

Leora Hamdorf



I had polio in August of 1952. I was in the hospital for 9 months. I had a 6 -month-old son and a 3-year-old daughter. My folks took care of them while I was in the hospital.

I was never in the iron lung, but very close to being . It was hard to breathe and talk. I still have trouble swallowing.

All I could do was move my left arm (& I am right handed). I now can use my right arm some. I need to have my elbow resting on something to use it.

I can write pretty good now. I don't have any back or stomach muscles, so cannot sit up without something at my back. I am not able to walk at all.

They would not let me go home until we had a hired girl. It was very hard to find someone. We finally did. We had her for six weeks—that was as long as we could put up with her. We have been able to get along okay on our own. My folks helped a lot, and my family was great.

We never had running water until 1966. We are farmers, so there was a lot to do. We did some milking so there was a separator to wash; and the last years, we had a milking machine.

My mom did our washing and ironing until 1955. I did it after that, with the help of my family—carrying in the water and emptying the machine afterwards. I hung the clothes on a wooden clothes rack, when my husband wasn't able to hang it outside.

With my folks and the children, we had a garden and we canned our own food.

My children and I took care of my husband, when he had cancer —so he was able to stay at home. I have been able to take care of myself until 2002. I broke my hip. Now I need help to get to bed and on and off the bathroom stool. After I'm up in my chair, I can cook and do most of the cleaning.

I miss my mom's help and miss her. I celebrated my 29th birthday in the hospital. Last fall, I celebrated my 80th birthday.

