

Voices From the Past

# Tommy Miyasaki's Triumph Over Obstacles Along Life's Pathways

By Tommy Miyasaki

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## Tape #156

Oral Interview conducted by Harold Forbush

Transcribed by Joel Miyasaki      June 2003

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Harold Forbush: This tape is copied from an original reel to reel tape and the interview then conducted is now placed on this C-60 (tape) this twenty-third day of August, 1984 by and through the facilities of the Upper Snake River Valley Historical Society that are located on North Center.

HF: **History of the Upper Snake River Valley.** It's my privilege this morning. It being the twenty-seventh of October, 1973, here at Rexburg to have and welcome to the office Mr. Tommy Miyasaki of Sugar City, that we might discuss together some of his choice background as an active citizen and a person who has, I feel, accomplished greatly in life. Tom would you state your full name and, in giving your name, kindly spell it for us and then the date and place of your birth and present residence

Tommy Miyasaki: My name is Hisatomi Miyasaki H-I-S-A-T-O-M-I M-I-Y-A-S-A-K-I. I was born in Rexburg, Idaho, November 30, 1918. My present residence is in Sugar City, Idaho.

HF: I'd appreciate it also if you would make a brief comment about your immediate family--your good wife and your children.

TM: My wife's name is Mariko, formerly Mariko Ogawa of Osgood, near Idaho Falls, Idaho just west of Idaho Falls. I have four children, three boys and one girl. My oldest boy is at the present time at the University of Southern California majoring in Physical Therapy. My daughter, who is the second oldest, is married and is with her husband in Provo, Utah. He's attending school there. She had graduated as a registered nurse and also had got a bachelor's degree in Child Development so she is capably qualified and is at the present time working at the Utah Valley Hospital there in Provo. My second son, Kevin, is on a LDS Church Mission in Japan at the present time. And we have an adopted son Ricky--Ricky who is five years old at the present time. We got him five years ago from Los Angeles, California.

HF: Well Tom, that's wonderful. I'd like to have you describe the present livelihood that you are pursuing, the service that you are doing, and maybe a little bit how you came to get involved in this type of work.

TM: Well maybe, probably, I should commence with, the, as to how I decided to change my career before the retirement age. I think it was in 1969, after twenty years of being in the poultry business. My children had no desire of pursuing the industry or the business that I was presently engaged in--which was poultry. And it came to a point where I had to more or less renovate my entire industry by placing new equipment, a newer method of involving in the business to meet with the challenges of mechanization that are prevalent in maybe every type of business. It meant that I had to probably get involved in a financial thing of about seventy-five to one hundred thousand dollars in order to complete the kind of a project I would like to have, to run a successful poultry business. So I thought, well rather than doing that, I'd like to do something I really wanted to do and that was work with the youth. Becoming interested in the youth through the church program I was involved in, as I got involved with the LDS church working in the Sunday

School, the Mutual, I got really interested in the youth. And so I thought, well gosh I'd sure like to get somewhere where I can get involved with the youth and decided that I'd like to pursue the area of counseling. So I went to the Brigham Young University. Prior to that, I had my B.S. degree in Agriculture. So I went to the Brigham Young University and majored in the Counseling and Guidance area and received my degree after being there for two years. I received a Master of Arts degree in counseling and guidance with the hope that I may be able to get into the Ricks College, here, in the counseling department. And at that time they were filled up so I naturally had to look for a job and I enquired around and finally went over to the Youth Training Center in St. Anthony. Where the program there is taking care of the delinquent youth of the state of Idaho and trying to rehabilitate them, modify their behavior so that they can once again be an asset to the community to which they will be returning to. And there was an opening as a case-worker or counselor there so I had the opportunity of getting in there. And at the present time they have almost centered my duties there of involving, doing counseling work with the girl's cottage. And I have some very wonderful choice experiences in trying to work with these young ladies who have in some way distorted their way of life because of circumstances, family disorganization, etc.--all those things that do cause delinquency to the youth. And in some way I'm trying to utilize all the professional experiences as well as the academic training that I have received at BYU in trying to motivate these young girls to modify their behavior to those acceptable types of behavior that will bring back them into their respective communities and become worthwhile citizens.

