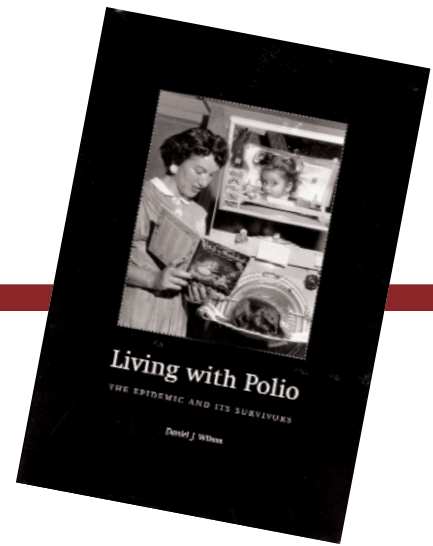


BOOKS TO “CHECK OUT”

Living with Polio: The Epidemic and Its Survivors

by Daniel J. Wilson
300+ pages, 10 halftones; Spring 2005;
ISBN 0-226-90103-3; \$29.00;
The University of Chicago Press (www.press.uchicago.edu)



Review of *Living with Polio*

Joan L. Headley, Executive Director, Post-Polio Health International, Saint Louis, Missouri

Daniel J. Wilson, a polio survivor, is professor of history at Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania. The simple title of his most recent book, *Living with Polio*, foretells the content of the book but belies its thoroughness. And, his book is not difficult to read.

Wilson explores living with polio from the dreaded phrase “I’m Afraid It’s Polio” to “An Old Foe Returns: Post-Polio Syndrome.”

The content of the book is compiled from Wilson’s research of over 150 polio narratives. In the introduction, he explains the value and limitations of these narratives. Throughout the text, he describes each phase of living with polio, based on the words of specific narratives while drawing conclusions without over generalizing or making the polio experience fit a preconceived mold.

Polio survivors who read the book will “find themselves” and will gain a better understanding of their fellow survivors’ experiences. Busy health professionals will be able to read specific chapters, e.g., about medical treatment during the acute phase and polio rehabilitation, and, because of its thoroughness and minor repetition, gain useful insights for treating polio survivors today.

Wilson’s book contains photographs from the March of Dimes collection,

which, in combination with the text, creates a book that fills a gap in the literature. Because it is a compilation and is well documented, readers of *Living with Polio* will learn about the breadth of the American polio experience.

I read the majority of Wilson’s book in Parc de La Tête d’Or in Lyon, France, while there to speak at the 10th International Conference on Home Mechanical Ventilation, and agreed with him as he pointed out that many, if not most, polio survivors never put polio in the past, but live with its consequences every day.

As I sat under a rose trellis in the same park writing my reaction to this book, I observed three gray-haired ladies coming towards me on the path. One had a left arm hanging limply to her side. On this beautiful clear sunny April morning she was strolling with her friends, clutching her handbag with her “good” arm and pointing out flowers with her feet. Now, that’s “Living with Polio.”

OTHER TIMELY BOOKS FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

Splendid Solution: Jonas Salk and the Conquest of Polio by Jeffrey Kluger, a senior writer for *TIME*, is a 373-page, illustrated book published by G.P. Putnam’s Sons (\$25.95). Kluger tells the story of Jonas Salk’s quest to conquer polio in a “medical adventure full of rivalries and last minute reversals that culminated in one of the greatest accomplishments of the 20th century.”

PHI offers a list of books about the polio experience on its website at www.post-polio.org/ipn/books.html.

Jerome Groopman of *The New York Times* describes the book as a “colorful and fast-paced narrative (that) brings Salk to life as a brilliant and determined man who, above all, believed in the probity of his ideas. His precocity was apparent to all, and made him both a leader and a target at every stage of his career.”

Polio: An American Story by David M. Oshinsky, a University of Texas history professor and polio survivor, is an illustrated 342-page book published by Oxford University Press (\$30).

According to Jerome Groopman of *The New York Times*, the book “frames the conquest of polio within the cultural upheavals of the time. *Polio: An American Story* is a rich and illuminating analysis that convincingly grounds the ways and means of modern American research in the response to polio.” Oshinsky’s book, based on the Salk and March of Dimes archives, covers the bureaucracy behind the fight against polio and the development of modern philanthropy.

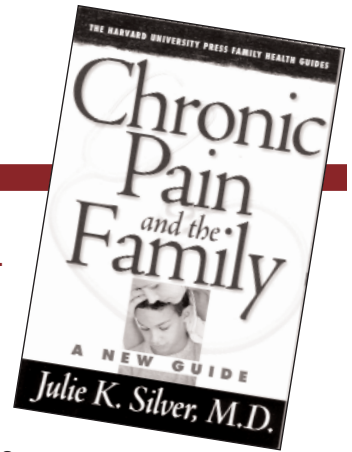
Polio and Its Aftermath: The Paralysis of Culture by Marc Shell, the Irving Babbitt Professor of Comparative Literature and Professor of English at Harvard University, will be available soon. Written by Shell, a polio survivor, the book is described on the publisher’s website (Harvard University Press, www.hup.harvard.edu) as conveying “the widespread panic that struck as the disease swept the world in the mid-fifties” and revealing “why, in spite of the worldwide relief that greeted Jonas Salk’s vaccine as a miracle of modern science, we have much more to fear from polio now than we know.” The hardback will retail for \$35.00.

OTHER NOT-SO-LIGHT-BUT-USEFUL SUMMER READING

Chronic Pain and the Family: A New Guide by Julie K. Silver, MD, October 2004; ISBN 0-674-01666-1, pbk; \$14.00; Harvard University Press (www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog)

Silver reviews the causes and characteristics of chronic pain and explores its impact on individual family relationships and on the extended family, covering such issues as employment, parenting, childbearing and inheritance, and emotional health. She treats aspects of chronic pain not covered in a typical office visit: how men and women differ in their experience of chronic pain; the effect of chronic pain on a toddler’s behavior or an older child’s performance in school; the risks of dependence on and addiction to pain medications; and practical ways for relatives beyond the immediate family circle to offer help and support to the person in pain.

Silver is the Medical Director of International Rehabilitation Center for Polio at Spaulding-Framingham Outpatient Center, and Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard University. ●



Recent books by polio survivors

The Red Brick Birdcage by Michael Creurer; August 2004; ISBN 0-9683489-6-3; \$18.00 Canadian; SFC Inc., Box 5664, Victoria, BC, V8R 6S4, Canada (250-598-7914 fax)

The Little Red Chair by Alan M. Malizia; September 2004; ISBN 1-4140-2837-7; \$12.50; AuthorHouse™, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403 (800-839-8640, www.authorhouse.com)