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**The Iowa Blind History Archive  
History of Blindness in Iowa - Oral History Project  
Interview with [Name]  
Conducted by [Name]  
[Date]  
Transcribed by [Name]**

**NOTE: Any text included in brackets [ ] is information that was added by the narrator after reviewing the original transcript. Therefore, this information is not included in the audio version of the interview.**

**Darla Rau, Age 49, Des Moines  
Mike Hicklin  
Iowa Department for the Blind  
524 Fourth Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309  
10/2/2010**

**Mike Hicklin: My name is Mike Hicklin. What is your name, please?**

**Darla Rau: Darla Rau.**

**Hicklin: Hi, Darla.**

**Rau: Hi.**

**Hicklin: This recording is being taken at the Iowa Department for the Blind; Des Moines, Iowa on October 2, 2010. All stories submitted to this project will become part of the History of Blindness Collection owned by the Iowa Department for the Blind. By submitting your story, you are acknowledging that your story is a gift, which transfers to the Iowa Department for the Blind all legal title and all literary property rights. You will be granting to the Iowa Department for the Blind an unrestricted license to use your recording and all the information for which it contains in any manner which the Department for the Blind may wish to use it, for as long as the Iowa Department for the Blind wishes to use it. Do you agree to have your story recorded?**

**Rau: Okay.**

**Hicklin: So, that's a yes?**

**Rau: Yeah.**

**Hicklin: Okay. So, Darla what is your full name, age, and where do you live?**

**Rau: My name is Darla Deann Rau. I live at 1015 Vinbury Drive, Altoona, Iowa 50009.**

**Hicklin: And, what is your age?**

**Rau: 49.**

**Hicklin: What would you like to talk about today?**

**Rau: Oh, I guess I can talk about my experiences here at the Orientation Center.**

**Hicklin: Okay, go ahead and start. When were you a student here?**

**Rau: Okay. I was a student here from June 7, 1981 until June 1, 1982. And, when I was here I did Typing, Cane Travel, Home Ec., and Braille. Well, I didn't quite finish Cane Travel, because I had this habit of cheating on the sleep shades, and Cane Travel and I really didn't get along very good. So, then I did Typing. I learned how to make a lot of good stuff in the Home Ec. room, although Cip and I didn't always get along. And, the summer I was here we did water skiing up at Lake Ponderosa, which is near Montezuma. But, for some reason, everyone wanted to call it Lake Beulah, because the typing teacher, Beulah Bartlet and her husband owned a cabin up there. And, the first time I went water skiing I got sunburned very bad; even on my legs.**

**Hicklin: I think that happened a lot.**

**Rau: Well, I tell you what, we all got. I wasn't alone; everybody got sunburned pretty bad that day. And, it was windy, and so I, and then yes I do remember the bar,**

**Jeannie's. I went there a few times. And, I learned how to cross country ski, Sleepy Hollow. No, I think it was some kind of golf course. We did cross country skiing that winter. We went...I went skiing at Sundown that year, too. Of course, we had a lot of snow that year. Learned how to make homemade ice cream; went apple picking one day. Went and picked up some pumpkins one day. The apples we picked was over by Griswold. Went to pick up, as we went to pick up some pumpkins over by, you remember Ginger Downing?**

**Hicklin: No.**

**Rau: I guess she used to teach here.**

**Hicklin: Oh, Ginger Downing, Yes.**

**Rau: Yeah, Yeah. That was when we went to pick up pumpkins and gourds, and I found out baking apples was a lot of work. I wasn't too happy with that. We had a Christmas party; that was okay.**

**Hicklin: Were you using the apples to make cider, or were you making pies or?**

**Rau: Yeah, we were makin', I guess we made pies, and I think we made cider, too. I helped with a Commission banquet. Had a Christmas party; one of the students dressed up as Santa Claus. Remember Arlo Knoppel?**

**Hicklin: Yes.**

**Rau: He was Santa Claus. Rosie Thierer and Intesar's little girls were there. They were pretty little. We went to eat at the, us gals went to eat at the Younkers Tea Room one Saturday in the fall. I went to Louise Eads' house once to decorate Christmas cookies. Oh, let's see, we...I guess we had a family day right before I left; that would have been in May, that was a family day. And, we went out to eat a lot. We went to a Chinese restaurant, which I liked; went to Spaghetti Works. We went to a bunch of places in Des Moines and ate; and went to see Helen Keller in Ames once. No, it was Huxley; went to see Helen Keller at Huxley once. Went shopping in Ames afterwards, and some restaurant near there that wasn't very good.**

**Hicklin: Were you ever, did you ever get in on the wood cutting?**

**Rau: No, I never did that. And, I guess...I think I went to help pick out...No, I didn't do the wood cutting, and I guess we did pick out a tree. I think I went with that. We went to the Amanas that one time; I got to go to the Amanas. And, Mitzie Kellan and I shared that apartment in the Home Ec. room for a few days once. I guess she talked me into it.**

**Hicklin: Sounds like fun.**

**Rau: Yeah, she was kind of a messy cook. She tried to make some kind of a Pandora, and she made a mess early in the morning.**

