



Citation for this collection:

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Of the original 252 audio-recordings in this collection, 212 of these tapes were transcribed around the time of the original recordings (between 1966 and 1978). In 2012, Cabbage Tree Solutions was contracted to create transcriptions for the remaining tapes. Corrections to and clarifications for all transcriptions are welcome, especially for names and places. Please contact Special Collections, University of Delaware Library, for questions. askspecref@winsor.lib.udel.edu

FROM THE DESK OF

GEORGE K. VAPAA *Dover Delaware*
10 November 1974

To Whom It May Concern:

Much of the Zimmerman tape suffered
in transcription from cassette to reel, so that
parts are indistinct. The written transcript
had to be made from the transcribed cassette
to the reel involving changes of tape speed
for one thing. This was needed in order
to cut down on the number of cassettes used.

Most cassettes run $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches per second.
Reels run at the same speed $3\frac{3}{4}$ or $7\frac{1}{8}$ inches
per second — and usually give truer fidelity at
the faster recording speeds.

George K. Vapaa
NARRATOR

INTERVIEW OF
JACOB W. ZIMMERMAN

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

GEORGE K. VAPAA, NARRATOR

August 13, 1974

(TAPE TRANSFER POOR)

Vapaa: This is the night ah--July the--State Senator Ja--Jacob W. Zimmerman ah, to tell us something about the growing of potatoes in Delaware and also about Long Island where ah, he came from. You happen to be the first person, Jake, that we have on this ah, so called oral history of the movement of Long Island potato farmers into Delaware. So ah, do you want to give us a little bit of your background? Your--where you live and so forth?

Zimmerman: George, I live on the South Little Cree^k Road on a farm. Ah, my address is R.D. 3, Box 117, Dover, Delaware. My phone number is 734-4453.

Vapaa: And your zip code?

Zimmerman: Zip code is 19901.

Vapaa: And the area code as far as the telephone is concerned?

Zimmerman: The area code as far as the telephone is concerned is 302.

Vapaa: I see. Now, along with ah, Jake here we're fortunate to have my neighbor Senator William G. Bush (actually Judge William G. Bush) of the Superior Court. And ah, let's identify you, Bill.

Bush: I had best be identified on this tape as a former student of Dr. Monroes. Live at 12 Lake Drive next door to ah, ah, George Vapaa.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And I'm George Vapaa, of course. And incidentally, I went to high school with Senat--with Dr. Monroe. He was a couple of years ahead of me so ah--. And I talked with him just a few days ago. And ah, very glad to have to opportunity to ah, ah, do this oral history so called of potato growing in Long Island and in Delaware. So let's ah, talk a little bit about your family background first, Jake.

- Zimmerman: George, I was born in Riverhead, Long Island in--on May 15th, 1930. My mother and father lived on a farm in a town called St. James.
- Vapaa: Um-hum.
- Zimmerman: Prior to that ah, my father was born in a town called Rosedale, Long Island which is presently in New York City near--adjacent to ah, Kennedy International Airport.
- Vapaa: That's a different county too, isn't it? Isn't that (unintelligible)
- Zimmerman: That's in ah, Kings County I believe.
- Vapaa: Kings County.
- Zimmerman: Oh, Queens County. Queens County, I believe.
- Vapaa: Queens County.
- Zimmerman: Anyway, my father was born on a farm. Well, my grandfather farmed in Rosedale. And in 1908 or 1909 my grandfather looking for more land made a 2 day trip out on Long Island by horse and buggy to ah, a community near Jamesport near Mattituck. And whereupon he bought a farm and then in later years add--bought some more farm. Ah, my father was one--one of 8 sons. And after (unintelligible) World War I he married my mother. And then he and one of his brothers started farming in a town called St. James.
- Vapaa: What is your mother--your mother's maiden name? Do you know?
- Zimmerman: My mother's maiden name is Whittington.
- Vapaa: Whittington.
- Zimmerman: My father was a ah, a captain on a sailing yacht.
- Vapaa: Now, you have a German name. Does this mean you have any relatives in Germany or anything?

Zimmerman: No. Ah, I believe that it was my great grandfather that came over in the 1850's.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And landed in--near Richmond, Virginia.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And ah, after the Civil War he wound up in New York City.

Vapaa: Farming.

Zimmerman: Or he moved there in that area.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And ah, what motivated him to come to Richmond and to then-- well, he went to Baltimore and then to Richmond and then went to New York City.

Vapaa: Now, you said that they--your father and your grandfather farmed in J--in Jamesport.

Zimmerman: In Jamesport.

Vapaa: Jamesport. Now, what was the reason they moved there from near what is presently the Kennedy Airport?

Zimmerman: Well, for better land. That was better land.

Vapaa: I see.

Zimmerman: And then my father moved to St. James when he started farming with one of his brothers. He grew--apparently grew vegetables and potatoes. Ah, and the only grains that we grew on the farm were enough to feed some of the horses that we used to work on the farm. But then when World War I started--World War II started--labor became scarcer and ah, he planted more in potatoes and cut out

some of the labor consuming vegetable crops. Ah, after--potatoes were very profitable during World War II. And there was keen competition for land all around. A lot of it--wooded land was cleared off and put in crops. And I have 2 other brothers who were at that time were in their early 20's. And my father wanted--and his brother who was in a similar situation farming in another adjacent town--felt they were going to--they were going to make a trip down to the Eastern Shore of Virginia because this was where the whole major potato area is of the whole East Coast.

Vapaa: Right.

Zimmerman: Ah, and look for some farms down there. Well, this was before the New Jersey Turnpike where that at that time when we first come to Delaware it took about 7 or 8 hours to get to Dover. And I happened to be with my father on this first trip. And he stayed in a tourist home on North State Street. I believe that it ends where the tourist home is.

Bush: (unintelligible)

Vapaa: Bill, you are a native Delawarean and a native of Dover, aren't you?

Bush: That's right.

Zimmerman: Well, I was 13 years old at the--12 or 13 years old at the time. And my father and his brother both came down and stayed there. Well, actually at the tourist home--the people that ran the tourist home wanted to know every bit of their business. And they told them they were on their way to Virginia looking for--to look at some farms. And at the tourist home they told them

about the--they said there was several beautiful farms around Dover were for sale. And one of the neighbors happened to be real estate then--came over and told him about the farms that he had and wanted them to look at them. And they couldn't believe the prices of the farms. Where--my father bought the farm at Denny's Corner--160 acres for \$6500.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And my uncle bought the farm on Bay Road for \$10,000.

Vapaa: And what particular reason did they happen to select those farms?

Zimmerman: They--they selected the best farms because they liked the land on them.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And the first year they fe--they weren't sure how well it would grow potatoes. So they planted some potatoes on each one of their farms that year. And they grew fairly well. So the following year they could cultivate the entire farm in potatoes. And they grew very well. And ah, then as the years went on my father bought some more farms. In 19--and also all farmers were farming on the land (?).