HF: Tommy, do you do your counseling in group settings or individual settings?

TM: I do both individual and group settings. I think--I have to more or less do this in that these girls got to learn to perform with acceptable behavior in group as well as--and of course in the personal individual counseling is to more or less work with those personal things which they feel like they do not want to express in a group situation. And these little, personal things are, we work through them in a sort of a confidential atmosphere.

HF: And now this is somewhat personal. But I would like to get you response, reaction to: How do you know as a blind counselor the reaction the response that you are receiving, by say a delinquent young lady, how can you tell whether your message, you're getting through to her? How can you tell how she is reacting to your counseling?

TM: I think there's always methods and means that you finally learn through experience. Naturally, I get the feeling of the individual by the tone of her voice, the, how she more or less sits and moves around. These things, I can tell if a person is real nervous if she shuffles her feet or moves in her chair. Emotional expressions are clearly identified by the quivering of the voice and then when she becomes more or less stable, that type of an impression is also communicated to me through their voice expressions. And I guess it's more or less anything to do with the sound media that I use to interpret the feelings of the young girls in my counseling experience. Naturally I may miss some of the facial expressions, but I think a lot of it is communicated to me by the way the talk. And from the audio media I can just about interpret the feelings of the girl that I'm interviewing.

HF: And I think being a blind person myself, I share this feeling with you, and I would go further and say that a blind counselor can know the response that he's getting almost as well as a sighted person.

TM: And I think there's an advantage to. That too many times we may grasp judgment by the physical appearance of an individual. Which--we fortunately don't have to make that kind of a judgment so many times, because of the way their facial expressions are, I mean their physical features are. For example, I had a choice experience of one of the sighted counselors telling me "he's a rough character" or "she is a rough character." And I says, "Well, how do you know?" And she says, "Well, you can tell by the way you look at them." But during my experience with them I saw none of that and when we worked with the girl or the boy the truth would come that he or she wasn't a rough individual--that just because their physical appearance showed that, they had made this rash judgment upon the individual. And so I think that we, more or less, probably, many times a lesson should be learned at this time that physical appearance is not the true criteria of an individual's quality or the character of the individual. And some times we in this choice experience of not noticing those things, feel the true inner quality of an individual.

HF: I appreciate those comments. Now, Tommy just one or two items of statistical data: How many inmates are there presently at the Idaho Youth Training Center.

TM: At the present time we have approximately one hundred boys and about twenty girls. In other words about one hundred and twenty boys and girls.

HF: How many are there on the counseling staff, administrative staff?

TM: We have, at the present time, a counselor in each cottage and we have four cottages of boys, and one cottage of girls. And of course augmenting with the counselor are, the drug educational program provides a drug counselor for each cottage. So we have about two counselors for each cottage. In other words, that would be a total of about ten individuals working with a hundred and twenty boy and girls

HF: In the interest of time, we won't pursue that further other than to say, that the last legislature took the Idaho Youth Training Center out of the Department of Education and has placed it now in the Idaho Department of Environmental and Community Services. This is correct isn't it?

TM: Right.

HF: Might I ask you, and when you respond to, do you have a feeling now as to what way the school, its fundamental purpose is going to be? Is there a trend as to whether it's going into emphasize vocational educational fields or corrective work or just what trend and purposes will, maybe, the school tend to fulfill. I don't know if my question was very good.

