation Gazette*, formerly known as *Toomeyville Gazette* and *Toomey j Gazette*.

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