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INTERVIEW OF
JOSEPH, MATILDA & JOE JR. JACKEWICZ

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

GEORGE K. VAPAA, NARRATOR

Vapaa: ...May 2, 1974 and we're at a farmhouse just south of Rising Sun ah, Delaware. Now Rising Sun, Delaware no longer has a post office. But ah, we'll ah, have our guest here introduce himself and then go into a discussion about the topics that we want to talk about. Ah, Joe, do you want to start and introduce yourself?

Jackewicz: Yes. My name is Joseph Jackewicz.

Vapaa: Do you have a middle name?

Jackewicz: Yeah. I do, but I do not use it.

Vapaa: I see. All right. Let's see and you are--?

M.Jackewicz: Matilda Jackewicz. Mrs. Joe Jackewicz.

Vapaa: Mrs. Joe Jackewicz. And formerly you were--before you were married?

M.Jackewicz: Matilda Kovalski.

Vapaa: Kovalski?

M.Jackewicz: Right.

Vapaa: Un-hun. I see.

Jackewicz Jr: Joseph Jackewicz, Jr.

Vapaa: I see. And ah, Joe, you're just home from college, are you not?

Jackewicz Jr: That's true. I just got home a few weeks ago.

Vapaa: Where do you go?

Jackewicz Jr: Ah, the University of Notre Dame.

Vapaa: And what's your major?

Jackewicz Jr: Mechanical Engineering.

Vapaa: And what year are you in?

Jackewicz Jr: I'll be a senior this fall.

Vapaa: Be a senior this fall.

Jackewicz Jr: Yes, sir.

Vapaa: I see. And I'm George Vapaa. And I used to be the Kent County Agricultural Agent here in ah, in this county. And it's my privilege to really ah, bring you to one of the better farms that we have here in Kent County. I know I told ^{LINC}~~Link~~ Wells ~~(?)~~ who had been the county agent up in River Head, Long Island, Joe,-- He's retired, you know.

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: That ah, he could send all the Long Island potato farmers down here he wanted to. Because most of you, I think, have been quite successful over a period of years. I don't know of any that have really failed. Ah, I know some have had hard times. And I know some have been squeezed out of potatoes. But ah, basically I think you've been sound farmers. And I always maintained that if you could make a living on Long Island farming, you could farm anyplace. Would you agree with that?

Jackewicz: Yes, I would.

Vapaa: Now ah--now, I want more than short answers, Joe. So--

Jackewicz: O.K.

Vapaa: 'Cause I don't want to be doing all the talking here. Hadn't made this point. So if there are things that I'm forgetting why, you just ah, say anything that you'd like to that you feel is pertinent.
First of all, I guess we'd better find out a little bit of background. Ah, what is your mailing address?

Jackewicz: Mailing address is R. D. 1, Box 144, Magnolia.

Vapaa: Your zip code?

Jackewicz: 19962

Vapaa: And your telephone number?

Jackewicz: 697-7681.

Vapaa: Now you tell me you get a lot of telephone calls from out of state and you're waiting for one right now from New Jersey. We have what we call area codes now. People 50 years from now may not know what an area code is. Now ah, what is your area code?

Jackewicz: 302.

Vapaa: Un-hun. I see. And ah, Let's see, where do we go from here? We got plenty of time. There's about an hour of recording on this ah, machine. We take a half an hour at a time. And so ah, let's not worry too much about time. Even though we do have an awful lot to talk about.

Jackewicz: (murmuring)

Vapaa: Now ah, Joe, when did you and your family come to Delaware?

Jackewicz: I moved to Delaware in December of 1952 with my brother. We left Long Island ah, that winter and were busy moving all the equipment. And in the spring of '53 was our first farming year in Delaware.

Vapaa: And why did you move from Long Island?

Jackewicz: Grumman Aircraft came in and acquired 4,500 acres in the area of which we were farming. Consequently, we could not find any tract of land large enough for the both of us. This is why we started looking around in Delaware and finally made a decision to move here.

Vapaa: I see. Who bought the farm?

Jackewicz: It was my mother who bought the farm. We were op--operating as a family unit up there on Long Island at the time.

Vapaa: And you continued to operate as a family unit when you came down here?

Jackewicz: For that first year--1953.

Vapaa: Now you say as a family unit. How many in the family?

Jackewicz: Well, it was my brother and I that were farming. He was married and so was I. Ah, however, when I made the move from Long Island my intention was to look around for a farm of my own.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: And ah, that season of 1953 I did have opportunities to explore further in the local area. And ah, found the place that we're on now.

Vapaa: I see. And why did you chose this particular place?

Jackewicz: Probably the main reason was the supply and availability of water from Voshells' Pond. (laughter) Irrigation was the main thing that sold me on this location.

Vapaa: Now, this is one of the lighter soils in the State I believe.

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: And particularly in Kent County.

Jackewicz: This is right.

Vapaa: And you have to have irrigation, do you not?

Jackewicz: This is right.

Vapaa: I see. Now, can you irrigate the whole farm?

Jackewicz: Yes, we can.

Vapaa: And have you irrigated ever since you been here?

Jackewicz: I started irrigating the first year I farmed this farm which was--would have been in 1954. We irrigated to some extent every year since then.

Vapaa: Let's not get too far away from the rest of your family here. Let's get Matilda in this a little bit. Matilda ah, tell us a little bit about your family, your children, and so forth.

M.Jackewicz: Well, ah, my father is European. He is ah, Polish. He came to this country in 1912 at the age of 22. And ah, he was from a farm. His father also grew potatoes and vegetables. And at that time I believe the country was under the Socialist. And ah, I guess his education was like ah, it wasn't really a schooling he received. The well to do were obligated to educate the under-privileged or whatever. Ah, so he got his education in that way. Ah, when he did come to the United States he worked for Freihofers in Philadelphia. And summer he worked out on a farm on Long Island. And my mother is American. And he had met her. He was married in ah, 1917. And went on their own in 1918. They started farming together.

Vapaa: Do you remember her maiden name?