TM: I think I know what your trying to get at in that I was just to a meeting yesterday, October 26, 1973, in Idaho Falls--the district meeting trying to more or less look at the future of the Youth Training Center. And the district leader there gave us the impression that the philosophy of the Youth Training Center is going to change in that its emphasis is going to diminish in the academic area, but its emphasis will be strongly oriented toward the modification of behavior of the individual. And probably a career type of training program which may be closely associated with vocational work. So, I think the whole emphasis is changing in that we are going to see if we can change behavior of the delinquent individuals because they feel like no matter how much academic training, how much vocational training they receive, if they cannot function in the community, in their interpersonal relationships with those that are about them. They are not going to succeed no matter how much training they have. Their behavior has got to be changed.

HF: Very Good. Turning our attention now to the years that occupied your time and effort in manual work, that of the poultry industry and business, recall for us will you please, some of the operation which you had. Of course I'm assuming as an Agricultural BS holder from Utah State, you were prepared for agricultural work and why did you take and select poultry and tell us some of your experiences you had in this business.

TM: I think, as I reflect now, it's rather of interesting as to how I commenced in this area. Naturally, I come out of the service without my eyesight. Having eyesight for nearly twenty-five years and then all of a sudden being denied the privileges of eyesight. Naturally, I went through quite a traumatic experience and the transitional period of trying to adjust myself without the utilization of physical vision. And naturally, I thought to myself, "I've got to take advantage and probably receive some kind of a training." And when I went into the vocational program under the Veteran's Administration, the vocational counselors there sort of encouraged me that I should go into a vocational line rather than to receive some kind of an academic degree. I'm glad at this time that I was a little stubborn in my nature I had made up my mind that I wanted an academic degree. So I continually insisted that I wanted to have a program outlined at the Utah State Agricultural College in an Academic Degree.

HF: Why did you choose the "AC" at that time?

TM: I think because it was one of the closest colleges from where, my, you know, where I live, here in the Rexburg, Idaho area. So this is why I chose Utah State. There was no, you know, any personal attachment to it, but the interesting thing at that time was they said, "well, we'll give you a chance and let you go through this summer quarter with a minimum amount of credit hours to see if you can function under an academic atmosphere." And naturally some of the courses were such things as Algebra and maybe Chemistry and two other courses in the Agricultural area. But this was kind of a challenge to me to see if I could make through Math and Chemistry, which is one of the more difficult subjects. At the end of the Summer session, yes it was trying, it was a challenging thing in order to, not only to adjust my mind to become a student oriented type of experience, but to do that without the use of the physical vision. And with the assistance of my wife, I came through the summer session with A's in every class. And I

guess this sort of convinced the people that I probably could make it through. And from there on I got interested in the, naturally coming from the farm, I was still interested in the Agricultural life. Before I lost my eyesight I had an objective of probably becoming an engineer, going into the engineering field, but this more or less came to a just stop when I realized that this kind of an occupation required a lot of the visual aid. And so I turned myself toward probably dairy or poultry, so I went into that area. Naturally the Dairy people said don't go into the dairy; you're handling larger animals. That will be--the hazards of accidents will be more serious than into poultry. Well, I still was interested in dairy so I went into both areas both dairy and poultry and minored in Chemistry. And I received a degree in dairy management and husbandry and just about a degree in poultry husbandry also. So I just needed another class to finish my degree in poultry but it was in those two areas that I graduated out of the Utah State Agricultural College and when I come back into this area at that time dairy heifers were such an enormous price it was almost beyond reason even to get in to that kind of area. And so, I started with a thousand chicks in the Sugar City area. I borrowed my neighbor's, he had an empty building there, that could house about a thousand little chicks, so I housed them there while I built my first coop, which was about a fifty by thirty-five two-story building. And naturally, in the building of it, I had the experience of working with along the carpenters getting accustomed to the ways to pound nails to wiring the building and all of those things.

HF: Who did you have hired to supervise the building?