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And for a period of 6 years we farmed in both places--^{Long Island}~~New England~~ and here. And we'd bring some of the men who would do much of the machine work later on down here to help plant the crop and help harvest it. And we'd go back to Long Island and plant and harvest there.

Vapaa: How about the equipment?

Zimmerman: We didn't move the equipment that much beca--eh, it's just too cumbersome.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Bush: You had a duplication of the equipment? I mean, down here?

Zimmerman: Yes, ah, right. So then in 1948 my older brother wanted to go on his own. He had been farming with partners.

Vapaa: What is the name of your older brother?

Zimmerman: Ernest.

Vapaa: Oh.

Zimmerman: I've got another older brother who was killed in an automobile accident in 1944.

Vapaa: Oh. Oh.

Zimmerman: Ah, Ernest wanted to go on his own. So he came down here to De-- Delaware. And he bought a farm in Kitts Hum~~ph~~rick--the old Caesar Rodney farm.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And he farmed there. And then in 1949 my father bought the farm where I presently live.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: From the Distle (?) family. Ah, in 19--. We planted potatoes there first in 1950. Ah, we've planted potatoes there continuously every year now since 1950. And this is the 25th year that that land has been in potatoes.

Vapaa: Now, it's a common practice on Long Island, isn't it, to plant continuously from one year to the next.

Zimmerman: Yes. And--

Vapaa: Do you want to give us the reasons for it?

Zimmerman: Well, the high cost of the land. And ah, we--and even today it's more important that we do that because we have quite a bit invested in stationary irrigation equipment.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: That ah, to justify it you have to utilize it.

Vapaa: But doesn't this add to your cost in some ways like (voice overlap)

Zimmerman: Yes, it adds--it cost (unintelligible) control it had cost periodically every 3 to 4 years we fumigate the soil on the entire farm to control soil bearing nematodes.

Bush: Ah, Jake, at the present time your brother Ernie is located right across from you (voice overlap, unintelligible)

Zimmerman: Right across (voice overlap, unintelligible)

Bush: Ah, when did he move to that area? There seems to be a strip of land east of the highway where you're located which seems to be a-- a potato farm zone ah, running from ah, north to south between the ah, the Little Creek - Leipsic Road and the ah, ah--

Vapaa: Air Base Road.

Bush: ...north of the Air Base to ah--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Bush: ...to Leipsic. Is that area particularly suited ah, more than--

Zimmerman: Yes. We're located where we can grow potatoes. And ah, it's fairly well drained. We have ah, abundant supplies of underground water for irrigation wells. And these are the qualities we look for. One of the problems we have been encountering the last ah,

5 or 10--5 years or so since we've switched to--continually to mechanical harvesting of potatoes and the use of a lot of heavy equipment on the land is the problem of compaction of the soil. We try to overcome this by being very careful in ah, when the soil is wet as far as harvesting or--or plowing or (unintelligible) as long as it's wet. And we try to overcome this by ah, plowing down in ah, greater amounts of color-foam (?) in the soil than we normally would.

Vapaa: Did you have these same problems on Long Island?

Zimmerman: That was a sandy top soil--very sandy. No, it wasn't a loamy soil such as this is. But back at that time there we didn't harvest mechanically. But here now we harvest mechanically. And ah, I think we have the compaction problem under control.

Vapaa: Weren't you one of the first people who used ah, mechanical harvesting to?

Zimmerman: I bought the first mechanical harvester--first mechanical harvester on the East Coast of the United States.

Vapaa: Oh.

Zimmerman: In 1956. It was a bad year because it cost me about ah, I lost^t about \$15,000 (unintelligible) on that deal. Ah, but it didn't work out and the company wouldn't back it up.

Vapaa: Say, '56 was a good year though.

Zimmerman: Oh, no. I was able to afford it that year. (laughter)

Bush: Now to get back to your early personal ah, history of the coming here to Kent County you came here in 194- --.

Zimmerman: I came here in 194-, the fall of 1949.

Bush: And you came to the North Little Creek Road to--

Zimmerman: The place where I am now, South Little Creek Road.

Bush: But then you had a farm located about 2 miles directly north--

Zimmerman: All right. And then in 19- --.

Bush: That was located where?

Zimmerman: Ah, past the community--north of Little Creek near (unintelligible) *SOUTH HERRING CREEK*
Creek. I was--

Bush: How big a farm was that?

Zimmerman: It was about 125 acres. We tilled it in addition to the farm that I live on.

Vapaa: That was right next to a dairy farm, wasn't it?

Zimmerman: Right. But in 1940--well, in 1949 I came down here working for my father. And I worked for my father for--until 1952 which was--. And in the spring of '52 my father put me on a--gave me a proposition to ah,--he'd give me half the profits for my bonus. Ah, I got half the profits that year. Well, 1952 was the biggest year in the history of the potato business.

Vapaa: And you were 22 years old?

Zimmerman: I was 22 years old.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Ah, so with my half of the profits that year I bought the farm from my father and bought the equipment from my father. Bought my father out completely. 'Course I had a few notes due I didn't--eh, that I--took me a few--other years to pay off. But it was a very profitable year. Ah, since 1952--'53 I've been farming completely on my own.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: We did experience ah, several more good years after that. And ah, then I bought my farm here north of Little Creek which I sold in 1959. And I bought another farm adjoining the one where I presently live. And ah, I farm there continuously and live there.

Bush: That--that one was a small one. Your talking about--

Zimmerman: The Warren farm.

Bush: Ah, as a tract to the ah--

Zimmerman: West.

Bush: ...west of you.

Zimmerman: Right.

Vapaa: That's on the north side of the road right along side--

Zimmerman: Right.

Bush: I happened to be along the day that he bought that ah, (laughter) options. What you call--

Vapaa: The last farm had been tilled by who, Jake, and what did they grow?

Zimmerman: The farm where I live now?

Vapaa: No. The--the farm that you bought.

Zimmerman: It had been growing--I tilled ah, small grains and corn.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: As many typical Delaware farms had been. Ah, the one that I live on now, when I first went there--moved there--my folks (unintelligible) the third titleholder of that farm since the original grant. And my father was the second. And then he changed that

title to me. Ah, but it was a typical da--small dairy farm where they have 30--perhaps 30 head of milk cows ah, and the small grains and--and ah, corn and soybeans for catch crops and some hogs.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Ah, it wasn't really tilled intensively. Ah, 1954 I put in a deep ye--deep water irrigation system on the farm. And ah, (unintelligible) the irrigation pipe--(unintelligible) irrigation pipe. Then in 1956 together with my neighbor behind me, we built a dam across the creek that goes out Little Creek and we created a 125 acre fresh water farm which we used for some irrigation in order to supplement the well.

Vapaa: Did that create any problems for your neighbors at all?

Zimmerman: No, because they were desirous of getting water--the water also.

