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INTERVIEW WITH
FRED AND MARY MARTIN

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

GEORGE K. VAPAA, NARRATOR

Martin: I am Fred Martin from Harrington, Delaware.

M. Martin: And I am Mary Martin from Harrington, Delaware--Fred's wife.

Vapaa: Fred's wife. O.K. And I'm George Vapaa the narrator for this Oral History for Dr. John Monroe at the University of Delaware. All right now Fred, we want to get some information about your life history. When and where were you born?

F. Martin: I was born in November 7, 1914 in Youngsville, Pennsylvania.

Vapaa: Which makes you how old now?

F. Martin: Sa--ah, 60 ah, 59 years old.

Vapaa: Fifty-nine years old. Yes. And ah, Youngsville, Pennsylvania would--can you just tell us a little more where that is? Youngsville?

F. Martin: I--it's in northwestern Pennsylvania in Warren County--a town of about 2,000 population.

Vapaa: Were you born in the town?

F. Martin: Just outside of town.

Vapaa: On a farm?

F. Martin: On a farm.

Vapaa: Was your dad a farmer?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: What did he grow?

F. Martin: Corn and oats and dairy and buckwheat was the main crops.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Anything else that was unusual about the farm?

F. Martin: Not that ah, I can recall. We had dairy and ah--

Vapaa: How many cows?

Martin: About 10.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: Average.

Vapaa: And you milked them by hand of course?

F. Martin: All by hand.

Vapaa: Was that--that was before milking machines were invented?

F. Martin: No. (laughter) No, not before they were invented but before they were popular.

Vapaa: Oh, I see. Now, where did you sell your milk? Do you remember?

F. Martin: To Abbott's Dairy in Philadelphia.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: They had a receiving station in Youngsville.

Vapaa: All right now Mary, let's pick up with you. What was your maiden name and when were you born and where?

M. Martin: My maiden name was Mary Kolata.

Vapaa: How do you spell it?

M. Martin: K-o-l-a-t-a.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: And I was born May 13, 1924 in Olean, New York.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: That's in the south--wait--southwestern--

F. Martin: southwestern New York

Vapaa: New York state.

M. Martin: New York state in Cattaraugus County

Vapaa: Cattaraugus County. Now, how about your parents? Where were they born and so forth?

M. Martin: My father was born in Portnan (sp), Germany.

F. Martin: Poland.

M. Martin: Po--Ger--Poland. I don't know why I said Germany. In Poland.

Vapaa: That would have been western Poland?

M. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Right close to the German border?

M. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: How about your mother?

M. Martin: My mother was born in Salamanca, New York.

Vapaa: Do you remember when they were born?

M. Martin: Oh--it'd be 1898.

Vapaa: Could have been.

F. Martin: Yeah.

M. Martin: Seems like mom was born 1898 and dad was born a year ahead. That would be 1897 my father was born.

Vapaa: And what did your father do in Europe?

M. Martin: His father had a farm. But when his father died he came over here to this country when he was 19 years old. And his mother passed away after he came over here.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Let's see Fred, if you have some questions too you want to ask Mary, why this is your chance. (laughter) But ah, I think this is interesting--Poland and Germany. Do you know why he came to this country?

M. Martin: Well, for a better life.

Vapaa: Do you know when he came?

M. Martin: When he came?

Vapaa: Approximately.

F. Martin: About 1915.

M. Martin: Yeah, I guess it would be, wouldn't it?

F. Martin: Just about 1915.

Vapaa: And what did he do after he came here? Where did he go?

M. Martin: He worked in a coal mine first in Pennsylvania near Scranton.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: And from there he moved up near Olean, and then he worked for ah, Socony Vacuum Oil Company in Olean for several years. And during the depression he lost that job and bought a farm--123 acre farm-- on a side hill. And he farmed a short time.

Vapaa: Where was this farm?

M. Martin: In Olean, New York.

Vapaa: Oh.

