

## **Timothy Takaro**

### **Side 1:**

[1/8] Born in Budapest, Hungary; he came to US at age 2. His father was a missionary to Hungarians in Manhattan - in the First Hungarian Reformed Church on 69th St. between 1st and 2nd Avenues. At age 8, they moved to Flushing in Queens.

[1/17] A high school teacher helped him to Dartmouth, assuring him of scholarships which one of seven siblings needed. He was thus liberated from NYC.

[1/25] Asked to recall the streets of his childhood, he recalled the sounds of milk carts and glass bottles, safe streets, ice salesmen, merry-go-rounds, playing marbles. He was happy; it was nice. Though there was a Depression, kids did not feel it. The Jewish grocer let the family run up big bills.

[1/45] He recalled his mother cooking, once, on the furnace for lack of fuel and her turning it into a picnic for the kids.

[1/51] In summers they had a tiny bungalow in New Jersey woods. Father commuted to NY on weekends.

[1/61] Asked how it was to be a preacher's kid, he said it was a double-edged sword. His father, a great orator to the Protestants, loved to preach and sat his children in the front facing the audience. His sermons were long and kids got good at guessing the end of the talk. It was mostly good.

[1/74] Asked how he chose his profession, he said he decided during WWII that medicine would be more useful than journalism, his major interest. His pre-med was spent 2-years at Dartmouth, and 2-years at NYU in Army Surgical Training Program.

[1/87] At the point of being commissioned in the Army Medical Corps, it was discovered he was an enemy alien, for his father had been naturalized, but the children had not. He was overnight naturalized and commissioned.

[1/97] He met his wife, Marilyn, behind the sanitary masks in the operating room at Mayo Clinic. He was an assistant in surgery, his wife in training. He had served in the occupation army in Germany.

[1/101] Julia Jones, a teacher at NYU had taught him thoracic surgery for TB. At Oteen he did residence and learned chemotherapy for TB; that is where he helped develop randomized treatment regimens to determine usefulness of procedures. [Julia Jones]

[1/149] Dog barks!

[1/152] Expansion of VA Hospital in 1965-67 occurred as emphasis; changed to cardiac surgery under Harry Walkup. Takaro developed the pump oxygenator at Oteen. [Harry Walkup]

[1/165] Stuart Scott took a residency in cardiac surgery to bring that skill to Oteen. [Stuart Scott]

[1/174] Takaro assisted him as they traveled widely to collect patients for surgery from W. Virginia to Georgia.

[1/183] Takaro had come to Oteen in 1951, when Albert Schweitzer made plain he was not interested in surgeons. Instead, Takaro went to India treating TB for three years. His wife and two children went along.

[1/190] The small village where they worked was in Bombay State and was named for Dr. Wanless, a Canadian physician at the nearby TB sanitarium. He was recruited to India by the Medical Foreign Mission Board...a man named Douglas Foreman. [Waddy Wanless, Douglas Foreman]

[1/213] Albert Schweitzer was Takaro's hero, but he wanted only preventative medicine. [Albert Schweitzer]

[1/222] These were as seminal years as any in my life.

[1/224] How was this for children? They were safe, sanitary; the ground had been laid by many others. We were "short term" missionaries...not there for life. The Presbyterians were careful not to interfere in the medication.

[1/235] Were you in an enclave? No, we were the only American family in the village...in a big house. We experienced being a minority for the first time.

[1/254] Oriental culture and civilization surrounded us. The missions tended to convert the untouchables as "Rice Christians."

[1/265] Christians are no more than 2/4 million in all India. And religious convictions were not a barrier to working on the surrounding poverty.

[1/275] Our family was drawn together as they would never otherwise have been. However, Takaro had to get retrained on return to Oteen, for he was some years behind in the surgery. The VA sent him for training. Then he built the cardiac pump.

[1/288] Are doctors skeptical of statistics due to lack of specific causal mechanisms?

[1/300] By 1962, random, controlled clinical trials were recognized. It was in such procedures for surgical treatment that we took a lot of heat. Patients were offered entry to a study, not knowing which treatment they would be assigned. In this way, many practices were tested for efficacy, such as use of talcum powder in the heart, the Vineberg Procedure in which the mammary artery is just stuck into an opening in the heart.

[1/340] Dr. Mason Sones accidentally discovered coronary radiology when he lit up the arteries with a probe. It was the pressure on the liquid which opened the arteries. [Mason Sones]

[1/369] Tim Takaro headed a study of national coronary artery transplant procedures. There was controversy over the ethics of surgical assignment of patients. The study is still continuing at this time. Takaro is most proud of this. [Tim Takaro]

[1/395] Students began coming to Oteen from Duke for residencies in 1966. This has enhanced the quality of care and teaching.

[1/406] Oteen is an excellent hospital and proud of its association with Duke. It occurred because Dr. Sabbotson was interested in more clinical experiences for Duke students. [Dr. Sabbotson]

[1/424] Is there cooperation among Asheville Hospitals? Little, except on a consultant or contract basis. The lithotripter was bought by the VA and is run cooperatively.

[1/434] Aside from your work, what do you enjoy about Asheville? Place to raise a family, retire, quality of life. The natural setting for camping, tramping attracted us. It has good size and cultural richness.

[1/457] Retirees support culture as do the many small colleges nearby.

[1/473] The VA gave Takaro a chance to invent staplers for surgery. The 1962 visit to Russia was a high point. Russia may have been ahead in this field due to improving on an idea borrowed from Hungary...stapling tissues together.

[1/509] The Russian Institute for this was selling them worldwide, mostly for use on animals other than man. One or two have proven beneficial.

[1/533] These staples are small, stainless steel staples which stay in the body after surgery. Some come from disposable machines.