M.Jackewicz: Ah, Danieloitch (~~sp?~~)

Vapaa: Danieloitch.

M.Jackewicz: Yes.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M.Jackewicz: Ah, her parents were from Poland. Her great grandmother was from Germany. Ah, were also potato growers. Ah, my grandparents came here in 1886. Ah, they were also (unintelligible) in Germany. Ah, I should say the great grandparents came in 1890. And they are buried here. Ah, my parents were--father was a potato grower and also grew cauliflower.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M.Jackewicz: And ah, I went away to school and ah, to a large city. And being a farm girl I realized I really liked the farm. And here I am.
(laugh)

Vapaa: Well, the evidence is--certainly evident that ah, you do like to farm, because I don't know of any farm wife in Kent County particularly who has a knack to grow as you do on the management of this farm.

M.Jackewicz: We ah, were married when ah, my husband got this idea of coming to Delaware. I wasn't very fond of it. I thought ah, we were going to the deep south. Ah, I'd gone to college in New Jersey. And of course, I hadn't been south of New Jersey in to the oh, what was down in Delaware. I'm quite--very, very happy now that we did make this move here. Ah, the place here--our farm--reminded me very much of home. Ah, the type of land, even the chestnut tree that we have outside which is identical to the one that we had at home as a child, I remember. The house is very much alike also.

I felt very much at home. I've never been homesick, I don't think, for Long Island.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Well now, tell us a little bit about your children. When they were born and where they were born,

M.Jackewicz: Un-hum. Well, Shirley was born on Long Island in Southampton. And Joseph and Tommy were born in ah, Henry Fords' ^(HOSPITAL) in Detroit, Michigan. Ah, I just went there for the time of confinement I should say and then moved back here with the babies when they were small ah--.

Vapaa: Now this of course, is all after World War II.

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: Now ah, and you say you've never regretted coming to Delaware?

M.Jackewicz: No. No, never.

Vapaa: What do you like particularly about Delaware?

M.Jackewicz: Oh, I like--I like the history of Delaware. And that's why when we redid our house I like to keep it in the old--in keeping of--of colonial Delaware.

Vapaa: Yes.

M.Jackewicz: The house--the colonial type--the type of ah, furnishings early old Williamsburg and the colonial type I do like.

Vapaa: Well, tell us a little bit about how you remodeled your home here? Because it is quite a home.

M.Jackewicz: Well, it was a very old home. It was--it's over 100 years old. Ah, it had a lot of ah, of damage, termite damage, I would say. Ah, we were very comfortable--loved it very much. The layout of it was perfect for our family. And so when it came time to ah,

remodeling I would say we knew exactly what we wanted to do.

We didn't want to change it really. 'Cause I couldn't find a floor plan in any other new house that I preferred better.

Vapaa: But there was one thing I noticed when this house was being built you took it right down to the bones I call it.

M.Jackewicz: Well, I would say that's because my husband is very thorough and methodical. This is his idea of doing things. (laughter) Ah, do them (voice overlap, unintelligible)

Vapaa: (voice overlap, unintelligible) He's waving his hands. (laughter)

M.Jackewicz: Ah, it started--you know, it was a good foundation--

Vapaa: Right.

M.Jackewicz: ...basically. Um-hum.

Vapaa: But you did go down to the basic frame as I remember. And you took every thing out of the house as I remember it except the frame itself. So it's just like building a new home. And it certainly looks like a new home. You even have what is still today an innovation in most homes, I think--touch^(plate) type wiring. These switches, I guess, are silent switches, are they not? Yes. And I believe you have ah, lights going up and down the stairs, isn't this right?

Jackewicz: That's right. Um-hum.

Vapaa: Any other innovations, Joe?

Jackewicz: Well, there's intercom in the house.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: The ah, dimmer switches on the lights. But the reason we stripped it as much as we did, there was a tremendous amount of old plaster that was in real bad condition. And the ah, outer covering was old weatherboard. Basically, the ah, exterior walls or framing--exterior framing--is just as it was. Just that we stripped the old off and put new on over it. Ah, we changed a few interior partitions. But ah, and all the windows are the same other than possibly relocating in a different area and taking a few out that were in the house. We had ah, in the old house approximately 33 or 34 windows. And after remodeling we were down to 24 or 25.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Well, it certainly is a very unique design. And if you don't mind, I'm going to get a picture of it--some parts of the interior of the house and hopefully the exterior before we--. I can't do it all today because it's raining outside. But ah, I'll get a few pictures yet before too long--of the exterior.

Jackewicz: Be glad to have you take 'em, George.

Vapaa: All right. And then also pictures of ah, your outside operation. I think the farming operation itself. Let's talk a little bit about this. Now, your son here is getting involved directly this summer again--I say again because every summer since he's been growing up, I guess, he's been working on the farm. Is this right?

Jackewicz: This is true. He's ah, been helping out ever since he was old enough to crawl up on the seat of a tractor. Which was approx-

imately at the age of 6. And ah--

Jackewicz Jr: I tried to reach the clutch pedals. (laughter)

Jackewicz: So ah, he has taken a ah, a real interest in farming and in all our particular operations. Ah, I do believe that at this point a young man or woman pretty much needs to make hi--his or her mind up as to what they want out of life. And ah, our son, Joe, certainly shows every indication that he does desire to come back to the farm.

Vapaa: Even though he's an honor student in mechanical engineering at--

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: ...at Notre Dame? You want to come back to the farm which is kind of unusual. I mean ah, for someone--. But I--I would tend to agree with you, Joe, that there certainly is a future here if there's a future anyplace. Ah, on a farm in this country and ah, certainly the pattern, I believe, on farming today is for a young man to take over eventually from his father. You grow into the business so to speak.

Jackewicz: This is true. And there's no reason why our young farm youth should be leaving the farms like so many have. Eh, it's a-- really it's a sad situation to see so many young boys that have been brought up and raised on a farm that have to go off and seek new ventures in industry and so forth. There--there should be a place made for these young boys that are of farm parents to ah, continue farming.

Vapaa: How about a person that has no farm experience, but thinks he wants to farm? How do you feel about that? Or haven't you thought about it?