M. Martin: On the out--outskirts of Olean, New York.

Vapaa: And when did you meet Fred? (laugh)

M. Martin: 1940.

Vapaa: Oh.

M. Martin: September of 1940. I was going to high school.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And he was going there too?

M. Martin: No, he was trimming trees and he dropped a limb on my head. (laughter) And I fussed at him. So we just got a date going and just started going together. And we were married the next year in August of 19--

Vapaa: Did you finish high school?

M. Martin: No. I had a half a year to go when I quit school.

Vapaa: How about you, Fred?

F. Martin: Yes, I finished high school.

Vapaa: Where?

F. Martin: In Youngsville.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: In 1935.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And you were married when?

F. Martin: In '41.

Vapaa: Where?

M. Martin: March 30th in Olean, New York.

F. Martin: In Brookville, New York. No, you're right--Olean, New York.

M. Martin: Olean, New York.

F. Martin: That's right.

Vapaa: Was it a church wedding?

M. Martin: No.

F. Martin: We was married in the parsonage.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: Rectory.

Vapaa: Now, how many children do you have?

M. Martin: Two. We have a son, David⁷--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: ...who was born September 16th, 1942.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: And we have a daughter, Jean, who was born in--the next July 28th, 1943.

Vapaa: That's J-e-a-n?

F & M Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Now, what does David do now?

F. Martin: He's a plumber for General Foods. In his--as his--his profession and he moonlights as a plumber.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Now you're talking about General Foods here in Dover of course?

F. Martin: Yes.

M. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: At the new plant?

F & M Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Now, he finished high school too didn't he?

F. Martin: Yes. And he finished high school in 19--

Vapaa: Do you remember when?

M. Martin: 1961.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Now Fred, I seem to remember I've had you at Harrington High School too, but--

F. Martin: You did. Ah, on the VA education.

Vapaa: That's Veterans' Administration?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Yes. This was after World War II.

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: You were a Wor--World War II veteran?

F. Martin: I was.

Vapaa: What did you do in World War II?

F. Martin: I was a wire and telephone man.

Vapaa: Um-hum. In the signal corp?

F. Martin: No. In the ah, artillery. The ah,--

Vapaa: Did you have any overseas service?

F. Martin: Nine months.

Vapaa: Where?

F. Martin: In Germany.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Can you speak a foreign language at all, Fred?

F. Martin: No.

Vapaa: How about you, Mary?

M. Martin: No.

Vapaa: Your parents never spoke Polish or German to you? Which did they--which did your father speak?

M. Martin: My father spoke English. When the older children--there was 5 of us children--when the older children were small my parents spoke Polish to them.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: But they fussed at them not to speak Polish because the older children was afraid the rest of us would talk broken. So by the time us younger children came along my folks always talked English to us. So I never learned to talk Polish.

Vapaa: Can you follow a conversation in Polish, do you think?

M. Martin: Yes. If it's slow enough.

Vapaa: Do you know what they're talking about?

M. Martin: I--I can--I can get an idea of what they're talking about.

Vapaa: That's about the same situation with me in the Finnish language.

Vapaa: My mother, of course didn't know any English when she came to this country, and she met my dad here. I was born in 1915. And she and my father would try to speak English because my mother really wanted to learn how to speak English, see. But when they were talking to me they would speak English only. And they didn't try to teach me Finnish at all. And I've always kind of regretted the fact. In fact I've got a book back-- several books back there, a Finnish dictionary and several others, how the--Finnish Self Taught, you know, for example. Do you have any Polish books or anything like this.

M. Martin: No, I don't. The 3 older children can speak Polish. But--

F. Martin: Her brothers and sisters--

M. Martin: ...my younger brother and myself neither one--we can't.

Vapaa: Now, how many br--bro--brothers and sisters did you have?

M. Martin: I have 1 sister and 3 brothers.

Vapaa: And they're older or younger than you?