Vapaa: So they pumped out of there too?

Zimmerman: They pumped out of there also.

Bush: As a sidelight, the farm became known as one of the better goose-duck hunting sites ah, in Kent County. Generally known as Zimmerman's pond. (laughter)

Vapaa: And you hunt on it.

Bush: I hunt on it. (laughter) The guest of Jake and his (unintelligible)

Vapaa: Of course, I think that we ought to point out that both of you are avid sportsmen. And, Jake, you've taken on--taken on some odd sports for a farmer I think over a period of years. Do you want to mention those a little bit? (TAPE 1, SIDE 1 ENDED)

Zimmerman: (unintelligible) ...and I like to play golf.

Vapaa: What size sail boat?

Zimmerman: I've got a lightning (?) that's 19 feet--a 19 foot sloop.

Vapaa: Um-hum. And I've raced it--well, for instance, across the years. This year I'm not racing it as much as I have in the past as it's difficult to have the time to be competitive.

Vapaa: How about the boys?

Zimmerman: My sons sail often.

Vapaa: They still active in it?

Zimmerman: Yes, they do.

Bush: Ah, George, Jake is recognized as one of the best hunting shots ah, around this area.

Vapaa: Mmmm-hum. I think we can agree on that. (laughter)

Bush: Ah, Jake, as your ah--ah, when you mention your peak years ah, since ah, 1949, is there any-- (voice overlap, unintelligible) ...You mention 1952 as a peak year--

Zimmerman: 1952 was a fantastic year.

Bush: What would the top price go that year?

Zimmerman: Ah,--

Bush: For a 100 weight?

Zimmerman: We sold potatoes that year for \$8 or \$9--\$8, \$7 or \$8 a 100 weight. (voice overlap, unintelligible) It had been higher for year per 100 weight than that. Then in 1954 I had a very good year. We sold potatoes at that time--our cost production was about little over \$1 - \$1.20. We sold potatoes that year for \$4 - \$4.50 the entire crop. And I had a big crop. In 1956 we had another big year. We sold potatoes around \$6 - \$8 a 100 weight.

Vapaa: Now, also in 1956, Jake, you--there was something else that happened. Do you remember what that was? As far as marketing was concerned?

Zimmerman: 1956 was the year we started Delaware Produce Growers.

Vapaa: Right.

Zimmerman: (unintelligible)

Vapaa: Do you want to explain how the thing got started?

Zimmerman: Well, 1955 was a disastrous year in potatoes.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: After having ah, 2 of the previous 3 years were very good in the potato business, farmers throughout the country just overplanted in 1955. And I can remember selling potatoes for 80¢ a 100 weight packed down. And the bags cost us 10¢ or 15¢. Ah, and I make a deficit on potatoes that year. Ah, so it was a bad year all the way around. Ah, so and the fall of 1955, myself together with several other farmers felt there was a need to do something on our own to control sales. And we attempted to get all the farmers in the state together. But it was impossible to do. Some of them were just too independant minded.

Vapaa: Do you want to explain the original scheme?

Zimmerman: I really don't recall all the details, George.

Vapaa: I think I can give you a little bit of it. Do you remember we had a meeting and I think in the State Board of Agriculture or some place like that where everybody was going to put up \$50 a piece. And you were gonna hire a salesman and he was going to sell all the potatoes in the state.

Zimmerman: Well, what we were trying to do--

Vapaa: (voice overlap, unintelligible)

Zimmerman: ...what we were trying to do was to get control of the entire production in the state.

Vapaa: Right.

Zimmerman: And ah, to (unintelligible). And ah, so that the buyers would not be working one farmer against another and beating the price down. And so that one farmer would not be able to cut his neighbor's throat as far as undercutting the price. But ah, this is ex--well, the previous year, 1955, was a bad year in potatoes. It wasn't, I guess, bad enough to force the farmers in to--in to giving up some of their independence and doing that. Subsequently, we then went ahead and formed a--we considered forming a cooperative. And we decided against forming a cooperative. We formed a stock corporation for the Delaware Produce Growers. And ah, roughly control about 20 - 25% of the acreage of potatoes in the State of Delaware.

Vapaa: Well, as I remember it, it was something like this with the Delaware Produce Growers. You tried to collect first of all when you were trying to get all the farmers in the--

Zimmerman: Right.

Vapaa: ...state--\$50 a piece from each farmer in the state. They were all supposed to come in. When the time you had to collect the money, you couldn't get any money from them.

Zimmerman: Right.

Vapaa: So you--a few of you--I think about 12 of you, wasn't it?

Zimmerman: 12 of us.

Vapaa: Decided well, we'll put \$500 a piece up and--and control that much acreage. And that'll still be enough to be a factor in the market.

Zimmerman: Right. And in 19--changes had come about in ah, in growing potatoes.

Vapaa: Well, finish 1956. How did that year work out?

Zimmerman: 1956 ah, was a very good year.

Vapaa: Right.

Zimmerman: Ah, 1956 was the first year that I bought a potato washer and dryer. The potato market was \$8. And it was raining every other day during harvest. And you couldn't ship muddy potatoes. So I--we--my brother and I called the Lockwood Manufacturing Company who was at that time one of two producers of potato washers in the United States. We called them and they located in their main plant--they had 2 washers and 2 dryers. So, well, we--end of July we sent a truck--sent a truck up to Maine and to pick up these 2 washers and dryers. And we brought them to Dover and had them installed. And we were the only ones who were able to ship washed and dried potatoes in Delaware that year.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Ah, we were able to harvest potatoes and ship them when other farmers couldn't. And those washers and dryers paid for them--

selves I guess the first week we had 'em in operation.

Vapaa: I think we can agree can't we, Jake, that you've been somewhat of a pioneer in some of the ah, developments that have taken place over the years. I mean you had the first mechanical harvester, the first ah--

Zimmerman: Washer and dryer.

Vapaa: ...washer and dryer, and let's see, there was some other innovations that you had there.

Zimmerman: We put in the first flume for--ah, in the potato packing house to ah--to separate--since we harvest mechanically we get the rocks and some clods of dirt. And ah, with compaction problem that ah, we've experienced in recent years, this was becoming an increasing problem. So we installed a flume. Well, the flume uses about 350 - 450 gallons of water per minute. And at the same it separates the potatoes float through--among the water and the rocks and clods fall--go to the bottom and they're removed by conveyor. And it eliminates the work of about 4 or 5 men and does it better.

Vapaa: Have you made any changes in your ah, ah, packing operation since then?

Zimmerman: Nothing major, other than--well, you know, we have--try to keep a modern packing house.

Bush: There's the sewing machine operation.

Zimmerman: We pack ah--sometimes we pack the single packs for the home that--

Vapaa: In the beginning you were packing what?