TM: Let's see, I had a Mr. Viv Harris of Sugar City, Idaho to build the first building and then the second building I attached to it as my. With a thousand chicks, I increased it another four thousand units, so by my second year I had a five thousand-pen unit. And Mr. Dean Ricks helped me build the second addition. And then naturally as years went on it seems like, As we become a little bit more efficient and used to the business well, my capacity increased so that added another building that would house about ten thousand more and so in this Mr. Taz Hikita helped me build this one. And I think at this time I done a lot more of the carpentry work. I did all the of the electrical wiring myself and the plumbing myself in that coop. I had become proficient by the experiences of the other buildings and so that the last building I done a lot of the inside work by myself--the roofs and all those things. And so, by the time I was in my full operation, I was able to operate around a fifteen thousand-hen unit. And I think it was a choice experience in that my children had an opportunity to work with me. It was a choice experience in that I could prove to myself that it can be done. Is there any other things that you?

HF: Well, now specifically was the poultry operation a kind of a double barrel thing to produce eggs and also to produce poultry meat?

TM: No, it was more or less centered around just the egg area. We just produced eggs If it was meat, it was only in the say good product, if the hens were no longer the sufficient producers of eggs than we sold them into the meat market as sterling hens and that was about the only area that we went as far as meat was concerned.

HF: Now, what specific areas did you handle in the daily routine work and what assignments did you give out to your family?

TM: Well naturally, I was involved in nearly every area of it except the, you might say, grading end where it required sight to grade the internal qualities of the eggs see. But as far as the other areas of the casing, the packaging, feeding, and the general care, you might say the daily routine would involve probably checking all the water, the feeders, the mechanical feeders if they work right, the general health condition of the birds all these things more or less I had to modify methods of detecting these things. For instance, I usually go at night when all the birds are quiet and if there's any respiratory diseases that's the time to detect it. You know by the wheezing or the difficult that their having breathing. Well then immediately I'd have to get some kind of medication to treat them see. And one of the choice, you might say humorous experience that we had, was I joined with Mr. Davenport of the Davenport hatchery and poultry farm there in Sugar City. He wanted me to raise some hatching mates for him. So we would put in these rooster so that we would get these fertilized eggs and then after that, well, the season was over, well then there was no longer the need for the those roosters and we would have to pull them out from the rest of the flock that was in the pen and Mr. Davenport says, "Well, I'll come over tonight to help you get these roosters out. Well by the time that he come out I had gotten out all the roosters out from the pen and he wondered how I'd do that. Well it can be quite a chore trying to pick the males from the females. And I said, "Well, yes, it would be a difficult chore to go through every bird to see which ones are roosters. But I sort of make, clap my hand to make some kind of a noise and the old proud roosters is more or less let out their crowing noise you know, to identify themselves that they're there and showing that they're the authoritative figure. And I'd just go toward where that sound where that sound of the roosters are and take them right out." And so you can see how we modify our ways of doing things because I knew that the roosters crowed a little different from the hens, see. And I'd follow the sound and pick these bird out.

HF: Now you'd gather the eggs yourself?

TM: Yes, I'd gather the eggs. Naturally, after my youngsters got old enough, they'd assume a lot of these other chores you know. The egg gathering, the feeding, especially the young chicks required a lot of handling, these kind of things. And the cleaning the pens and all these things my youngsters persisted in. And this enabled me to increase my capacity to about fifteen thousand hens.

HF: And you start out with the chicks, then?

TM: Yes.

HF: Two day old chicks?

TM: Yes.

HF: Did you get your chicks mainly from Mr. Cal Davenport?

TM: Yes, I got all my chicks.

HF: What type or breed of chicks?

TM: It was a legend breed. They called them the H&M nick-chicks you know. And it was the brand name of a legend, see.

HF: You would get them into production how quickly?

TM: Within five months they're in production, see. They start producing when they are about five months old.

HF: How long would you retain them in production? One year, two years?

TM: About eighteen months.

HF: About eighteen months production? And during that period they would be laying all the time, or would they have one period of molting?