[1/560] You have been associated with the UU Church since '59. Can you talk about it? Norman Hubert was the president when we happened to attend the annual meeting. They begged us to stay so they would have a quorum. We had found it at the house on Vermont Ave. [Norman Hubert]

[1/596] Martha Takaro had decided she wanted formal religion and was dropped off at the Presbyterian Church. The Vermont house was dirty with soot from the furnace, but it had a big lot for play and picnics. [Martha Takaro]

## **Side 2:**

[2/1] Dan Welch was old, experienced, wise and witty. He created the basis for the fellowship. His wife was eccentric. [Rev. Daniel (Dan) Welch]

[2/20] Richard Gross was minister when Takaro was president of the church. He was a tall, lean, earnest type. [Rev. Richard (Dick) Gross]

[2/26] People seemed uneasy with him. A psychologist distributed surveys which were thought to be aimed at Gross. Gross resigned and joined the NC Heart Association. Then we began to look for a minister who could manage the transition from a fellowship to a church. Takaro doesn't remember specific problems with Gross. He couldn't generate enthusiasm.

[2/45] Tracy Pullman and pure luck have been the lot of the church. The luck was the Robertson and Sandburg gifts. During luncheon at Marion Williams, Pullman seemed impressive and wise. [Tracy Pullman, Marion (Williams) Stivers]

[2/60] What do you mean by "wise?" Balanced, many sided, experienced, able to fit himself into the setting. He knew how to manage people's effort. He had insight about religion and good political instincts on the Vietnam War and UU's.

[2/81] David Williams was close to the Sandburgs and Robertsons. He was important in the building of Edwin Place. The enthusiasm of the Williams' was crucial during those years. Their house on Lookout Drive was an important magnet. [David Williams]

[2/110] Was there anything particular during your days as president of the church? I took the position because my visit to Russia brought me into the public eye.

[2/115] There were pigeons in the attic, roof leaks and always repairs on so old a house as the Vermont place.

[2/55] e will return in March for more on recent church memories.

End for now. Restart 1993-03-03.

[2/156] What is your reaction to the collapse of the totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe? It was the rapidity of the collapse. Hungary and Poland were first, then USSR fell so fast after the collapse of the Berlin Wall

[2/180] I had no expectation it would happen. In 1962, I saw no chance of an end to Communism. The tragedy of Russia was that some of the ideals of Communism were those of Christianity. Russia was a disappointing tragedy, given the successful socialism of Sweden and Denmark. Was it Communism's rejection of religion that led to the downfall? No. Religion was permitted in Moscow, but they were not allowed to teach the young in church schools. The Orthodox Church was reactionary, but people needed some kind of religion.

[2/215] What was the most joyous event in your experience with the UU Church in Asheville? We discovered the UU fellowship when we returned from India.

[2/230] Rev. Tuton at Trinity Episcopal had helped us to satisfy the Presbyterians of our religious convictions in order to go to India. We found the UU fellowship in this grungy building and found that was countered by the excitement and the people. [Rev. John W. Tuton]

[2/245] For example, it was Helen Reed who taught three of us Russian in the evening for about a year before I went to Russia. I practiced Russian as I was digging my fallout shelter in 1961. I was able to read lectures to Russian students in Moscow due to this study. She is one person who made a difference in our lives. [Helen Reed]

[2/274] We met the Stones through our interest in Nicaragua. My son, Tom and Susan Cookson had become interested at U. of Miami, then we joined the Central American Study Group, which was strongly supported by Rev. Jim Brewer. [Mel and Ema Stone, Tom Takaro, Susan Cookson]

[2/290] Why Nicaragua instead of Guatemala? It was the openness of the Sandanistas, their interest in health and education, their willingness to accept foreign aid. Susan was a Spanish speaker, as was Ema Stone. We were angered by our government's contra support. [Susan Cookson, Ema Stone]

[2/310] Tim and Susan worked in Jinotega and reported to churches in Asheville.

[2/330] We hated the mining harbors in Nicaragua.

[2/340] What other churches were involved? Presbyterian, Episcopal, Catholic? I knew All Souls through Physicians for Social Responsibility. Catholic interest was through the Quixoti Center, and Liberation Theology. Locally, I didn't know of any interest.

[2/370] We have made three trips to Mexico with the Stones, and are going to Yucatan right away.

[2/384] What were the low points of the UU church in your experience? The period of Rev. Gross was the sad, low point. The resistance by psychologist Bob Clower with questions on member satisfaction did not help. [Rev. Gross, Bob Clower]

[2/405] What are your personal beliefs? I'm not sure. I had doubts in my youth. College reinforced them I was unattached for years, though the Congregational Church helped. In Rochester, Minn. I encountered UU's through a thoracic surgeon I knew and admired...Claggett. [Claggett]

[2/430]I was impressed with the broad spectrum of beliefs I encountered.

[2/455-465] Tape trouble, twisted...left blank.

[2/467] We change the content of our beliefs with aging, not the strength of them. Religion is a response to needs.

[2/480] Aldous Huxley's Perennial Philosophy expresses my view. We need to have trust, tolerance, dignity and these are common to all great religions. [Aldous Huxley]

[2/520] Church is more a social matter for me now. I'm free not to show up and to get my inspiration from a walk in the mountains, forest and fields looking at flowers. Is there any need for an organized church? Yes, it is sad to try to go it alone and not consider religious ideas in concert with others.

[2/560] The success of the local UU church rests on financial and psychological coincidences related to Dave Williams, Logan Robertson, the Sandburgs and the leadership of Welch and Pullman. [Dave Williams, Logan Robertson, Sandburgs, Dan Welch, Tracy Pullman]