Zimmerman: Well, in 1952--1954 we only packed 100 lb. sacks and 50 lb. paper bags. In 1954 I started a little packing line and we were able to pack in single packages--10 lb.--10 and 15 lb. packages. Then ah--

Vapaa: How does this differ from up in Long Island? At the time?

Zimmerman: Well, no great difference, as we know them the techniques that we use here are the same that they use there.

Vapaa: Have the--

Zimmerman: There's a lot of interchange of information.

Vapaa: But how about the ah, packing sheds up on Long Island. They're different than they are here.

Zimmerman: Well, up on Long Island many of the farmers don't have their own packing houses. They haul to central packing sheds. Ah, this is for several reasons. There are a lot of small farmers that grow from 60 to 100 acres of potatoes. And ah, with that small an acreage they can't justify the investment in an packing house. Ah, the larger farmers they do have their own packing houses same as we do here.

Bush: Jake, would you miss the economic benefits of going to a smaller pack? Well, it's the difference between a 5, 10 and 100 weight pack.

Zimmerman: You get an increased profit in the, you know, 100 weight if you are able to run your packing house efficiently. And ah--

- Bush: The smaller the pack the larger the ah, amount of money you receive per 100 weight.
- Zimmerman: Right. Right. Well, the increased price goes (voice overlaps unintelligible)
- Bush: (voice overlap, unintelligible) ...may differs--may mean the difference of a--about a \$2 per hundred weight. In other words, you (unintelligible) a 10 lb. pack.
- Zimmerman: All right. Th--there's an increase cost though in putting in this little packs. For example, last year when we were packing southern potatoes for \$10 a 100 weight ah, we put in 100 lb. bag-- we would put 101 lbs. In 10 10lb. bags--we have to pack 10 lb. potatoes at ah, 10 lbs. 12 oz. --at 10 3/4 lbs. Ah, on 10 of those you have 7 and 1/2 lbs. of potatoes extra. Ah, you're packing 107 and 1/2 lbs. versus 101 lbs. So your--your cost--your 6 and 1/2 lbs. of potatoes. Potatoes at 10¢ a lb.--\$10 a 100 weight--that's \$1.65 increased cost you have in your packing end operation. So ah, there's quite a big difference. So you have to take that into consideration ah, when you mark up the price of small packages over the bulk packages.
- Vapaa: But by and large you feel this is profitable to do this?
- Zimmerman: It's generally profitable.
- Bush: There more ah--or the small package more saleable?
- Zimmerman: Small packages are more saleable.
- Bush: 'Cause they're ready to go in that grocery store in the (unintelligible)

- Zimmerman: Well, we--we're set up--we can pack any size package. Ah, we have to maintain a sizeable bag inventory--packaging inventory. But we have to fix that up so we can pack everything. Ah, because it depends upon the demands of the market at the time.
- Bush: You me--you mentioned ah, ah the ah, (unintelligible) efforts on the soil end and about (unintelligible) efforts on the purchasing end of bags, supplies and seed potatoes.
- Zimmerman: Well, we do both together. And ah, I think it's been quite worthwhile over the years.
- Vapaa: Now, your fellow produce grower doesn't sell anything but potatoes though, does he?
- Zimmerman: He sells whatever the farmers want in the line of potatoes or vegetables. Ah, that the farmers have to offer.
- Vapaa: Now, Pete, where does your ah (voice overlap) ...sales manager.
- Zimmerman: Sales manager. Manager there now.
- Bush: And ah, how many members are in it at the present time?
- Zimmerman: 14.
- Bush: And it started with how many in?
- Zimmerman: We started with 12. But at the same time the total number of potato farmers in Delaware has been decreasing. And the individual farmers' acreage has been increasing.
- Bush: What ac--what acreage does that represent--the 14?
- Zimmerman: About 25% of the acreage of the land.
- Bush: Numberwise what? How much acreage? Do you have any rough estimate what that would represent? In thousands of acres?

Zimmerman: It represents about 2 - 2 and 1/2 thousand acres of potatoes.

Bush: Now you mentioned--I think we got up to about 1956 as a ah, peak year. What were your peak years beyond '56?

Zimmerman: There were very few peak years beyond 1956. Ah, until this past year.

Bush: You had 1963.

Zimmerman: 1963 was a fair year. There were several good years during the ah, 1960's.

Bush: Ah--

Zimmerman: But nothing exceptional.

Bush: '61 or '62 which was a very poor year. Ah--

Zimmerman: I don't recall them exactly. I'd have to look o--my records which I keep of every year and total production and everything we take in and what we package ea--packaged each year. But ah--

Bush: '61's good--

Zimmerman: There was nothing memorable about the years 1960's. (laughter) Nothing good and nothing very bad to make it stick in your memory.

Bush: There was one year--I believe it was '61--where the ah--there was a number of farmers in Kent County who ah, had a number of fields-- the price was so low September - October where they ended up ah, not ah, harvesting the ah, (voice overlap unintelligible)

Vapaa: Weather.

Bush: And a lot of them ended up in November still the crop actually frozen in the ground. The price was down about \$1.50 per 100 weight.

Vapaa: Normally, what is your harvesting date?

Zimmerman: Generally starts--I start harvesting around the 15th of July and try to finish by Labor Day. Ah, years back in the 1950's we grew predominately the variety of Irish ^{CORBIER} ~~Cobla~~ (?) which was an earlier variety. We would start harvesting those years around the 1st of July. But now with the newer variety, the variety Superior, that we're growing we--the harvest date is 10 days or so later.

Bush: (murmuring)

Vapaa: No. We can keep going.

Bush: Ah, do you know--do you happen to know ah, for what use these potatoes are equipped. Ah, are they ah, table potatoes, baking potatoes, potato chips--are the Delaware potatoe we're talking about now.

Zimmerman: Most Delaware potatoes se--ah, for the fresh m--for the fresh market for table use. Ah, very, very little processing. Some--^{times} what processing there is is for ah, potato chip companies. There's some acreage in Delaware that is contracted. Ah, but a small percentage of the total acreage. And it's contracted by the potato chip company.

Bush: I think that's just about it, George.

Vapaa: No, wait. We can keep going here.

Bush: ..Couple of minutes?

Vapaa: But ah, now, there's not too much time left on it.

Bush: Is there any use made of the small potato? I call 'em marbles ah, for lack of a better ah--.

Zimmerman: Oh, over--

Bush: The term used used as a (unintelligible) farmer.

Zimmerman: For years and years ah, the first cannery that canned ah, small whole potatoes was Dulany and ah, in Fruitland, Maryland. Ah, I guess about 8 or 10 years ago Draper Company in Milton, Delaware started canning small whole potatoes. And ah, they probably process most of the potatoes that are canned here--that are--the small potatoes that are by-products of the packing houses here in Delaware today. I have shipped some ah, washed and for the fresh market. Last year we shipped some small potatoes. Ah--

Vapaa: Are these that profitable do you think, Jake. The small potatoes?