TM: Well, what we do is put them into what we call a temporary mode which would only last maybe a couple of weeks. And this we take after they have laid about ten to twelve months we put them into this temporary mode which improves their shell quality, improves their egg quality a little bit.

HF: Now Tom, of course some sighted person would make the deliveries of course. And I suppose you had the delivery route all in the Rexburg, Sugar, maybe even the Idaho Falls areas. That's right? How big an area did you have?

TM: Yes, more or less the merchandising of the eggs was left up to my wife, she done all that area and we covered from Idaho Falls clear into West Yellowstone.

HF: Oh Boy.

TM: Yes, in peak production, we'd peak when all of our pens were filled it needs about ten thousand eggs a day, and that's a lot of eggs to move around and we had to go even into West Yellowstone to market all of our eggs.

HF: Did you have other members, persons, other employees other than your own family?

TM: I had one individual hired steady for a while at the time I had around fifteen thousand hens, you know, because my children were going to school and naturally they couldn't give me the assistance that I needed for the entire day. And so I had to hire someone. And in that time my wife was delivering all of the eggs from Idaho Falls to West Yellowstone.

HF: Would you also sell eggs from the premises?



TM: Yes, we had people come to our home; there was a little sales in there, where we dispensed a lot of our eggs to them.

HF: What was the going price and you might indicate any great fluctuation during those years you had it?

TM: The home sales, we more or less had a fixed price of about fifty to fifty-five cents for large, forty-five, forty to forty-five for medium eggs, and then twenty-five to thirty cents for small eggs and then the cracked shells, you know, eggs that the shells had little cracks on them we'd sell with cracks on them for about thirty cents a dozen. But our other eggs that we delivered, we more or less had to meet with the competitive price.

HF: And what was that?

TM: It fluctuates very much you know, it went down as low as twenty cents a dozen and got up as high as ninety cents during the period that I was in business.

HF: Up to ninety cents during that period?

TM: About the time that I was getting my Master's Degree that's when I was phasing out poultry industry, and I had just left, I had degraded my flock to about half the maximum population you know, about seven thousand birds because they'd had in about another year to go before they'd lay out, so I left my wife to do that, and she made more money out of the seven thousand birds than I did out of the fifteen thousand that one year because the egg prices went clear up to about ninety cents on the retail market, see.

HF: Interesting, How interesting.

TM: It did fluctuate clear from about twenty cents to ninety cents

HF: During those years did you have some real competitors in the field of poultry here in the Upper-Snake River Valley? And who were they, your friendly competitors?

TM: Yes, I think. There was what we called you might say competitive competition, it was more or less friendly competition in that we worked together you know in the areas that we served as far as the egg market is concerned. And that was the Davenport hatchery and Mr. Haroldsen just south of town and then we had others, small flocks, all up and down the valley here. We had, I think at the time that I was in business, I think we around fifteen or twenty poultry people that had over a thousand hens. But about the time that I left for school there was only three of us: the Davenport hatcheries, Haroldsen's, and the Miyasaki Poultry.

HF: And now what?

TM: Now, we just have Haroldsen's poultry farm just south of Rexburg.

HF: During those years, were all of the eggs marketed in the Upper Snake River Valley, or were some of them shipped out?

TM: I think most of it has been utilized in the area here. In fact, I think the most damaging type of competition was people from the outside trying to come in, and lowering their prices, trying to establish a market here. But I think the people in the community supported us, they knew what a good, fresh egg was and when these outside markets would come in the consumers provided some resistance in trying to purchase these type of eggs. They didn't like it as well as the local raised eggs. So they were at times, they come in and then they'd leave because they couldn't sell their eggs.