M. Martin: Ah, my sister is older and 2 brothers are older and then I have a--1 younger brother who was born 10 years after me.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Well Fred, we haven't gotten you raised yet really. I was jumping ahead a little bit. Let's back up a little bit. Ah, you were living on a farm when you were going to high school?

F. Martin: Yes. I lived on a farm all my life.

Vapaa: I see. This was outside of ah--

F. Martin: Youngsville, Pennsylvania.

Vapaa: Youngsville, Pennsylvania. But your dad did let you get through high school?

F. Martin: Yes. (laugh) He didn't let me, he forced me. (laugh)

Vapaa: Forced you. Were you unhappy about it?

F. Martin: No. Not really.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Did you play any high school sports or--?

F. Martin: No, I did not. I--

Vapaa: You had to go home and milk cows?

F. Martin: I had to get home and--I had work to do home.

Vapaa: How far away fr--were you from the school house?

F. Martin: About a mile and a quarter--a mile and a half.

Vapaa: Did you ride a bus?

F. Martin: Are you kidding? (laugh) They didn't know what buses was then. (laughter) No, I never rode a school bus until I come to Harrington and I rode one to town one time.

Vapaa: I see.

F. Martin: That's about it--experience on school buses. (laugh)

Vapaa: Tom. You mean Tom who?

F. Martin: I rode one to town.

Vapaa: Town. Oh, yeah.

F. Martin: Town.

M. Martin: Town.

Vapaa: O.K. I ah--not quite used to your New York ah, or is it Pennsylvania accent.

F. Martin: Pennsylvania.

Vapaa: Western Pennsylvania accent. All right, we got you through high school. What--wh--and from high school you went in the army?

F. Martin: From high school I went ah, to work for Davey Tree Expert in Kent, Ohio where I worked in various parts of Pennsylvania and New York for 2 years 'till I was--. I went to work in a machine shop then--1940. Yeah, 1940.

M. Martin: '41. You went in January and we got married in August.

F. Martin: Ah, all ri--yeah, in 1941 I went to a machine shop. And from there I was drafted to service where I spent 2 years. And then I went back to the machine shop. And I got disgusted with the machine shop and came to Harrington and bought a farm.

Vapaa: Why did you happen to pick Harrington?

F. Martin: No particular reason. I was--

Vapaa: Did Mary help you?

F. Martin: Oh, sure. Du--but there was really no particular reason why we picked Harrington.

Vapaa: Did the price of the farm have anything to do with it?

F. Martin: No. I don't think it did. It--the farm suited us. That was ah, main thing.

M. Martin: Well, in a way it did because we were--looked around up by Lancaster and York. And the prices was so high we thought we never could pay for a farm and ever get on top.

Vapaa: Do you mind telling me what you paid for your farm and how big it is?

F. Martin: \$10,000.

Vapaa: For how many acres?

F. Martin: For 77 acres.

Vapaa: Right next to Harrington.

F. Martin: Right next to Harrington.

M. Martin: Nine tenths of a mile from our farm to the post office.

Vapaa: I see. And how far is it to the northern city line to your farm?

F. Martin: Three tenths of a mile.

Vapaa: Three tenths of a mile.

F. Martin: Um-hum.

Vapaa: I see. Now ah, what else can we say about the farm?

F. Martin: Well, people told me after we bought it that it was the poorest farm in Kent County.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Why?

F. Martin: Because it has been share cropped so many years that it just wouldn't grow a crop. The first year I had 10 acres of oats on the farm. And I can't tell you how many bushel of oats but it was not very many. But off of this 10 acres I got 113 bales of straw. I know that. I remember that.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: And now anybody can tell you that I don't have to take a back seat to nobody.

Vapaa: Any particular reason Fred, that you feel that your farm has been improved?

F. Martin: Chicken manure.

Vapaa: How did you get in the chicken business?

F. Martin: Didn't know any better. (laugh) No. Ah, well, a man that we bought the farm from when--before we--

Vapaa: Who was it?