Zimmerman: The small? No, they're not profitable because the canneries have not been paying the price that they ah, the value of the product.

Vapaa: Right.

Zimmerman: And we--I've been trying to ah, get the farmers to ah, stick together in bargaining for a price for the cannery. But farmers being what they are, it's ah, nearly impossible to bring everyone together on it.

Bush: Now, the ah, mechanical harvester--also there's a lossage here by the number of cut potatoes which have no economic value to the farmer ah, whatsoever.

Zimmerman: Right. Some farmers have--

Bush: (voice overlap, unintelligible) ...it's--

Zimmerman: ...some--the damage to the small potatoes ah, eh, some farmers feed them to hogs and ah, according to the extent of the damage to the potato. If it's just a surface damage ah, they can--

- Bush: The harvesting season running from the middle of July until Labor Day--when does your planting season start? When do you start preparing the soil itself.
- Zimmerman: Generally, we start planting right around St. Patrick's Day which is the traditional day you plant peas and potatoes. But ah, this year ah, and some other years ah, the ground's been too we--too wet. Now, we may not get started until the 25th of March.
- Bush: That is about that time of year a problem a lot of times, isn't it? The moisture problem.
- Zimmerman: Right. But we do try to complete planting by the third week in April. And ah, generally we've been able to do this.
- Bush: If you're delayed, one problem would be--would come in the ah, harvesting season ah, of another harvesting area. Would that--
- Zimmerman: Yes, that--that happens. But ah,--
- Bush: Then that would--
- Zimmerman: ...the recent years are--
- Bush: ...the Virginias or, I'm sorry, the Jersey's.
- Zimmerman: The recent years though ah, yu--20--20 years ago why a farmer in the potato market he had the middle atlantic area. Ah, and, but in recent years our primary market eh, right in the first week-- couple of weeks of the shipping season, we'll be shipping to the north of us and as soon as they start harvesting potatoes to the north of us generally we start shipping then to the south. Because harvest is completed there. I would say in an average

season they're probably more Delaware potatoes shipped south than there are shipped north.

Bush: By south where would they--where would they be shipped to?

Zimmerman: To ah, ah, Charlotte, Norfolk, Richard--Richmond, Charlotte, Raleigh ah, Savannah, Atlanta ah, Tampa, Jacksonville, Miami.

Bush: To the north would be you--your markets north, Philadelphia, New York .

Zimmerman: Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Buffalo, Albany.

Bush: Does it ever extend--

Zimmerman: Then al--this past season we ah, shipped some to ah, ^AHolton, [?]Maine.

Vapaa: Humph. How about the mid west. You--

Zimmerman: I ran out of potatoes there for french fries and they wanted to keep the french fry plant going.

Vapaa: Like taking coals to New Castle. (laughter)

Bush: Jake, what are the ah,--some of the ah, techniques that you've used to ah, increase your production ah,--'course irrigation would be one technique that's very--

Zimmerman: We started irrigating in 1954--put in our first deep well. Ah, we irrigated ^{with} portable aluminum pipe. Ah, then in 1970--1 and--we changed our entire system--put underground water main and used the fo--or circular system--system known as the rain cap. And with this sytem ah, we--it uses absolutely no labor and it waters day, night ah, Saturday, Sunday and eliminates all the labor problems of moving to all the pipe.

Bush: Is this rather expensive--irrigation system?

Zimmerman: It is. And that's why we do not rotate our land. We keep it in potatoes constantly. And you put a heavy cover crop ah, on the land and plow it down ah, to maintain the tilt~~4~~ of the soil.

Bush: Irrigation systems for 100 acre tract would cost ah--

Zimmerman: The system that I have in cost me \$30,000.

Bush: How old is it?

Zimmerman: It's t--it's 2 years old.

Vapaa: Two years old. (voice overlap, unintelligible) Your brother, Ernie, has one too, doesn't he?

Zimmerman: Ernest has a ah, different type system. He has what they call a wheel roll. Which ah, moves across the field and--and has to be moved ah--one man moves it ah, mechanically and then has to reconnect it to his water main.

Bush: Is there a trend to go to deep wells rather than ah, ponds or lakes ah, as more dependable?

Zimmerman: It depends upon the--

Bush: I should say deep wells--from wells for instance.

Zimmerman: ...it depends upon the water supply that one has available. A farm that ah--a good farm that is a cheap supply of water ah, but in ah, ah, not many farms have that, and as a consequence a deep well ah, they can locate it in the middle of the field rather than having to spend ah, a lot of money to run underground water main from the corner of a farm or the edge of a farm.

- Vapaa: How deep are the wells in the Dover area, Jake, and what's the approximate cost of one?
- Zimmerman: (cleared throat) The--there's a base (?) supply of water in the Dover area in the surface layer which is down to 80 to 90 to 100 feet. Ah, and--but the thickness of that layer varies quite a bit. Ah, that's where my well is in that surface area--72 feet deep.
- Vapaa: Um-hum.
- Zimmerman: Where 20 feet of (unintelligible)
- Vapaa: And how many--
- Zimmerman: And it produces about 600 gallon per minute with the rain ^{cap} ~~cap~~ running 24 hours a day se--7 days a week we can irrigate 200 acres with it. (voice overlap, unintelligible)
- Vapaa: (voice overlap, unintelligible) ...the name of your irrigation system (voice overlap, unintelligible)
- Zimmerman: (voice overlap, unintelligible) ...it's a trade name. Ah, it's powered by electric.
- Vapaa: Um-hum.
- Zimmerman: Ah, moves electrically.
- Vapaa: Um-hum.
- Zimmerman: And ah, we can move it ah, without water in it--with or without water in it.
- Bush: And a ah--you've also seen a--in your production techniques of course, as most other type of farming a--an increase of a larger type of a more powerful machinery ah, the tractors--
- Zimmerman: Everything has gone today from when I first started farming when

we planted potatoes 2 rows at a time, cultivated them 2 rows at a time, now everything is ah--. I bought my first 4 row potato planter in 1956. And ah, everything is 4 rows now in potatoes. Ah, some farmers are even harvesting 4 rows at a time. They use a windbrella (?) to harvest 2 rows and the windbrella (?) spills those 2 over into the next 2 and then the ha--potato combine comes along and harvests the potatoes from the--those 4 rows.

Bush: The horsepower and size of the tractor?

Zimmerman: Tractors are increasing in size every year. Ah, ah, now it's a question of ah, the tractor is bigger than we can utilize now in row crops. Ah, row crop agriculture is a little bit than ah, than open grain farming in that ah, you're limited to the size of the tire that you can get down between the rows. And we plant potatoes on 36 inch rows. And it's difficult for cultivating and things and it's difficult to use a tire that's much wider than ah, 15½ inches.

Vapaa: Jake, have you ever grew--gr--you've grown any livestock at all?

Zimmerman: We have--some years we have fed cattle with culled potatoes.