HF: One more question about this business during these some twenty years. I'm assuming that you were recognized as an outstanding figure, a blind person in the business of poultry handling fifteen thousand hens and so forth. You surely must have received some rather memorable recognition maybe in the department of agriculture or from the department. Would you share one two experiences of almost national scope

TM: Well, I think the Farm Bureau Organization sort of recognized this and I had an interview with the Farm Bureau Public Relation's man, and this interview went nationwide. As to the experiences that I had as a blind individual venturing into the poultry industry. I remember Idaho Poultry Federation, I went to several conventions, participated in panel discussions and such as to some of the things that I had to do differently then the ordinary poultry man in order to carry out my business. And naturally, I had many speaking experiences and naturally it is rather unique I guess for a blind individual to be in the poultry business, and from there I just about covered the entire state of Idaho in various speaking invitations that I've received.

HF: Would you like to call to mind one specific one?

TM: I think that more of the choicest experiences that I ever had in the speaking field is when I've had the opportunity of speaking to the youth. The American Legion has a program every year of what they call the Girl's State and the Boy's State program for the youth of Idaho. Encouraging them citizenship, becoming acquainted with how the state government operates and the county and these things. And as a I final speaker to round up the Boy's and Girl's State program, I had the choice experience to be the speaker in the Girl's State program and the Boy's State program. I think this was one of the highlights.

HF: This was over in Boise, probably?

TM: Boise, and the, I think the Girl's State was held at the Nazarene College near Caldwell area, somewhere in that area, And then the choice experiences of given commencement talks in the various high schools throughout the state of Idaho. Been up as far north as Moscow and probably as far west as Wendell, Hagerman Valley area, all around in this Upper Snake River area as well.

HF: Wonderful, Well Tom, during these years I presume that you have been and have affiliated yourself with organizations whose purpose and maybe aim would be to improve conditions for your people, the Japanese-Americans. Would you like to comment some on this area?

TM: Okay, I guess the Japanese American Citizen's League was an organization to promote this kind of thing. To encourage Americans of Japanese ancestry to get involved and participate in the community activities to foster those things that will naturally improve their acceptance in the community as well as more or less proving to themselves that they're first class citizens. And along with this I think I have the choice experiences of belonging to other organizations within the community. I was once the past commander of the American Legion, the president of the Rexburg Kiwanis club, board member and vice president of the Farm Bureau organization of our county, vice-chairman in the Sugar City booster club, and just various other community and civic organizations that I've participated in gave me sort of a full round out feeling of the importance of an individual in the community that in order to become, you might say, a integral part of a community where you feel like you're an asset to the community rather than a liability--that you had to be a participant. Naturally, we know that a non-participant is a hazard to any community or any individual because it is those kinds of individuals that will lash out at something trying to find meaning and purposes in his life. And when he cannot find these things socially then he seizes upon what is available such as in the present time we have individuals grasping things of the extremist philosophy, annihilist politics, bazaar religion, and making full-out protests movements trying to find meaning and purposes in society because they're not a non-participant, see. So I think from this kind of a background I felt like, gosh, I've just got to involve myself and naturally the Japanese American Citizens' League had a vital part to play I think not only to me, but to other Americans of Japanese ancestry in trying to become an integral part of the community. To make that community a better place to live.

HF: Do you feel that the Japanese, Americans of Japanese ancestry here in the Upper Snake River Valley have been pretty well acclaimed and accepted maybe with the exception of the war years?

TM: Yes, at the present time they are fully accepted, yes, but I think we had a real hard row to hoe in order to achieve this goal that we desired it as our goal and motto of the Japanese American Citizen's League was to become better Americans in a greater America. And I can remember the time during the war years; I think it was the most trying years. And especially from our childhood years we have experienced a gradual transition of acceptance and then this was more or less impeded or halted temporarily by the war hysteria, when it seems like we were ostracized, not the majority of the people, but there were a few that agitated the situation which made it very uncomfortable. And naturally the war was between Japan and America and our fathers were from Japan we were the second generation called Nisei. Our first generation fathers and mothers were called Issei. And our children, the Sansei are the third generation. But I think the situation at that time gave a real good insight as to what we had to do in order to prove our loyalty to our country in which we were born. About that time I think it was a critical period for

Americans of Japanese ancestry and we were rather fortunate that we did have this Japanese American Citizen's League. Where we nationally requested the president to give us the opportunity to serve our country.