Jackewicz: Yes, I have. Ah, it's a tough road to hoe.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: Not very easy. I am experiencing this very thing right now with a young gentleman working for me. He--his desires are tremendous wanting to farm; but because of the overhead and expense of starting up a farm operation at this day and age that ah, it's tremendous. And--and unless you have the support or already have something already established to come into, it's rather difficult to start today.

Vapaa: Do you have anything to add to that?

M.Jackewicz: Well, it's very true. Ah--

Vapaa: Incidentally, young Joe has gone to answer the telephone which is why you haven't heard from him in the last 5 minutes.

M.Jackewicz: I think it's ah--it's ah, wonderful that the young boys would be interested to come home to farm. Ah, and those that do want to it's very difficult to become established unless they are in--inherit land or familiar with it. I think it's the same in every profession. Ah, a doctor and his son or a lawyer and his son, I think he has been exposed to that type (murmur)

Jackewicz: George, you asked the question why mechanical engineering and still wanting to come back--

Vapaa: Right.

Jackewicz: ...to the farm. Let's face it, in today's agriculture this fits in beautiful. That--not only the mechanical engineering phase of it, but a farmer must be so many different things. He must be a chemist, He must know how to handle books or take care of records. He has to ah, be an electrician. And this could go on and on.

Vapaa: Joe, what are your primary jobs when you are at home here working?

Jackewicz Jr: Huh! Well, I guess you could probably say just about anything. I sort of ah, help out where help is needed. Ah, no one particular job because we have many, many different things going on at the same time. I sort of help out with what needs to be done at the moment. But ah, for the most part during the summertime I'm out in the fields ah, digging potatoes or potato harvesting, repairing machinery ah, doing field work or sometimes I might be (unintelligible) . Any type of work.

Vapaa: Joe, that leaves you free to work in the packing shed in--

Jackewicz: I do spend quite a bit of time on the farm--

Vapaa: Oh.

Jackewicz: ...particularly during our shipping season.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: This--this does take up quite a bit of my time. And ah, with the amount of help that we do work here, I must circulate quite a bit throughout the farming area--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: ...to--to keep eye on--my eye on things and to see that every-
things progressing all right.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: And then coordinating work and so forth.

Vapaa: I see. Well ah, now ah, you brought up the subject of ah, being
on the telephone. I presume this is to sell or--

Jackewicz: This is right. Yes.

Vapaa: Now, do you remember back--I think it was about 1956 there was
some talk about the formation of a ah, marketing organization in
Delaware to sell potatoes? Do you remember the background of that?

Jackewicz: Yes, I do. Very well.

Vapaa: Do you want to tell it to us?

Jackewicz: This stemmed from what was known as the Delaware Potato Growers
Association.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: Of which all potato growers were members.

Vapaa: Do you remember how many we had--members at that time?

Jackewicz: George, I believe there must have been in the neighborhood of 55 to
60 at that time. And some how the subject came--the subject came
up to form a farm cooperative whereby the farmers could buy their
supplies through an organization and also use the same organization
to market their crops. Primarily potatoes. So, as this thought
progressed and ah, it boiled down to where it was necessary to
put in some cold cash so to speak, the interest eventually

dwindled down to about 12 growers.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: And some --and with these 12 growers we did form what is know today as Delaware Produce Growers Incorporated. And we still have--

Vapaa: It is not a cooperative?

Jackewicz: No.

Vapaa: And most of the farmers still call it the coop, don't they?

Jackewicz: This is true. This is a carry over from the original days.

Vapaa: Yes. (laugh) But as I remember when you only could get about 12 growers instead of collecting \$50 a person from each farmer, you put up \$500 a piece.

Jackewicz: We put in \$1200 a piece.

Vapaa: \$1200 a piece?

Jackewicz: Yeah.

Vapaa: Oh, and you want out and hired a salesman--

Jackewicz: This is right.

Vapaa: ...and you rented a place to ah--an office--and your telephone--. How many telephone lines did you have that year? Do you remember?

Jackewicz: I don't think we had over 2 or 3 at the time, George.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: Ah, we did buy an office north of Dover which was known as the Willard Boyce Tomato Receiving Station.

Vapaa: Yes.

Jackewicz: Near Marker's Hatchery.

Vapaa: Now, why did you happen to buy that and when did you buy it?

Jackewicz: That was bought I believe the following year. And ah--

Vapaa: I'm not picking that up either, Matilda. (laughter) Don't worry about it.

Jackewicz: Ah, that must have been in--in 1957.

Vapaa: '57. I think you're right.

Jackewicz: I think so.

Vapaa: Because 1956 I think is when you first got started.

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: And Willard Boyce had been a ah, tomato buyer.

Jackewicz: This is correct.

Vapaa: And ah, he wanted to get out of it, I guess; or he was tired of the rat race. And they tell me he moved to Florida and is now dead. And ah--

Jackewicz: Well, his health was failing him at the time too.

Vapaa: Yes. So, he was anxious to rent the place to you the first year. And I guess very glad to sell it to you the second year. But now, why in particular did you buy it the second year? Do you remember? Why? I think I know.

Jackewicz: I can't, George. Perhaps I should let you answer that. I--I really don't remember.

Vapaa: Do you remember what the price of potatoes was in 1956?

Jackewicz: Oh, yes.

M.Jackewicz: Oh, yes. (laugh)

Jackewicz: Yes, indeed. Well, perhaps that is the reason. I don't know. But ah, it sure helped to pay for the building.

Vapaa: Yes.

Jackewicz: The land because of the potatoes being what they were as far as the price was concerned.

Vapaa: Well, I think \$8 was a common price at the time per hundred weight, was it not? Or was it better than that?

Jackewicz: No, George. It was ah--it started at \$8, but it leveled off around \$6--\$6, \$6 and a half was probably the going price at the time.

Vapaa: I see. Normally, what is the price of potatoes, Joe? In a normal Year?

Jackewicz: Normal year \$2 to \$2.25. If you're lucky, why we'll get \$2 and a half a hundred.