Vapaa: You're talking about beef cattle?

Zimmerman: Beef cattle. But other than that we have no livestock.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: I don't have a chicken on the farm. Ah, the extent of animals on my farm are cats and dogs.

Vapaa: Do you still have any interest at all up in Long Island?

Zimmerman: No.

Vapaa: Pardon me.

Zimmerman: My mother lives in Long Island. She has a home there. But ah, we have no farms in Long Island.

Vapaa: Where is she--at Jamesport?

Zimmerman: In St. James.

Vapaa: St. James.

Zimmerman: Has a--St. James. My sister lives there.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Bush: You men--you mentioned the fact of ah--

Vapaa: How many sisters do you have?

Zimmerman: I have 2 sisters. (voice overlap, unintelligible) ...1 older.

Vapaa: Oh.

Bush: You mentioned the fact that there is a decrease in the number of potato farmers ah, as true for Kent County as well as the State, isn't it?

Zimmerman: Yes.

Bush: Ah, and also in the amount of acreage that's now in potatoes year after year.

Zimmerman: There's some--there's been some decrease in acreage ah, during the 1960's was a decrease in acreage in Delaware. Ah, but I would say in the last 5 years that acreage has pretty much stabilized. And I would guess we have anywhere between 7 and 8,000 acres of potatoes.

Bush: (voice overlap, unintelligible) ...what the future trend would be.

Zimmerman: Ah, I don't see any great change. Eh, ah, with the change in eating habits of--of the housewife ah, the trend towards more prepared products ah, the instant type potatoes ah, I think--I don't see any opportunity for any great increase in potato acreage in Delaware. Because ah, market is primarily oriented towards the fresh--fresh market being used by restaurants or--or the retail stores for table use. And ah, I think that our percentage of consumption that is consumed I think is going to decrease in that area. But since I think the population growth is going to hold our--our--our total usage of potatoes in that--for that purpose will probably hold the same. I don't see any great increase (unintelligible) increase.

Vapaa: Bill, let's see if (unintelligible) ...politics.

Bush: All right. Jake, you're now serving as a State Senator. How long have you ah, been in the Legislature?

Zimmerman: Well, I first got involved in politics in 1956. That year I's President of the Potato Growers Association here in Delaware. And there was some legislation before the General Assembly that was unfavorable ah, in the area of regulating farm labor. So I wrote to my local representative and spoke to him. And ah, he didn't see things my way so I said, "Dammit, I'm going to run against you." (laughter) That summer I filed against him and (unintelligible) ..for State Representative. And ah, I was warned ah, that I was gonna get beat. And I was beat. So I--

Bush: That was the only time.

Zimmerman: That was the only ti--. No, I was beat one other time (unintelligible). Ah, so then that fall ah, after the el--winter after the election--I believe you^(BUSH) were part of the group--group of us organized the Young Democrats of Kent County. And ah, so then we worked at that. And I think we came quite successful in our effort. And in 196--there was--there har--the election of President Kennedy in 1960. That year I was President of the Young Democrats. And I was subsequently appointed ah, State Chairman of the ASC Committee--Agriculture (unintelligible) Conservation Service in 19--in spring of say, '61. (clearing of throat) I served there until 1964 when I became--became involved in ah, the movement to draft Governor Terry for Governor in Delaware. And ah, got involved in a delegate fight and ah, resigned my position as ASC State Chairman to run for the House of Representatives. And which I had the nomination and I was elected to the House in that year--1964 to 1966. I was reelected ah--and I was elected min--elected--chosen minority leader of the House. In 1968 I was reelected and again chosen minority leader. Then in 1970 I received the Democratic nomination for the United States Senate in Delaware. Ah, I was defeated in that election. And I--

Vapaa: I want to ask you who you run against, Jake?

Zimmerman: Run against Senator William Roth who is presently United States Senator in Washington.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Ah, I run in 19--I was out of the political field for 2 years. And in 1972 I filed for State Senator in my district. And I was elected and I am presently serving in that office.

- Bush: Have you had any other potato farmers that ah, been ah, serving in the Legislature or actively ah--
- Zimmerman: There's no other farmers that I know of that have served before or ah, in the General Assembly or even in elective office other than in their towns or school boards and such.
- Vapaa: Now Jake, one year you were named Young Farmer of the Year for the State of Delaware. Do you remember what year that was?
- Zimmerman: It was back in the 1950's. I think it was when--
- Vapaa: How old were you then? Do you know off hand?
- Zimmerman: I think it was 1956. I was 26.
- Vapaa: 26 years old. And that--I mean, candidates for that ah, ah, award have to be at--under 35 years of age.
- Zimmerman: Right.
- Vapaa: And it's awarded by the ah, Junior JayCeese.
- Zimmerman: State Jun--Junior Chamber of Commerce--JayCeese.
- Vapaa: JayCeese, yeah. And ah, did you get any kind of ah, recognition out of it? Other than--
- Zimmerman: You get a lot of recognition. You don't get any cash out of it. (laughter)
- Vapaa: Do you have a trophy or anything like that or any trips--
- Zimmerman: I have a plaque. That the--that program has expanded quite a bit since then. And I think they get--the winners of it now get ah, some more trips out of it and such. But at that time it was in the beginning years and--of the outstanding young farmer program.
- Vapaa: Of course, most years I think ah, since Delaware is pretty much of a dairy producing eh, state too, many of the candidates happen to be dairy farmers. And ah--

Zimmerman: What's happened in Delaware in agriculture has--agriculture representation in--in the State Legislature ah, previous to the reapportionment that was required by the courts in 1964--the General Assembly was predominately agricultural.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Ah, since the reapportionment the--the number of farmers in--has decreased considerably to the extent where today ah, I believe there are only 2 bona fide farmers in the House of Representatives out of 41.

Vapaa: How about the Senate?

Zimmerman: And in the Senate there is Senator Isaacs, myself, ah,--

Vapaa: Senator Elliott.

Zimmerman: ...Senator Cordrey, Senator Elliott and Senator Adams. So we have--it's unusual in our representation in the Senate. It's not typical.

Vapaa: No.

Zimmerman: Because even myself, I represent a district where there are only 50 farmers living in it.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: And ah, it's predominately the City of Dover and ah, the suburban areas on the east and the west and the north of the City of Dover. Ah--

Vapaa: What percentage of your constituents do you feel that you know, Jake?

Zimmerman: It's hard to imagine. I think I know by name or by face ah, I like to think I know half of them.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Bush: To--too much of that--(cough)you also have to mention that in the Dover area particularly in the last ah, 10 years or so, there's been a great influx of a large number of ah, ah, new persons coming

and settling in the area. So that this would not be the ah,-- or maybe it's typical ah,--this is probably true throughout the whole state now. But it is not a true pattern compared to ah, 15 or 20 years ago.

Vapaa: Yeah. Do you feel like this has worked in your favor over the years, Jake? The fact that population has increased and people have come in from the outside?