F. Martin: Mr. Black.

M. Martin: Harry Black.

F. Martin: Harry Black. Wanted us to build a chicken house prior to moving here. But we were sceptical about it and so we did not build it until 1952. We built the chicken house. And that has been a life saver since then.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Now, Harry Black, let's clear up who he was.

F. Martin: Well, he was a merchant.

Vapaa: What did he sell?

F. Martin: Wo--women's apparel in Harrington.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: But he had bought this farm--why I can't answer--why he bought it. I think he bought it in 1943. And he paid 23 or was it 23 or \$2800 for this farm in a run down condition. He bought it from the Federal Land Bank.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: And he did not improve it much.

Vapaa: He was speculating in other words.

F. Martin: Speculating, that's right. And ah,--

Vapaa: Was ah--the original house there then?

F. Martin: Yes. It has been rebuilt. He rebuilt it.

M. Martin: It had no electric when we bought it.

F. Martin: No indoor plumbing, no indoor water. Oh, there was a pump in the kitchen. I'll take that back. But the water wasn't fit to drink out of it.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Now, when you moved in you did what? You did all of these things? Put in electricity and so forth?

F. Martin: We put electric and we put in indoor plumbing and rebuilt the house almost completely. Modernized it I should say. And--

Vapaa: How many years did you live in it? I know you're not living in it now.

F. Martin: No. We lived in it ah, 7 from 25.

M. Martin: 8. Eight from 25.

F. Martin: Be 17 years we lived out of it.

Vapaa: Seventeen years you lived out of it.

M. Martin: And now our son lives in it.

Vapaa: And what did you do since then--since you moved out?

M. Martin: Since we left the farmhouse?

Vapaa: Since you left the farmhouse? Tell us. Yes.

M. Martin: Well, I went to work at General Foods for 7 years and worked in the cafeteria as a salad girl.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: Then I felt Fred needed me home on the farm with the chickens and his extra work. And I wasn't feeling good so I gave up the job and I've been home helping him since. And I tend to the chickens while he's off out in the field at noon time when he doesn't have to stop and come in the house.

Vapaa: Do you like farming in Delaware better than you did in New York, Fred?

F. Martin: Oh, yes.

Vapaa: And why?

F. Martin: Well, it's much easier. Ah, we don't have no stones to contend with.

Vapaa: Is that one of the reasons you bought the farm?

F. Martin: Well, I can't (laugh) ah--. The main reason I bought the farm is I got tired of the machine shop.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: Punching a clock. And I didn't--I haven't had to punch a clock since then.

M. Martin: He always said when we first got married that was one thing that he wanted was a farm.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: He always wanted his own farm. So I thought he might just as well have it and we'll move on a farm.

F. Martin: Starve to death together.

Vapaa: Have you ever bought any more land for the farm or sold any?

F. Martin: No. No.

Vapaa: And you have how many acres now?

F. Martin: 77 and 7 tenths. Well, I've--I'll take that back. We did sell where the--where the farm house is. We sold that.

Vapaa: Um-hum. To whom?

F. Martin: To my son.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And Built this new home?

F. Martin: And we built this new home.

Vapaa: And it's a brick home?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: It's on ah--what road do you call it?

F. Martin: Raughley Hill Road.

Vapaa: Now, it's not what most people might think. It's named for a Mr. Raughley and a Mr. Hill.

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Right? I don't know which Raughley or which Hill. Do you know?

F. Martin: I can't answer that.

M. Martin: No.

Vapaa: Virginia, do you know?

V. Vapaa: No (murmur)

Vapaa: She doesn't know either so we'll have to pass that up. May--maybe something we ought to look into, Fred. But there's no sign of a hill on that road I can tell you.

F. Martin: Not on that road today.

M. Martin: No.

Vapaa: And there are no Raughleys living on that road.

F. Martin: No.

Vapaa: But there are Raughleys and there are Hills living in the neighborhood. (1st side of tape ended)
Now Mary and Fred, we were talking about the Raughley-Hill farm.