Vapaa: And what is your cost of production?

Jackewicz: Today?

Vapaa: Well, over a period of time. You--you can give me the prices anytime you want.

Jackewicz: Well, let's compare year--

Vapaa: All right.

Jackewicz: ...year for year. We're talking about--

Vapaa: All right.

Jackewicz: ...ah, back in ah, say '57--

Vapaa: '57 or '56, '57, '58. Yes.

Jackewicz: So, at that time the cost of production would have been in the neighborhood of \$1.85 to \$2 a hundred. (WEIGHT)

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: They were slim pickings even at that. It's just the one bumper year that you look forward to which comes no--not often enough believe me.

Vapaa: No. Ah, well ah, then I think as a result of that particular year, 1956, while other people got in to the potato business, did they not? Didn't you get more people down from Long Island from other places?

Jackewicz: Not really. There may have been one or two growers that did come down that particular year. But the--those of us that were growing increased our acreage on the following year.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: And ah, just a 10% increase had a bearing on the ne--return the following year.

Vapaa: Do you remember the peak number of potato growers and the peak acreage that we had in the State?

Jackewicz: We had in the neighborhood of 60 growers here at one time. And we did grow, I would judge a little over 12,000 acres--approaching 13,000 acres at one time.

Vapaa: Yes, I used the figure 13,000 acres, Joe. And I hate to dispute you, but I think at one time I counted over 100 people that lived on potato farms. Now, they may not have been growers. But they lived on farms that produced potatoes. So, I better not dispute your grower figure either.

Jackewicz: You may be right, George.

Vapaa: Well, with 13,000 acres of potatoes ah, it was just too many potatoes for Delaware wasn't it?

Jackewicz: I--I really don't know how to answer that. Simply because of--there were times when 13,000 acres could be marketed without any difficulty. And however, other times well, this certainly was too many acres. But this is really--i--it's more than what Delaware grows. It's a national deal. It's--it's an over all picture of the entire acreage in the country.

Vapaa: So you feel that we're more part of the national picture than we ever have been before?

Jackewicz: Certainly.

Vapaa: And who do you feel are our biggest competitors in this country?

Jackewicz: Well, the biggest competitors while we ship--

Vapaa: While we ship, yes.

Jackewicz: ...is--wo--would come out of Virginia--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: ...New Jersey, Long Island and Michigan believe it or not. Because Michigan does have one area in the southern part of Michigan that are relatively early. They start harvesting about a week or 10 days after we begin. Consequently, we lose our western markets like Pittsburg, Cleveland,--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: ...Toledo, Cincinnati.

Vapaa: What's the farthestest you've shipped potatoes, Joe?

Jackewicz: West would be Indianapolis, north would be in to Canada, south in to Florida.

Vapaa: And the majority of your crop goes where? During the season?

Jackewicz: There again perhaps many people do not realize this, but when we start harvesting the first 2 weeks of harvest, or thereabouts, our potatoes are moving north and west. Simply because Virginia is still harvesting. And there--they are supplying the southern markets.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: By this time the northern producing areas are beginning to start and Virginia is tapering off. We lose the northern and western markets when they begin to ship south.

Vapaa: Did any Long Island potato growers ever go down in to Virginia?

Jackewicz: To farm you mean?

Vapaa: Yes.

Jackewicz: I believe there were 1 or 2. Yes, I do believe. However, I do not think they're in the business today.

Vapaa: Any particular reason for it?

Jackewicz: If there is, I could not pinpoint the reason. I really do not know.

Vapaa: Now, over a period of time, Joe, since you've been here on this farm in particular ah, you've gotten involved in a lot of--I call 'em public service activities--ah, not political activities. You've never run for political office have you?

Jackewicz: No, I have not.

Vapaa: But you have served in public capacity. Do you want to give us some

idea what some of these ah, appointments or jobs have been or are? 'Cause you still are--are active in some of them.

Jackewicz: Which one do you want to start with, George?

Vapaa: Take your pick.

Jackewicz: Of course, we discussed our produce growers--

Vapaa: Right.

Jackewicz: ...such as they--a private corporation now. I am president of this.

Vapaa: Right. How long have you been president?

Jackewicz: Probably for 12 years now. I ah, now ah--

Vapaa: That's not continuously though is it?

Jackewicz: Yes, it has been.

Vapaa: Continuous?

Jackewicz: Yes. The ah, of course, I have been--I am past president of the Peninsula Horticultural Society.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: Belong to the Rotary Club here.

Vapaa: Right. How about your connections with Farmers' Home?

(ADMINISTRATION - DEVELOPMENT)

Jackewicz: I have served two 3 year terms ah, as ah, on the board--board of directors with Farmers' Home Corporation here in Kent County.

Vapaa: Now, let's say this, people 50 years from now might not know what the Farmers' Home Administration is. Do you want to explain a little bit what you've done?

Jackewicz: Well, Farmers' Home Administration is a federal lending agency that lends money to farms that can not be or would not be financed by commercial lending institutions.

Vapaa: Um-hum. They have to be turned down by commercial lending--

Jackewicz: This is correct.

Vapaa: I see.

Jackewicz: And ah, however, recently the Farmers' Home Administration has also gone in to rural developments--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: ...and financing of homes. Not necessarily for farmers, for anyone, providing their income does not exceed \$8,000 to \$10,000 a year income.

Vapaa: And there is a limitation as to where these homes can be built isn't there?

Jackewicz: This is correct. And that limitation is they should not be built within any municipal area that has a population of-- *(5 or more people)*

(TAPE 1, SIDE 1, ENDED)

Vapaa: Now, Joe, a little bit about the size of the loans that--. Not the size of the loans but the type of loans that the Farmers' Home Administration makes for rural housing. Do you want to expand a little bit on that?

Jackewicz: Yes. Ah, as I was saying that ah, the homes must be build in ah, urban or rural areas. And they can not be built near cities with a population of 5,000 or more.

Vapaa: Which in Kent County just means Dover--about--.

Jackewicz: That is correct.

Vapaa: In other words this would be the only limitation as far as that's concerned.