Zimmerman: New people coming in ah, ah, I think worked in my favor because ah, I have no difficulty identifying with them. Ah, most of the old timers as both of you know, they know that I'm not a native. And I guess I don't sound like a native either. But ah, we did a survey in the last campaign and found that ah, two-thirds of the people in my senatorial district didn't live here 6 years ago. So, they're all newcomers and ah, there are new ones moving in all the time. And this is one of the--been one of the things that's helped me in the campaign--in various campaigns is that we've made considerate effort in registering new voters in the new communities.

Vapaa: Share some of the issues ah, Jake, in the Legislature right at the present time that you're involved with.

Zimmerman: I've been very involved with the ah, construction of the north-south toll road--proposed north-south toll road. When I was in the House of Representatives in 1968 I got legislation through ah, appropriating funds for the conducting of a study of the feasibility of a north-south toll road. This laid dormant. The study was completed and the enormity of the cost of the project ah, such as it was practically dormant for ah, nearly fi--ah, 4 years. We started it

moving again last year. Ah, I'm hopeful that ah, within another year or so we'll be able to settle the--this project. At the present quote: they have just finished studies that indicate that ah, it will be self supporting. And the bonds are saleable. Ah, with the growth in the Dover area that we have experienced in recent years ah, and the traffic congestion that we are experiencing ah, I think more and more people are becoming convinced that ah, we need a new road to go north and south in the State.

Vapaa: Do you see any hope for mass transit up and down the State?

Zimmerman: Ah, I don't see any hope for mass transit until gasoline possibly doubles again in price like it has in the past year and it doubles again in the next year--wh--that is a real possibility for mass transit. But it takes more than what we have right now to get people out of their automobiles and get 'em to sit in a bus. And we have no trains. Ah, so still we're depending upon highways even with mass transit.

Bush: One issue the farmer in Kent County has been wary of where the road is going to go because of going--the possibility of going through prime ah, farm land this has been an issue in Kent County for 5 or 10 years. And ah, you both agree--

Vapaa: Oh, at least that.

Zimmerman: It's been many times and always will be I presume. That's--many times that's a selfish issue. Because well, the farmer says, I don't want to see it go through this prime farm land. If the highway department were to move (unintelligible) the location of

this route off his farm and on to the next farm, this guy will be happy. As long as it's off his farm. Ah, so this is why I think that most of the time that it's selfish motivation. Ah, and the road is going to have to go someplace. And as I think what the highway plan is that--has to consider is to locate it where it will do the least possible damage. And ah, I'm sure no matter where the road is put, it's going to do some damage some place. But ah, I (unintelligible) . I don't think you can stop ah, the building of people coming into the area. We've seen in the last 10 years the new developments around Dover. Ah, last ah, the last campaign we had 14 large apartment complexes in my senatorial district that we separated and worked them individually as units. Ah, since that we still have those 14 and we have 3 new ones--3 new large complexes. So ah, and when you consider a large apartment complex having 200 - 250 units in it and at least 2 people living in every unit, you have about another 5 - 600 people living in each one of those units.

Vapaa: Well, you're looking for mass housing so to speak then. In other words (voice overlpa, unintelligible) ...complexes.

Zimmerman: I don't know how it's going--. I'm astonished that ah, each time you see an apartment complex being built--wonder where in the hell are the people going to come from.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: But by the time they have that built it's almost full and some are full when opened. And now right on my own--the road I live on there's one large apartment complex. Ah, and right now they're

building an--another construction of another 250 townhouse.

So ah, and they seem to have a buyer for every one of the places that are built, or someone to rent it.

Bush: Do you see a trend in the general decreasing of farm land in Kent County due to--particularly the City of Dover and perhaps Smyrna, Milford ah, expanding and the increasing population?

Zimmerman: I think what's--you're going to see some decrease in acreage. But I think we've seen that over the years--til the last 10 years, 12 years. But I think what we've also seen is a more intensive use of the existing farm land. Ah, you see very little land left idle now in ah, in pasture or hay. Most of the dairy farmers are ^{gone} ~~doing~~ more intensively to silage and--and more intensive feeding. Ah, I know several dairy farms that have are--have more of a loafing lot more than a pasture.

Vapaa: Right. Now, they have--if they have any pasture at all, it's a so called night pasture, Jake.

Zimmerman: Right.

Vapaa: I mean, where they'll put 'em out at night to graze a little bit ah, on there. But I think you're right they--they primarily on a silage program. There's very little hay that goes into cows today.

Zimmerman: Right.

Vapaa: And the hay goes in to the ah, horses of course, in our race tracks that we have up and down the State.

Zimmerman: I think what you--wh--what we're seeing is ah, in little grain farms we're seeing more intensive ah, use of land, increased use of fertil-

izer and ah, other chemicals to protect the seed from insects and ah, stimulate the growth of plants ah--

Bush: No tillage.

Zimmerman: And weed control. Ah, they're growing soybeans now--. Last year I had some soybeans. We didn't cultivate them at all.

Vapaa: Did you have 'em in rows or--?

Zimmerman: Had 'em in rows. Never had to cultivate 'em.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Bush: Now, there hasn't been as much effect of all these techniques on the marginal farm land on the western side of the ah, Kent County.

Zimmerman: Well, this is because there are many small farms. And the small farmer cannot afford the equipment ah, that he requires to maintain the tillage practices.

Vapaa: Could have a drainage problem too, I think.

Zimmerman: There is a drainage problem.

Bush: They really have (voice overlap, unintelligible)

Zimmerman: But after those farms have been drained ah, or as they dig tax ditches in those areas, and ah, many of the small farms being consolidated into larger farms--. And ah, I was on a farm out near Sandtown about 3 weeks ago where a fellow had about 250 acres in one field--of corn. And he came in and planted it, plowed it and planted it, fertilized it and planted it in less than a week.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: He went in there with 7 large tractors and rigs. Walter Schiff from Harrington is tilling it.

Vapaa: Oh, yes. Yes.

Zimmerman: And ah--

Vapaa: He goes like a house afire.

Zimmerman: Right. So--

Vapaa: And he has grown over the years a lot of broilers and a lot of beef cattle. I remember when he started in beef cattle. We had been advising him to start slow, you know--

Zimmerman: Um-hum.

Vapaa: ...with relatively few. So what's he do, he goes out and starts with I think with about 200. (laughter) Which is kind of an unheard of figure for beef cattle these days. He's out of it now.

Zimmerman: We're using today practices and ah, to help cut our costs. Ah, I don't--we don't do anymore ground spraying with our--on our potato fields. We do it all aerial. And of hand, as a consequence we eliminate some soil compaction. Ah, we use ^{SYSTEMIC} ~~sistetic (?)~~ insecticides that we include--put in the soil with seed pieces at planting time. Ah--

Vapaa: Do you remember how that got started here, Jake?