F. Martin: Raughley--

Vapaa: Raughley Hill Road, excuse me. And we were trying to decide how it happened to get it's name. Now ah, there are several Hills particularly out at Paradise Alley. And Randall Hill lives out on U. S. 13.

F. Martin: Um-hum.

Vapaa: Right? And he grows what?

F. Martin: Wh--ah, field crops, corn and soybeans and melons. And--

Vapaa: Which he retails mostly from the highway doesn't he?

F. Martin: Yes. He retails mostly his melons.

Vapaa: He also wholesales them too, doesn't he?

F. Martin: Yes. Ah, but (cough) ah, in ah, since he has a--he's in semi-retirement right now.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: And he rents his farm. And the man grows soybeans on it.

Vapaa: Who does he rent it to?

F. Martin: Harold Williams from Bridgeville.

Vapaa: Oh. Does Harold still own the other land in the immediate area, do you know?

F. Martin: Not in the immediate area. He tilled some in Milford but ah, not in the immediate area.

Vapaa: Um-hum. So that whole corner up there where Randall lives now is being tilled in ah, essentially grains--

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: ...of one sort or another.

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Small grains and soybeans and--

F. Martin: Small grains and soybeans.

Vapaa: Any corn out there now?

F. Martin: Just across the highway from Randalls.

Vapaa: And who lives there?

F. Martin: Winkler. Francis Winkler.

Vapaa: I see. And his 2 boys till that land plus enough--some other land.

F. Martin: Plus a lot of other land perhaps a couple thousand acres of other land.

Vapaa: Most of it's rented, isn't it?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: A lot of it?

F. Martin: A lot of it.

Vapaa: Now, they also came from western New York--

F. Martin: New York.

Vapaa: ...state, didn't they?

F. Martin: Yes. Up near--

Vapaa: They were--as I remember they were ah, fruit growers primarily but they also had dairy cattle--

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: ...up in New York state.

F. Martin: And beef.

Vapaa: And beef. And I remember old Mr. Winkler, the father, used to talk about Jersey cattle I believe it was they had up in New York state.

F. Martin: Oh, uh, would uh--I won't say whether it was Jersey or--

M. Martin: They lived in Jersey at one time. Near New York City. Yeah.

Vapaa: They did? I didn't know this.

F. Martin: He was a butcher at one time--Mr. Winkler was.

Vapaa: He was? Un-hum.

F. Martin: And ah, and when he moved--well he--Oneida, New York. Wasn't it Oneida? Oneonta.

M. Martin: Oneonta.

Vapaa: Oneonta.

F. Martin: Ah, when he moved there he bought this farm in ah, Oneonta. A fruit and dairy farm.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: And then ah, prior to moving to Harrington he wanted to expand his farm but there was no land available. So he came to Harrington and bought that farm. The Lyons farm.

Vapaa: And that farm has been tilled--. Do you remember what it had been tilled in before?

F. Martin: Lima beans mainly.

Vapaa: And it used to be that on real hot weather like we're having-- or have had a little bit of this summer--. I guess we can't say we've had too much hot weather this summer yet.

F. Martin: Not yet.

Vapaa: It's still a little ah--I mean ah, almost the middle of August.

F. Martin: That's right.

Vapaa: And we've still got a lot of warm weather we hope.

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: And ah, but after the small grain was off and before the beans would get up--the soybeans, the late soybeans--why the winds used to blow pretty heavily in the summertime.

F. Martin: Oh, definitely.

Vapaa: And you could go to Houston which is approximately 4 miles east I would say of Harrington and see this clouds of dust blowing across the highway and on east of Harrington all the way over to Houston.

F. Martin: Um-hum.

Vapaa: Not Houston as the Texans would say, but Houston. (laughter)
And ah, it was that farm that was--the soil from that farm that was blowing.

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Now, how did the Winklers corrected that problem would you say, Fred? Cause they have, haven't they?