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: Well, Joe, I--until this thing stopped and I thought it was still running why ah, I had asked you a question about your service as a director on the ah, First National Bank of ah, Wyoming, Delaware. Tell us a little bit about that.

Jackewicz: Yes. Back in 1961 I was asked to serve on the bank board of the First National Bank of Wyoming by a neighbor. And ah, I considered a real friend, Mr. Frank Richardson. He was not in the best of health at the time. Perhaps knowing that he would not be with us much longer, and as it happened he did die shortly after that. I did accept his offer not having any stock in the bank, not knowing anything about banking. Ah, this was an entirely new venture for me. I soon found out that I had to buy stock. It is--it did involve some money to--to buy this stock. It was not easy to come up with, but I did desire to serve as a board member.

Vapaa: Do you mind telling us what it was selling for at the time, Joe? You had to buy 10 shares I know.

Jackewicz: I had to buy 40 shares--

Vapaa: 40 shares! Oh.

Jackewicz: ...to qualify. And ah, the stock was selling for \$100--I believe I paid \$105 a share. So ah, like I say, it was not easy to come up with. But ah, it has been a real education to me. I have learned a tremendous amount about ah, banking and handling of money so to speak. Ah, it's been enjoyable and been a real pleasure too.

Vapaa: Do you consider that the First National Bank of Wyoming is primarily a farmers' bank?

Jackewicz: No, not really. We ah--

Vapaa: What type loans do you make?

Jackewicz: We make pretty near--oh, we do make all--any loan that anyone would require or request. We have a consumer loan department. Ah, we make mortgages. We do make ah, farm loans, operating loans for farmers and so forth. Construction money we also have available for building trade in the area. We ah, we have some of our builders who have a line of credit arranged with us whereby when they need the financing why, it's there available for them.

Vapaa: Well, Joe, I'm no longer on the advisory board of the Bank of Delaware which I served on for a matter of several years. I don't know, maybe 6 or 7 years. Let's see, I went on I guess in 1957.

Jackewicz: Um-hum.

Vapaa: And ah, it's an odd thing the way I happened to get on that board. Ed Neylan was the--then the national president of the Chamber of Commerce and also the president of the Bank of Delaware. And he was going around the country at the time giving a speech saying that there was no need for the government putting any money in to farm financing because the commercial banks could handle it all. You know, all of the banks could take care of this business.

Jackewicz: Um-hum.

Vapaa: So I talked to George Simpson down at Harrington and Ernest Killen

who are directors of 2 banks down in Harrington area and also have farming interests. And I says, "Do you believe what you say?" They says, "No." I say, "Well, let's challenge it." So I wrote a letter and as a result of that why we had an invitation to a luncheon meeting at the ah, ah, Dinner Bell Inn in Dover. Very nice luncheon meeting. Where the bank directors told us they were surprised--the bank officers I mean told us they were surprised at the amount of farm business they had. And I asked them, I says, "Would you like to have ah, as much as \$2 million worth of farm business in Delaware." I says, "It's here. And I can give you the names of a 100 - 200, a 100--no, let's see. I said, "A hundred farmers in Kent County," who at that time were turning over \$100,000 a year--they weren't earning that much. But they were turning over that much money in--in the operation of their farms.

Jackewicz: Right.

Vapaa: And I--so ah,--. They said, "Sure they'd be interested." I said, "Well, all you have to do is go out and get it just like you go and try and get the business of a man on Loockerman Street down there in Dover."

Jackewicz: Um-hum.

Vapaa: So ah, anyway about 2 weeks after ah,--well, I'd been looking for some bank stock too at the time. And ah, I went to ah, Laird, Bissell and Meeds to talk to Donald Vane who is working in that office and is one of my former students in high school by the way.

Jackewicz: Um-hum.

Vapaa: I said, "Donald, what's a good bank stock to buy?" He said, "Why not Peoples' Bank stock in Harrington." I says, "Can you get it?" He says, "I don't know." Says, "It's bringing a pretty good price." I says, "My wife has 8 shares of that." I says, "What about the Bank of Delaware. Because I was kind of impressed, you know, with what we had on the report." He says, "Oh, that's good stock." I says, "What's it sell for?" He says, "Oh, about \$40 a share." I says, "Well, get me 10 shares of it."

Jackewicz: Um-hum.

Vapaa: Says, "OK." And within 2 weeks after I got that stock who walks in the bank--in my office one morning at 9 o'clock in the morning with his downstate bank officer. Because the Bank of Delaware has several branches you know downstate.

Jackewicz: Right.

Vapaa: But Ed Neylan, President of the Bank. And he says, "We were impressed with the interest that you--comment that you had to make about farming ah, loans in Delaware. And what ah, the banks could be doing." Says, "There's going to be a vacancy on our board. Would you be able to serve?" I says, "Well, I'll have to ask my boss, George Worrilow." Well, that wasn't much of a problem because George at the time had just been appointed a director on the Farmers Bank.

Jackewicz: Farmers Bank. Yes.

Vapaa: And I says, "You'll have--there's one other condition. If he agrees to my serving on it, and I says, "If you'll understand that if any

conflict of interest comes up, I ke--I've got to be neutral. I've got the same responsibility as a County Agent^{TC} every lending institution in the State as I do to ah, any one. So I can't go out and sell your bank as a lending institution." He said, "We understand that."

Jackewicz: Umm.

Vapaa: That's how I happened to get on.

Jackewicz: Um-hum. Very interesting.

Vapaa: Well, OK. But I agree with you. You learn a lot about ah, lending practices through commercial banks. Ah, you know one of the comments we used about criticizing the Bank of Delaware in particular, because Ed Neylan had been making this comment, was because we had felt that they weren't doing enough farm business as ah, they should be doing. And they said they were surprised at the amount that they had. Gene Gagen for example was one potato grower. And I think the ah, Cartanza boys ah, down at Little Creek also had substantial accounts, as well as Alfred Bilbrough and a few other people I think that you know.

Jackewicz: Right. But over the years I think it's been traditional that ah, your commercial banking institutions would shy away from farm accounts.

