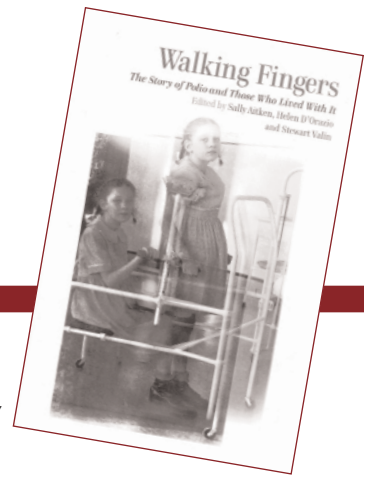


# Telling Stories

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Telling your story, as a polio survivor, has several benefits. Remembering and making peace with the past is healing. Telling your story allows you to acknowledge the many people who assisted you through the years. And telling your story can help others.

When the worldwide coalition of the UN, WHO, CDC, USAID and Rotary International succeeds in eradicating the poliovirus, your story will be an important contribution to the record of the polio epidemics.

## READING STORIES

By reading the stories of others, you can easily explore your past and “write” your own story. Each description of a rehabilitation unit, a classmate’s reaction and an overheard comment by a parent registers an internal, “Yes, that’s how it was,” or “No way.” There is as much value in finding the differences in your experience (your individuality) as in finding the commonalities, those connections that make you feel part of a special group.

## READY TO READ?

*Walking Fingers: The Story of Polio and Those Who Lived It*, edited by Sally Aitken, Helen D’Orazio and Stewart Valin, was launched in Westmount, a suburb of Montréal, Canada, in late March. The 225-page paperback was published by Véhicule Press ([www.vehiculepress.com](http://www.vehiculepress.com)). Liberally sprinkled with well-identified historic photographs, the book contains end-

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## Diabetes and Post-Polio Syndrome

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I use smaller luncheon plates since they make the portions appear larger. At a restaurant, I will share an entrée, or bring half of it home with me.

So far, I haven’t switched to artificial sweeteners. My decision is a personal preference to nourish my body with natural foods. I’d rather use a small amount of pure maple syrup in my muffins than use something artificial. I don’t drink soft drinks or juice anymore and prefer filtered water or unsweetened teas (sometimes flavored with lemon).

I am taking an oral diabetes medication, not insulin shots, and am using my glucose meter daily to monitor my

progress. My health care professionals are pleased with my progress and, I’m very thankful that my choices seem to be working for me.

How has my new lifestyle affected my post-polio symptoms? I am pleased that I have much less fatigue. While I still take a nap when I am tired, I am no longer taking a two-hour nap every afternoon. I have not driven for the past couple of years since I was unsure of my reactions. Fortunately, I have not needed to drive, and I am less fatigued now when riding in a car, when previously it was very stressful. I now feel in control of my emotions and in better health than I have in years. ●

## Telling Stories

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### Polio Stories Featured on PBS ...

KERA Dallas/Fort Worth is presenting a co-production of Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children and Ken Mandel Productions, "A Fight to the Finish: Stories of Polio."

Check your local listing or schedule at [www.kera.org/tv/productions/fight](http://www.kera.org/tv/productions/fight).

notes, bibliography, index and post-polio resources in Canada.

The personal stories are arranged chronologically based on the year of onset (1924-1984). Doing so gives a small glimpse of the succession of

limited treatments used to treat acute poliomyelitis. The stories, as edited, feel honest, conveying the sense that this *is* their story and their analysis (although limited) and not the story they *think* is the typical polio story.



Editors of *Walking Fingers*: (left to right) Helen D'Orazio, Sally Aitken and Stewart Valin, members of Polio Québec ([www.polioquebec.org/fr](http://www.polioquebec.org/fr)), a group founded in 1984.

Story after story lauds the contributions of Neil Cashman, MD, and Daria A. Trojan, MD, physicians at the Montréal Neurological Institute and Hospital. (Cashman is now in Toronto and Diane Diorio, MD, a neurologist, is working with Dr. Trojan.) Many of the survivors have accepted the wisdom of respecting and working with a knowledgeable physician, while educating and proactively helping themselves.

Dr. Trojan contributed the concise chapter about post-polio syndrome. Other chapters include a history of polio in Canada and the Canadian vaccine story which involves Paul Martin, Sr., the father of the current prime minister. Both father and son had polio, and the book contains an interview by the editors with Paul, Jr., although it is attributed erroneously to another.

Parts Three and Four provide the points of view of health professionals and family members. "Maybe My Dad

Didn't Go to War, but He Fought One of the Great Battles of the Century" is editor Stewart Valin's heartfelt tribute to his father and the story from which the book title was extracted. The post-polio literature is lacking in stories written by others involved in our polio history and these small sections attempt to correct this.

Editor Helen D'Orazio contributed the chapter about Sister Kenny and her story — "I Am More Than My Polio" — as a polio survivor whose arm was affected and who lived in a family where polio was never discussed.

The impetus for *Walking Fingers* was *Histoire vécu de la Polio Québec* published in 2000 by Carte Blanche and sold by Polio Québec ([www.polioquebec.org/fr/livre.html](http://www.polioquebec.org/fr/livre.html)). Polio survivor Sally Aitken, whose story is not included, was the force behind both books as she served as visionary, interviewer and editor. Aitken's personal polio experience, '60s individualist spirit, years of involvement in post-polio advocacy, willingness to allow others to have a voice, and her recent battles with benign brain tumors uniquely qualified her to initiate and complete the project. ●

*Walking Fingers: The Story of Polio and Those Who Lived It* (ISBN-1-55065-180-3) is an excellent addition to the literature documenting Canada's polio past. Copies may be ordered by your local bookstore for US \$18.95/CAN \$24.95 or at [www.vehiculepress.com](http://www.vehiculepress.com).