F. Martin: To as certain extent. They--well, today they grow corn and small grain and plant it almost no till--minimum tillage. And they don't have the--the erosion problem.

Vapaa: And they have one other thing there going for them.

F. Martin: That--their irrigation.

Vapaa: In 2 of the fields, aren't they?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Or do they have 'em on the other farm too?

F. Martin: Yes. On the other farm. On both farms they've got irrigation.

Vapaa: That would be Francis' brother?

F. Martin: Yes. Walter.

Vapaa: Now, do you work with the Winklers at all?

F. Martin: Oh, occasionally. I--eh, but ah, I--I help them and they help me both.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: I expect they'll pick my corn for me this fall.

Vapaa: They have more modern equipment, is this the story?

F. Martin: They--yes, ah, I don't have a 30 inch picker and they do. My picker is 38 inch. And I can't pick my 30 inch rows with it.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: So I'll hire them to pick my corn.

Vapaa: Now, is yours a 2 or--I mean, do they have a 2 row picker or 4 row?

F. Martin: No. They have a 6 row picker.

Vapaa: Six row picker.

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Well, how long will it take them to harvest your corn do you think?

F. Martin: Well, I only have about 20 acres for me--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: ...and they will do it in less than a day.

Vapaa: Now, it's been a pretty dry summer. It started out as an awfully wet spring. But it's been a pretty dry summer. How does your corn look?

F. Martin: If I get a half a crop, I'll be happy.

Vapaa: What's half a crop?

F. Martin: Fifty bushel.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: To the acre.

Vapaa: What would you normally get?

F. Martin: I'd like to get--think I could get--a hundred, but I usually end up with just under a hundred.

Vapaa: And ah, how do you figure you've been able to increase your yields fr--from below 50 bushels and acre to about 100 bushels an acre, Fred?

F. Martin: For--fertilizer and lime and--

Vapaa: How about your chicken manure?

F. Martin: ...chicken manure.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Do you remember the time when you were a veteran when ah, when we went out and looked at some of your small grain and some of it wasn't coming up?

F. Martin: Um-hum.

Vapaa: Do you remember why?

F. Martin: Um-hum. I killed it with chicken manure.

Vapaa: (laughter) So you can use too much, can you?

F. Martin: Oh, definitely. On--on wheat that I know of.

Vapaa: I mean you've had that much experience with--

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: ...with chicken manure.

F. Martin: But ah, ah, as a whole I think it's one of the greatest fertilizers that we've got.

Vapaa: Now we haven't said too much about growing chickens, Fred. Tell us a little bit about your experience in growing chickens. You were married. You--you--

F. Martin: We--well, you can tell him better--

Vapaa: She does all the work.

F. Martin: Yeah, she does all the work.

M. Martin: We usually get 'em when they're a day old. We get 11,000 at a time. And we keep them until they're between 8 and 9 weeks old when they're sold. We hand feed them. We don't have automatic feeders. We could have automatic feeders, but we feel we do a better job feeding by hand as the automatic feeders clog up and the feed runs on the ground and its wasted. So we feed ours by hand.

Vapaa: All 8 or 9 weeks?

F. Martin: Yes.

M. Martin: All 8 or 9 weeks, yes. The 2 of us do it together in the morning.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: When the chickens are little and they're only up to 2 weeks old, we have to feed 'em twice a day. Then we have feeders that are big enough we only feed 'em once a day.

Vapaa: Now you told me that those chickens today are how old?

F. Martin: They'll be 2 weeks tomorrow.

M. Martin: They'll be 2 weeks on Monday.

Vapaa: So you have to feed them again today yet?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: What time?

F. Martin: About 4 o'clock.

Vapaa: And then again when?

F. Martin: About 7 tomorrow morning.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: For another few days and then we switch over to once a day. We can put enough feed in for once a day then.

Vapaa: Now Fred, it's kind a hard for me to see how a person with ah, less than 78 acres of ground can make a living farming.