Vapaa: Yes. And they admitted this. And they still haven't--particularly the accounts of small farmers. Because I told them as I remember at the luncheon meeting that farmers were afraid of bankers. They didn't trust them. They kinda looked at me kinda cross eyed. I

says, "He doesn't like to go--a farmer doesn't like to go in to a bank in his work clothes. He doesn't feel comfortable."

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: I says, "A country bank he doesn't mind." I says, "This is just like a big city bank here in Dover." And I says, "They don't feel comfortable coming in here. And they have the feeling that if they have to go out and borrow money, they're going broke." I says, "This is a--a feeling that has to be broken down."

Jackewicz: Um-hum.

Vapaa: And I says, "I think that you are breaking it down gradually. But if you'll work at it a little harder, I think that you can get more business." And I'm sure that your bank in Wyoming has the same feeling. Although you do have more of a limitation as to size of--of any one person can borrow.

Jackewicz: Well, this is true. We can ah, just loan a certain limit depending on our deposits and so forth.

Vapaa: I see.

Jackewicz: But ah, we have worked with farmers rather closely. Perhaps the reason being because we are more so in a rural community than those banks that are in Dover.

Vapaa: And don't you feel your bank officers are more familiar with farmers' problems than they would be say at a larger bank?

Jackewicz: This is very true. Plus, perhaps you may consider this as a plug, but those of us that are on the board of directors understand farm problems too.

Vapaa: You're allowed to give a plug on here, Joe. (laughter) 'Cause what percentage of your directors are farmers? Do you know off hand? Or how many of your directors are farmers? You can count out loud.

Jackewicz: There's 4 of us that are fa--farmers out of 7.

Vapaa: Out of 7 directors.

Jackewicz: Right.

Vapaa: Umm. Well, we had 12 members on our advisory board. But let's see, I think only 2 of them had direct farming interests--Hudson Gruwell and ah, Reds Lofland up at Clayton.

Jackewicz: Right.

Vapaa: And all the rest of 'em were primarily automobile dealers or people in other types of business.

Jackewicz: Um-hum.

Vapaa: Ah, similar to this. Well ah, now let's see, I've--. Dr. Monroe has told me to make sure to ask certain questions and I haven't even looked at this thing yet, Joe. So ah, I think that it's about time that I asked some questions or have you ask me some questions. Ah, the ah--to ah--to ask you.

Ah, what differences have you noticed in farming between the time you came to Delaware to the present time, Joe?

Jackewicz: Well, there's been a tremendous amount of differences. Ah, as far as ah, primarily as far as equipment is concerned. Ah, as you well know and I'm sure are aware of that ah, more and more auto-

mation is taking over in agriculture.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: The machinery and equipment is becoming more sophisticated. And ah, consequently ah, the cost of the equipment is increasing. And again the farm unit must grow in order to compensate the-- for the increased costs of all this higher priced equipment.

Vapaa: Now just this morning, for example, you were out--Sunday morning-- looking for some planting (?) equipment. Is this--?

Jackewicz: This is correct,

Vapaa: And wh--what's your ah, situation as far as plan--potato planting is concerned?

Jackewicz: This is becoming a real sad situation. Parts for almost all equipment is becoming very, very hard to find. Ah, we in the business really can not understand what has happened--or what is happening, where this--where these parts or even complete units of equipment are disappearing. Are they--we're wondering if they're not being exported and not being sold here to our own growers. These are the things that are going through our minds. Ah, whether these big manufacturing companies ah, profit picture is better by exporting and ah, not selling here locally. Ah, we don't know. But ah, these are some of the answers we're looking for.

Vapaa: You know, Joe, way back in 1961 I took my family to Eu--to Europe for the summer. And believe it or not, I saw John Deere equipment being assembled, I guess, in Finland with Finnish names on it and everything else. But it had ah, American parts numbers

on the ah-- . Well, one piece of equipment I had in mind in particular was a small combine. I've never seen one quite that small. A 6 foot cut combine. Their fields and farms are a lot small^(size), you know. Particularly in northern Europe. But they still use modern equipment. And ah, I don't know what the situation is today because I haven't been back there since then. But they were very definitely ah, American equipment with ah, foreign names on it and American parts numbers on the equipment itself.

Jackewicz: Well, I am of this opinion, George, and I--I think ah, really the ah, American farmer is in a way being cheated because ah, I realize these large manufacturing farm implement companies are perhaps getting more money for this equipment overseas. Ah, now of course, this is just my--my thought on the whole matter. But ah, rather than to sell here domestically they are exporting a tremendous amount of equipment.

Vapaa: I know back in 1961 down in the ah--in areas of ah, eastern France, for example, coming from Luxembourg to Paris we were driving a--a Swedish car that I had bought, you know, for delivery in Copenhagen and ah--it was a Saab--and ah, it was harvest time for small grain. And in eastern France we saw these big combines there. 'Cause their fields are quite large. You'd be surprised at the size of the farms in France in particular. Oh, they're tremendous. Even though France is considered to be a highly populated coun--country just like New Jersey is considered to be a highly populated state.

Jackewicz: Ummm.

Vapaa: They still have in both places rather extensive acreages in agriculture. And of course, the equipment, I guess, to ah, manage some of this ah, ah, land.

How do you feel about the decline in the ah, number of manufacturers and supply places and things of this nature? Where were you looking for this equipment today, for example?

Jackewicz: Well, I couldn't really go to any supply houses today, George. I was trying to locate some amongst my other growers in the area here.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: Ah, like farmers will exchange parts from time to time. And I was hoping I could find some of this. But ah, to no avail of course.

Vapaa: Um-hum. All right. My recorder is picking up the ah, chimes on that clock. Because the clock says--what time, Joe?

Jackewicz: Three o'clock.

Vapaa: Three o'clock.

Jackewicz Jr: It's wrong though--3:15.

Vapaa: I see. (laughter) Yes, it is almost 3:15. It's 3:10 as a matter of fact. So you can move you--. It's a little later than that even.