**Hicklin: Good chance to practice though.**

**Rau: Let's see. We made a lot of good stuff in Home Ec., but I tell you, pie crust and I don't get along. The way Cip taught us to make a pie crust is that you rolled it out and if it stuck to the rolling pin, you had to do it again. I got frustrated sometimes. I made potatoes once, put them in the refrigerator and they turned purple overnight. Now, I kind of felt dumb with that, but I guess it's like Cip says, "Live and learn."**

**Hicklin: That's how we all learn.**

**Rau: And, but I will admit I did make good food. I had a termination dinner, or yeah, a termination lunch.**

**Hicklin: Were you able to invite friends and family in?**

**Rau: I invited Cip, of course. I invited Beulah. I invited a few students; however, I did not invite my sister, Detra. I should have invited her that day, but I didn't. I didn't think I was supposed to, but I didn't. If I would have been here today, I would have. Yeah.**

**Hicklin: Was it like one of the seven course meals, where it was a full meal?**

**Rau: Yeah, I remember I made pork chops. I made a green bean casserole; I made, oh gosh, I think I made banana cream pie. Now, I remember we made that when Mr. Witte turned 50. I think I made rolls. No, I don't think it was quite seven, but it was...it turned out okay.**

**Hicklin: Good. Cip was your Home Ec. teacher?**

**Rau: Yes, Cip was.**

**Hicklin: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us? Do you have any good travel stories?**

**Rau: Well, one travel story landed me in the dentist's office. I was going to Cane Travel. I went down by Vets. Me and the mouth hit with a chain link fence at Vets. So, I chipped these two front teeth. So, I had to go back, had to call...luckily for me my sister, Detra was working for Dr. Polydorn that day. She doesn't work with him anymore; she works at a dentist's office in Pleasant Hill, a Dr. Kunchel. So, I had to call Detra at work. She had to come get me, take me to Dr. Polydorn's. I had to have the two teeth filled, right here, and I had to miss Home Ec. because of that. Also, I had headphones and I was listening to Billy Joel's Glass Houses. So, I had quite an experience at the dentist's office.**

**Then, a few years later, Elkader built a brand-new swimming pool. This was back in 1990. Well, a trip to the pool landed me in the dentist's office again. Some kid, I don't think he meant to do it, kicked me in the mouth. So, these two teeth, they came kind of loose. So, I had to get 'em fixed again, but that time it was in Oelwein I got 'em fixed. I could not believe a kid could kick me in the mouth and I'd have to go to the dentist. But, I've had a little experience at the Aquatic Center that summer. I had...some kids were playing ball in the pool, and I got hit in the left eye with a ball. Luckily, I was fine. Then a week and a half ago I stuck a...have you ever stuck like a piece of paper in your eye?**

**Hicklin: Oh yes, that hurts terribly.**

**Rau: Oh, God. I told Detra...I went to the cabin with Detra that night up in Northern Minnesota, and I didn't tell her until we got outside Ankeny, and oh God, Detra was trying to find a drug store in Ames for my eye. Don thought I should patch my eye. So, Detra and I had to go to the eye doctor the next morning, because she was worried about my left eye.**

**And, I tell you what, when I was here, we had to do dishes by hand. I had to do dishes by hand in Elkader, too. I moved to Altoona 12 years ago this month, middle of this month, and I've had dishwashers, the machine kind. So, I use those kind.**

**I worked at Hy-Vee in Altoona for 10 years, and now I'm just doing some volunteer work at the Altoona Care Center and the Library. So, I don't know. I'm kinda lookin' right now, I'm goin' to get a...Rosie was supposed to help me find something, but so far we haven't been able to find anything. So, we're goin' to get me a caseworker and see if I can come up with something.**

**I would like to...I would like to, oh, help in a doggie day-care center. I like dogs. I did have an experience last year working and givin' dogs baths. And, I didn't work there very long because I almost broke a dog's neck accidentally. I put the dog on the table. There's like a hook on the bottom of the table between the table and the bathtub. I hooked up the thing on the wall on the table and I almost broke the dog's neck. Then, another dog bit me on the finger. So, she let me go. And, I thought, okay I won't get bit. I was told they were supposed to be muzzled, but they weren't. I find out that there are some dogs that...but usually I talked to**

**them and say, “Oh, you’re gonna get a bath,” and, “Oh, that feels good.” I was talkin’ to ‘em while I was giving ‘em a bath. But, otherwise I did enjoy workin’ there, but I did come home smellin’ like dog.**

**Hicklin: Yes.**

**Rau: And, I had dog hair on me. I tell ya, dogs like to give you showers, and they like to give you kisses.**

**Hicklin: Well, hopefully you can check around and find someone that’s looking.**

**Rau: Yeah, I went to some doctor things. I’m kind of autistic, and I have a few emotional problems I need to work on. So, we went to talk to somebody on, oh, Thursday. And, then I got to go talk to some caseworker, it’s October 14. That’s what my sister, Detra, thought it was October 14<sup>th</sup>. So, and I think...My sister, Debbie’s birthday is comin’ up. So, she’ll be 60. I’ll be 50 next year, January 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Hicklin: Yes. Well, thank you for telling us a story, and, good luck.**

**Rau: Okay.**

**15:11**

**(End of Interview)**

**Jo Ann Slayton**

**6/25/2011**