F. Martin: Well, I--I rent ah, some land--about twice as much as I have of my own tillable land. So I till about 150 acres.

Vapaa: Where do you rent it? Who from?

F. Martin: Well, I rent some from Jehu Camper and some from John Paul and some from Sam Paul.

Vapaa: Where are these lands located?

F. Martin: Well, the Paul land is located on the Houston Road and the Camper land is on the Poset--Houston Road. Then I also rent some from

ah, Mr. Reed. He's just north of me.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: And--

Vapaa: What does he do? What kind of work?

F. Martin: He's retired.

Vapaa: What did he do?

F. Martin: He--he was a general farm hand.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: Just a hand labor man.

Vapaa: But he does own this farm? Right?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: And you rent it from him?

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Does he have any livestock? Or do you have any livestock?

F. Martin: I have 5 steers,

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: That I just keep for my own use.

Vapaa: How's a person eat 5 steers in a year?

F. Martin: That is--

Vapaa: You can't afford to keep 'em any longer than that, can you?

F. Martin: No. They ah, the man that I own--have 3 of my own and 2 that belongs to a friend of mine.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: And he furnishes the steers and I furnish the feed and we each take a steer a year.

Vapaa: Do you like this arrangement?

F. Martin: Yes, it seems to be working satisfactory so far.

M. Martin: It's a lot easier that way than it is to put out 3 or \$400 for enough meat to put in your freezer.

Vapaa: Now, do you raise any of your other food?

F. Martin: Just a garden.

Vapaa: And what do you grow in your garden?

F. Martin: Corn, lima beans, tomatoes, peppers, whatever--anything we want to eat.

Vapaa: Any melons?

F. Martin: We don't have a melon this year. We normally do. As you know. You've had the boys out there when I had melons.

Vapaa: Yes. When I was teaching at Harrington.

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Yes. I know cause I used to have a time keeping the boys out of 'em. (laughter)

F. Martin: It ah--but this year I didn't plant a melon. I normally do. But--

Vapaa: Do you have any strawberries?

F. Martin: Oh, yeah. Just our own--for our own use. We have a few strawberries.

M. Martin: (Unintelligible)

Vapaa: You say a few--what's a few?

F. Martin: Oh, a row probably 150 feet long.

Vapaa: Um-hum. What variety?

F. Martin: That's a good question. I--I don't have a--a whatever--ah, I had some Jersey Bell and I had some ah, Sure Crop and I think I had some Pocahantus.

M. Martin: And we have raspberries--

Vapaa: Oh.

M. Martin: ...that we got from--

F. Martin: Red raspberries.

M. Martin: ...red raspberries that we got from Mr. Lawrence Cain--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: ...when he was teaching school several years ago.

Vapaa: He took my place during the war--at Harrington. He was one of the people.

M. Martin: Did he?

Vapaa: Yes.

M. Martin: Well, he gave us the red raspberry plants. And we transferred 'em down from the farmhouse down to the new house. And we still have 'em.

Vapaa: Where do you have 'em in relation to your new home?

M. Martin: In the garden. On the edge of the garden on the lawn.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

M. Martin: And they bear twice a year. They bear in the spring right after strawberries and now they will come on again now in August and bear until cold weather.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And ah, do you sell any berries at all?

M. Martin: No. Just give 'em away what we don't have--use for ourself or put in the freezer. I usually just give 'em to the neighbors.

Vapaa: You'll have to ask my wife for her receipe she uses for ah, raspberry mush or blackberry mush. Do you do any berry picking at all or anything like this in the woods? You have some wood land, don't you?

F. Martin: Yes. I have about 15 acres of woods.

M. Martin: Well, we picked blackberries this year out in the pasture. The first time we picked 'em in about 10 years. There hadn't been any that long. But just enough to eat.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And your--your raspberries you have enough to preserve some, you say--to freeze some?

M. Martin: Yeah.

F. Martin: Oh, we--we ever use.

M. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Do you have any problem with disease or insects on raspberries?