Jackewicz Jr: (unintelligible - background noises and murmurings)

Jackewicz: Let's get back to farming. (laughter)

Vapaa: OK.

Jackewicz: Ah, talking about asking questions, George. Perhaps I could re-

fresh your memory going back some 15 or 20 years when we were in the strawberry business.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: I'm sure you must recall when we had probably what would be considered a record breaking crop of 12,000 quarts to the acre.

Vapaa: Right. I remember that.

Jackewicz: Yeah. Since those earlier years we have gotten out of the strawberry business and have shifted this particular time of the year to asparagus rather than strawberries. Ah, I find ah, asparagus does fit in better with my operation ah, rather than the strawberries.

Vapaa: How many acres do you have in asparagus?

Jackewicz: At the present time I am harvesting 100 acres.

Vapaa: Do you own all this land? In asparagus?

Jackewicz: Half of what I have in asparagus now I own. The other half I am harvesting a crop on a percentage basis with the owner.

Vapaa: I see. And who is the owner? Do you mind telling us?

Jackewicz: Hans Steffens.

Vapaa: Oh, yes. Right down the road.

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: However, this past year, 1973, I've planted an additional 125 acres of asparagus. But that--of which will not be harvested until 1975.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: We plant the stalk next year and harvest the crop in a small way.

Vapaa: Will that be all on your land?

Jackewicz: Fifty of which is on my land and the balance is on also a percentage arrangement--

Vapaa: Yeah.

Jackewicz: ...worked out with the land owner.

Vapaa: What is it--a cash lease?

Jackewicz: No, it is not a cash lease. The grower plants his--well--pardon me--the land owner finances the crop. I do the work--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: ...for the first 3 years. After the th--end of the third year--the fourth year--we go on a 80 - 20 percent. The fourth year I will finance the cultural practices and the fertilizer and so forth, do the harvesting, collect 80% and the land owner will collect the 20% of the crop.

Vapaa: I see. How do you keep your asparagus separate from his?

Jackewicz: No. problem. Just ah, they come in on different wagons out of the fields. So it's no real great problem to keep them separate.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: And it's weight--it's all weighed right here on the yard eh--as soon as the wagon comes in out of a particular field it's palletized, weighed and packed.

Vapaa: Now, you're growing asparagus now and you're growing potatoes.

Jackewicz: That's right.

Vapaa: How many acres of potatoes?

Jackewicz: George, we have a crop of pickles to harvest between asparagus and potatoes yet.

Vapaa: That's new too, isn't it?

Jackewicz: Ah, this has been going on for like 3 or 4 years now.

Vapaa: Oh. (cough) Since my stroke.

Jackewicz: So ah, hopefully the ah, crop of pickles will be out of the way before we do start potatoes. Which is normally 20 - 25th of July.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Now, this leads me to another question, Joe, as far as farm labor is concerned. And you can be free to discuss this anyway you want to. Ah, what is your labor situation?

Jackewicz: Right at the present time?

Vapaa: Yes.

Jackewicz: Quite fine. Ah, all right. I have adequate labor. They are what I would consider as labor goes good workers. And ah, so far no problems. I could not say the same for 4 weeks ago.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Tell us about 4 weeks ago.

Jackewicz: George, this would take a year to tell you about. (laugh)

Vapaa: No, it won't. We got 10 minutes. Come on. Tell us what your problems have been.

Jackewicz: My problems--

Vapaa: If you don't, Matilda will.

Jackewicz: Perhaps she should. I've been doing an awful lot of talking here.

M.Jackewicz: Well, we had had our ah, camps number 1 certified for our workers-- the Texas Mexicans--ah, certified by the Board of Health and--for 30 workers. And when they had arrived--they had arrived ah--the

30 workers had arrived as fine and also 15 children. Which took us by surprise. It was over the Easter holiday week end. So we had placed the over flow in to a large farm house. Ah, the farm that we did not have certified. Ah, as it was the Board of Health was very unhappy about it--how we had made improvements for the people. They went to work almost immediately after they arrived. Ah, ah, I think because we really didn't understand our material or the labor--importance of the labor inspection or whatever we--. My husband was placed under--given a summons for housing these people. And ah, it was a very unpleasant 10 days until we had straightened matters out.

Vapaa: But you feel it is straightened out now?

M.Jackewicz: Oh, yes. Yes. Um-hum.

Vapaa: I know I talked to Senator Zimmerman about it. And he thought that it was probably cleared up now. And Judge Bush happened to be there the same time when we were doing that particular interview. So he kind a helped me out with a lot of questions which I should be asking you, but frankly I ah--

Jackewicz: The charges by the Board of Health were dropped, George. But the ah, records have not been expunged as of yet.

Vapaa: But they will be?

Jackewicz: They are supposed to be in the process of being expunged.

Vapaa: That's what Jake told me.

Jackewicz: Un-hun.

Vapaa: So I don't think I'm telling you too much that you don't know already.

Jackewicz: No. No.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Well ah, Let's see. We don't have too much time left here. You might be glad of that on this particular tape. But we can always go to another tape if we have to. Oh, there's another 10 minutes or so here. So, let's see, I think I started at 5 minutes of 3 and it's now 20 after. Yeah, so we got at least 5 minutes on here anyway.

So ah, Joe, Jr., you got anything at this point you want to add?

Jackewicz Jr: You were talking about tractors before and parts and equipment.

Vapaa: Right.

Jackewicz Jr: I'd just like to add this that it's interesting to note that there is a farm bureau out there ^(INDEPENDENT) who is selling Russian tractors.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz Jr: And they are selling like wild fire. And the farmers like them.

'Cause they ~~can~~'t buy American tractors out there for \$2,000. There isn't a supply. And the neighbors call 'em unpatriotic and call 'em Communist. But they're--they're buying equipment that works in their fields and is doing the job and it's the only thing they have. So it's interesting to note the situation that's going on in this country now where we are buying equipment from European countries and all the American produced equipment is over there. What's wrong?

Vapaa: I see. Would you ah, prefer to use American equipment or would

you have any objection to using foreign made equipment? Apparently these farmers don't, do they?