HF: And you personally took up the challenge and joined the service yourself?

TM: You might say I was more or less drafted before that period where they denied the enlistment into the services see. It was in 1941 when Japan made that historic incident of the attack on Pearl Harbor, see. And soon after that they banned all Americans of Japanese ancestry from entering into the service. Well, I entered prior to that, so I actually didn't get involved in the real problems of it, but I was quite aware of it you know. Because a lot of the leaders the Japanese American Citizen's League Leaders had met maybe forty-eight hours in a session, trying to come up with a program. There was a lot of dissension, in fact, the experiences told that they even tarred and feathered the leaders of the Japanese American Citizen's League you know--from not the outside source but from the Japanese that were in the relocation centers because they were really, you know, they felt like how can we serve America when they have us behind, you know, the barbed wire fences. But naturally we convinced them that the only way we could prove our loyalty is to ask the government to give us a chance to prove our loyalty. And from this little incident the 442<sup>nd</sup> regimental team was organized which consisted of primarily Americans of Japanese ancestry and they come out of the European campaign as the most decorated unit in the history of American military service. And I think probably the initial encouragement probably to utilize Americans of Japanese ancestry were because of the hundredth battalion which consisted primarily of Hawaiians, Hawaiian-Americans of Japanese ancestry. They made such a tremendous showing in the Italian campaign and then the 442<sup>nd</sup> just followed right after.

HF: Now Tom, of course we, here of the Upper Snake River Valley know that you lost your sight while you were in the service. If you'll share with us just a moment so that the story will be set straight as to how this occurred and then follow that by maybe a little statement of your ancestry, of the Issei group and then the final presentation you'd like to make.

TM: Okay, all right. I lost my eyesight while I was in the military intelligence part of the armed services. I feel like the situation isn't anything spectacular. It was after a little maneuvering that we had prior to getting prepared to go over seas that a hemorrhage occurred in my eyes and the doctors had no way of stopping the hemorrhage and it continued to increase and to finally in a matter of three days, I had no eyesight whatsoever. And this was right after maneuver. And so, naturally they tried to investigate the cause of it. They couldn't find it during the period of one year's convalescence and during that period I gradually lost my eyesight to where at the present time--I have no light perception whatsoever, total darkness. I think that was the most trying year is the first two years of my life without eyesight in that I had to make the transition. Naturally, it seems like realizing all of a sudden that I'd no longer be able to see the blue of the sky, the majestic Tetons that is, silhouetted against the Eastern horizon, the beautiful Snake River Valley with all its vegetation, showing the creative power of God, the smiles of my

friends and my loved ones. All these had to be more or less closed as a curtain only to be dreamed about. Seems like I was burning in a crucible of self-pity and self-commiseration and then to realize that there were multitudes of soldiers under the same situation in the hospital. And these experiences appreciate at this time I think the experiences that I did have in that I was a convert to the church. Recognizing that when all the technological advancements of human endeavor could no longer restore the thing that I treasured most, a light was given to me that I could turn toward God. And I think with this kind of an insight, it gave me the courage to rise above these afflictions. To make something at least, that I could find something useful to live for. That injury is grievous only when remembered. Therefore the noblest of all revenge and to forget this kind of injury is to forget in the service of your fellow men. I recall the words of Helen Keller. She says that, "When you are most unhappy, sincerely believe that there is something in this world for you to do." So long as you can sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain. And I think it's these kinds of philosophical readings that give me the courage to work through the problems that I had.