F. Martin: No.

M. Martin: No.

Vapaa: They grow pretty well?

F. Martin: Yes, they do well.

Vapaa: All right Fred, now I'm going to get into a delicate subject. We don't have too much time left on the tape, but we got enough to discuss it, I hope. This business about drainage around Harrington. It seems to be quite a lively subject.

F. Martin: It is.

Vapaa: And you're involved in the middle of it.

F. Martin: The ah--well, the drainage engineers decided that they could put a ditch through our farm, on the highest spot on the farm, and abandon the ditch that was doing the job. Which they did. And also cut the ditch through our farm which I objected to. And

they didn't even have the common courtesy to come and ask me about it prior to going through.

Vapaa: Did they have any authority whatsoever to do it?

F. Martin: Not that I know of. The court says that they advertised it in the paper and it was a form of condemnation. But it is ah, if it was--. The lawyer says that's a form of condemnation. But it's not in the American way.

Vapaa: Well, this is part of the tax ditch system that we have here in Kent County--

F. Martin: Yes.

Vapaa: ...and in fact, it's throughout the whole state.

F. Martin: Um-hum.

Vapaa: And incidentally, it's unique Fred, for the whole country I believe. I don't think there's any other state that has tax ditch companies like we do down here in Delaware. Where people vote to tax themselves to do a ka--job of drainage on their farm where an individual farmer couldn't get drainage by himself. In other words, what they were looking for on your farm, I presume, was an outlet. Was that right?

F. Martin: Well, I--I ca--really can't answer that ah, for this reason. There was a ditch that took care of the water without destroying none of my farm prior to them building this new ditch. And when they were proposing--forming this tax ditch company they said they were going to clean the old ditches. But when they got to it they dug new ditches.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: And ah, they--

Vapaa: Now you say they dug 'em. How'd they dig 'em?

F. Martin: With a backhoe.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: Ah, they ah--they have a ditch at the back of my farm that's at least 10 feet deep.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: When the went through--. Oh, as I say they went over the highest--

Vapaa: How wide is it?

F. Martin: Well, on the top it's about 30 feet.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: On the bottom it's 4 or 5 feet.

Vapaa: So it's almost a pond?

F. Martin: Well it's big enough for a pond.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

F. Martin: In fact it is the only ditch I believe in the United States--they've got a dam in the middle of it.

Vapaa: Why is it in the middle of it?

F. Martin: Why at Wheelers' Park there's a dam.

Vapaa: Yeah. That's right.

F. Martin: And they--the dam is still there. But eh, so the water is damed up just prior to eh, leaving my farm--or just after leaving my farm. And the--in fact the water backs up to my farm from this dam. And what they cut this new ditch for, I'll never answer.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Well, I think I know a little bit about the story of this

thing, Fred. I know the City of Harrington was quite concerned about getting drainage in the northern part of the town particularly. So this tax ditch company I believe the City of Harrington itself is involved in this tax ditch company.

F. Martin: Well, to date they haven't done a thing in the City--or for the City.

Vapaa: But I think the proposal is that they do get a tax ditch going. And ah, part of your taxes will be the benefits presumably that you will get from the drainage of the ditch.

F. Martin: That i--that's the idea of it. But ah, ah, and there will be some that will get benefit from it. But in my particular case I don't get enough benefit (cough) to even think of ah, the damage they done.

Vapaa: So you were--you feel that you were outvoted and that you've been harmed more than helped by this? Taxation?

F. Martin: Much--much more.

Vapaa: Well Fred, I think and Mary, I think we're just about out of tape here. And I do want to thank you for doing this story. And if you want to listen to a portion of it, we'll play it back--a little bit of it for you.

F. Martin: Ah, well, it's chicken feeding time. And ah, not at ah--well, you want to listen to a portion of it?

M. Martin: Well, it's up to you.

F. Martin: I don't care. Maybe 2 or 3 minutes.

Vapaa: O.K. Right.

T H E E N D