Jackewicz Jr: Well, the problem--the problem with this European equipment at this point would probably be a matter of convenience or inconvenience if you are using European made equipment because of the fact that they are under the metric system.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz Jr: And the sizes--both sizes--wrench sizes that you need--your repairs are based on the metric system which is not used widespread in this country as of now. So ah, any cooperation--if you don't have a supply of metric tools to work on a particular piece of machinery well, it's going to cause difficulties there plus the availability of parts, (unintelligible) part filters ah, have to be replaced on the tractor somehow for operation. Not necessarily ah, parts for major repairs that might occur due to breaks or damages or--

Vapaa: How soon do you feel we'll change over to the metric system?

Jackewicz Jr: How soon? Ah, I believe there's a bill before the Congress now in Washington to have it be (unintelligible) into transition over 5 years starting in 1978 I think. '78 or '80. It's ah, it should start sooner I think. The bill should.

Vapaa: It's interesting because just this morning in the Delaware State News, I believe, I read about some opposition in England to the adoption of the metric system. Now, I just read the headlines. I haven't read it deep. The ah--the story yet. But of course ah,

the so called English system of measurement is what we've been using over the years and years and years. And ah, it's a little bit like English money to me. It just doesn't make sense. And of course, they're getting to a metric system in their money too. The English are. And ah, they tell me that ah, a pound is no longer the pound or the unit of exchange that it was. They--I don't know what they call it now. Or it may still be called the pound. But it's value on the international market--. I don't really know what it is.

Jackewicz: But getting back to what we were saying about this bill in Congress. I thought I read somewhere where Congress did not pass this bill--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Jackewicz: ...to go through with this transition to the metric system.

Jackewicz Jr: Well, even if it's not passed as a law in the United States, it's going to come about naturally through the international science and engineering standards that are being set by international organizations throughout the world of which this country plays an important part because of the great economy which we have which is the world wide ah, ah--. If it doesn't come about through force by legislation, it will come about by natural--natural means.

Vapaa: How about in your course work at Notre Dame? Do you use the metric system much there?

Jackewicz Jr: I've been using the metric system since high school. And it's much easier to use once you've got hold of it. It's understandable

because it's based on ah,--

Vapaa: Tens.

Jackewicz Jr: Right, as 10's--easier to convert to smaller units and break down into your fractions than it is to figure in what percent an inch and a half is of a foot. And it's ah--it's got to be a lot easier once people understand it.

Vapaa: This is the busiest household. Matilda's just gone to answer the door. It doesn't make any difference who it is, Joe.

Jackewicz: It's a sunny, rainy afternoon. (laughter) The sun is warm.

Vapaa: (voice overlap - unintelligible)

Jackewicz: A Sunday rainy afternoon.

Vapaa: Oh. You mean that you expect company on--

Jackewicz: Not really. I have no idea who that might be.

Vapaa: I know--

Jackewicz: Well, that was an asparagus customer looking for asparagus.

Vapaa: You hope?

Jackewicz: No. Retail asparagus--yes, we do. We're not cutting today because of the bad weather. And ah, I do not have any supplies available.

Vapaa: I see. What does asparagus retail for now?

Jackewicz: We're charging 35¢ a pound.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And what's it bring on contract? You do contract it don't you?

Jackewicz: Yes. Ah, my contract is with a ah, processor in New Jersey--

the Ritter Company at 29¢ a pound.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Now Joe, before we run out of tape here, you have any idea what the price of potatoes is going to be at harvest time this year?

Jackewicz: If I was that smart, George, I wouldn't be growing 'em. (laughter) I'd be buying them, contracting them from the growers and hedging them on the market. Ah, but generally speaking I--I feel that ah, they have to be in the neighborhood of \$5 a hundred to come out and cover our expenses. Ah, I think we should perhaps see a \$7 and a half to \$8 a hundred market this time.

Vapaa: Um-hum. You're seed cost this year have been rather high haven't they?

Jackewicz: Yes, they have. We have paid as much as \$10 - \$12 a hundred pound for seed using 22 to 23 hundred pound bags to the acre. One can figure what that cost is pretty easy.

Vapaa: How about your fertilizer costs?

Jackewicz: Fertilizer had increased 100% over last year--from \$55 a ton to \$110 a ton this year.

Vapaa: Now, that's what grade of fertilizer?

Jackewicz: This is a triple 10--10-10-10.

Vapaa: 10-10-10 fertilizer. Which is what you had learned to use?

Jackewicz: This is what I have been using for the last 3 or 4--

Vapaa: Nah, years ago in Long Island what fertilizer did you use?

Jackewicz: Basically, I used a 5-10-5.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And why--

Jackewicz: And I do come back with a side dress of nitrogen and a little
(coughing) Pardon me.

Vapaa: Do they still do that?

Jackewicz: Yes, they do.

Vapaa: 5-10-5?

Jackewicz: Yes. It's surprising how--. Some do. Now, I should retract
that. Ah, some of 'em have gone to a 1-1-1 ratio. Ah, and
still side dress. Ah, those that are using the 5-10-5 this is
perhaps their own way of doing things and just never did change.
Ah, some are using a 8-16-8.

Vapaa: A 1-2-1 ratio.

Jackewicz: 1-2-1 ratio. Yeah.

Vapaa: Well, Joe, I think we're just --

(TAPE 1, SIDE 2, ENDED)

T H E E N D

Joe Jackewicz with own potato labeled bags in storage shed.



Joe Jackewicz, Jr. on potato grading line.

Joe Jackewicz, Jr. at end of packaging line with a sack of Delaware Produce Growers' potatoes.
(Father is President)



Joe Jackewicz with own potato
labeled bag in storage shed.



On the spot equipment repairs



Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Jackson



Joseph Pickering



people parking in office



George Vapaa (interviewer)
and Joseph Jachewicz



Mrs. Joseph Pickering



Mrs. Joseph Jackson
and son, Joseph, Jr.



Joseph Jackson, Jr.



Joseph Jackewicz, Jr.



Jacob Zimmerman



Jacob Zimmerman