Now as far as my ancestry is concerned, my father at an early age come from Japan called Niigata-kin. He realized and dreamed about and heard about how wonderful the utopian country of America is wherein you could get rich in no time at all. And so, with this kind of an idea coming from a little farming community where probably the whole family lived on a one-acre piece, they had to make a living. It was crowded and he thought well gosh I've got to go there and make a lot of money and come back to Japan. I think most of the Issei here had that primary interest of coming here and getting rich quick and then returning. And as they come to the United States the dream wasn't quite like they thought it was. They had to, naturally they were taught from their ancestry the importance of industry, and I think it was these things that motivated them to work with the railroad, come into this area following the railroads, and then establishing themselves as farmers. Naturally, most of them were farmers in Japan and they were industrious, found themselves there. Called their wives over as more or less what they called baishakunin in other words they didn't marry because they loved an individual but because there were people who were go betweens that more or less arranged the marriage for them. And through this method they got their wives here, established their families, and this is why we're here today. And I'm proud of my father and mother, their family of eleven children, seven boys and four girls. And out of the seven, five served in the military service of America, and one was posthumously decorated with the distinguished service cross and at the present time in his honor the army reserve building in Rexburg is named after him. Is there any more?

HF: Now, in closing your presentation which is on Americanism. I'd appreciate that.

TM: And I think with this, the experience of living here and these things. I want to close my expression and my sincere feelings about being an American citizen by more or less paraphrasing the creed that was written by Mike Makaoka during that trying time of the Japanese American Citizens' League in World War II. And he says, "I'm proud that I am an American citizen of Japanese ancestry for my very background makes me appreciate more fully the wonderful advantages of this great nation. I believe in our institutions, ideals, and traditions. I glory in our heritage; I boast of our history, I trust in our future.

She has granted me opportunities and liberties such as no individual enjoys in this world today. She has granted me an education befitting kings, she has entrusted me with the responsibility of the franchise. But most important of all, under these blue spacious skies, the waving grain, she has given me an opportunity to build a home, to earn a livelihood, to work and to worship to think and to speak and act as a free man equal to every other man. Of course, in our interpersonal relationships we know that there are some individuals who may discriminate, but as for myself, let me enlarge my soul by cultivating love so that no person will ever feel his color or his caste in my presence. And give me the power of judgment and the power of discernment that I may not misconstrue patriotism and citizenship as a franchise for the destruction of order, for the dismantling of authority. That treason is a peace movement, that mass criminality a demonstration, that exhibitionistic anarchy, protest and decent. If there are problems, let me help to solve them in the American way: above board, in the open, through courts of law, by education, and by proving myself to be worthy of equal consideration because I am firm in my belief that the attitude of fair play and American sportsmanship will judge citizenship and patriotism on the basis of action and achievement, and not only on the basis of physical characteristics. Why: Because this is a nation under God and has the ability within its framework to redress the wrong that it has made, because it is still a government of the people by the people and for the people. Because I believe in America such as this, trusting that she believes in me, I am not ashamed to take off my hat and stand at attention when Old Glory passes me by. Neither do I give an apology when I get a lump in my throat when I pledge allegiance to the flag. Neither am I embarrassed when my eyes inundate with tears as I sing the Star-Spangled Banner because I am proud that I am an American citizen of this great country. Because she has given men innumerable benefits, I pledge myself to do honor to her at all times and in all places, to support her Constitution, to obey her laws, to respect her flag, and to defend her against all enemies, foreign or domestic. When I think that many have died for the cause of freedom, then shouldn't I care enough to live for it, enough to forgo the joys of life to serve it, enough to work with patience and fortitude to assist in curing its afflictions, enough to forgo the joys of hating one another, enough to make these common, cherished purposes continue to prevail? In doing this, I think that I must consistently assume my duties as an American citizen without any reservation in the hopes that we may continue to work toward that goal of becoming a better American in a greater America."

HF: Tommy, we surely want to thank you for this opportunity this morning of having you come here and grant me the opportunity of making this interview. Thank you so much.

TM: You bet.