Zimmerman: On an experimental basis on Stanley ^{Relle's} ~~Raleigh's~~ farm, I believe.

Vapaa: Yes. But I mean do you know which farmer actually ah, started to use it commercially? Your brother, Ernie.

Zimmerman: Ernie.

Vapaa: You know I talked with Ed Bender who is the American Cyanamide field man.

Zimmerman: Yeah.

Vapaa: I said, "Ed," I says, "Here we spent 4 years trying this thing experimentally on the ^{Relle} ~~Raleigh~~ farm and Fifer farm and over at (unintelligible) Maryland ah, ah, Goldsboro--

Zimmerman: Yeah.

Vapaa: ...and at one other farm--." I've forgotten which it is now. I says, "The farmers wouldn't use it. And all of a sudden they were selling a whole lot of this material. Who in the world did all of this?" He gave me the one name. He says, "Ernie."
(laugh)

Zimmerman: You--we used it a number of years before the other farmers--

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: ...you know, started ah, using it.

Vapaa: But then people watch you and then when you do something why then they want to do it.

Bush: I'd like to mention it first--George, you and I have talked about it in the past that ah, the ah, potato farmer in Kent County has been a type of farmer set apart from the rest of the farmers ever since he has been here in that he has been the most progressive type of farmer using the new techniques. And there's been a certain amount of envy on the part of the other farmer ah, envying their success through using ah, the modern techniques (cough) as they came along. And it's been the other type of farmers which have ah, followed the techniques of the potato farmer.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Bush: And this has been true for 20 years here in Kent County.

Zimmerman: But we have been forced to because ah, the potato farmer you have a hell of a lot of money invested in ah, in every acre. And you have to use the most modern techniques to get the most out of it. Ah, for example, this year with the price of seed potatoes ah,

selling ah, in March at ah--the last couple that I bought I--I needed another 450 bags of seed and they cost me \$14.50--14 and a half dollars a 100 weight to (unintelligible). We used about 20 bags of seed potatoes per acre. And you consider that this year we paid \$79 a ton for fertilizer--\$78.50 a ton for fertilizer--same analysis from the same supplier that I paid last year \$49 a ton. And with the increased fuel costs, increased prices of equipment ah, that we estimate when we finish planting each acre of potatoes, I had about \$500 in it. And so you--you can't take many chances ah, when you've got that much money invested.

Vapaa: And with an average yield of how many 100 weight do you figure?

Zimmerman: We try to get ah--last year we--our crop was short. Ah, because we harvested it early because the price was so high. Ah, but I would consider 225 to 250 sacks a acre a good crop. Many years we have far exceeded that. We've had some years we--we've averaged close to 300 hundred weights a year.

Vapaa: Um-hum. Ho--how about the trend toward bulk shipment, Jake? Do you see much future in this?

Zimmerman: No. I don't see much future in shipping them bulk.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Ah, except for those that are bought by potato--potato chip companies. I--. And ah, I think the tr--the future for Delaware--our marketing here is going to be in packaging. And when we're selling to a fresh market ah, outlet and I think we have to serve the ah, market the best we can. And ah, I would sell ah, this year the deco (?)

process in the packing house in the water flume. Which is the preservative to prevent decay. Ah, we have it--it'll be--my brother, Ernest, put it in 2 years ago. And I contracted for it last year. And by the time they brought the equipment the season was about over. So we will have it after this year. And it will prevent decay in potatoes after they are washed and packaged.

Vapaa: Does Ernest still have his cold storage?

Zimmerman: He has it but he uses it very little.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Because ah, ah, except when you have some left over on week ends after packing on Saturday and you don't crank up again until Monday morning ah, well, if there's any left over from ah, a particular load, he'll put it in cold storage. I use his cold storage when I'm unhappy (?) too. But ah--

Vapaa: It's only a small one too, isn't it?

Zimmerman: It's--it's just strictly⁺ for the purpose of what he's been using it for.

Vapaa: Um-hum.

Zimmerman: Of ah--

Vapaa: Rainy day market you call it, don't you?

Zimmerman: Somewhat, yeah. But ah--

Bush: Is there much of a trend in the use of futures market as a hedge on prices other than farm--

Zimmerman: Futures market ah--the only farmers who I know who have played with

the futures market have been hurt by it. And I think the potato industry would be much better ahead if there were no futures market trading in Maine potatoes or Idaho potatoes. Because most of the see--the only ones that really profit from that are the speculators on the exchange in New York.

Bush: Any other trends that you might see ah--

Zimmerman: There's going to definitely be a trend to more and more mechanization. We're being forced in to it ah, through increased labor costs, through the restrictions that are being placed on--on farmers, the--on housing labor and on various other employment conditions. Ah, this past winter there was quite a crack down by the State Department of La--of Health on ah, migrant labor camps. Ah, and I know I myself ah, have had to completely refurbish my camp. So we're installing a sanitary septic system in the camp. Ah, it's really going to be fit for someone to live in the year round. But ah, this is what we may do now. I may just turn around and rent rooms out--rent the apartments out the rest of the year. I--

Vapaa: Now, the walls of your building are what--concrete blocks?

Zimmerman: No, we have frame buildings.

Vapaa: Frame buildings.

Zimmerman: And it's com--we've completely paneled it. We (voice overlap, unintelligible)

Bush: Did you run insulation at all?

- Zimmerman: No, it's not insulated. But it could easily--could ah,--could easily be covered on the outside.
- Vapaa: And how are they heated?
- Zimmerman: Well, we don't have heat in them at the present because ah, they're only used ah, from the first of July until ah, the first part of September. So they don't require heat. But they could be heated easily.
- Ah, I can see that a greater trend for farmers to ah, utilize more equipment in the production and in the packaging of their crops.
- Bush: How about marketing techniques? Any change in that?
- Zimmerman: Not really. I don't see any great change in marketing techniques ah, in the coming years. I'm sure there will be some, but ah, nothing that I can foresee.
- Bush: You mentioned about the acreage of potatoes remaining about the ~~State~~^{SAME} how about for the rest of the agricultural land. Has there been any trends--major trends cropwise--that ah--
- Zimmerman: There's been a reduction in the acreage of vegetable crops. And it's been brought about through increased labor costs. Ah, and ah, there's been a tremendous increase in--in corn and soybeans because they loan themselves very well to everything mechanically ah, in addition to receiving good prices for them the last couple of years.
- Bush: The government is encouraging the soybeans this year.
- Zimmerman: Well, increasing the export of those particular products ah, and

the many new uses they found for most of them. Not only for food improves--but in the production of various ah, plastic components.

Vapaa: Jake, we're going to have to wind this tape up so I think I'll put a close on it and just indicate to the listener that--that you've been hearing from Jacob W. Zimmerman ah, State Senator 6th--Jacob W. Zimmerman ah, William G. Bush, Judge Bush, and George Vapaa, your narrator, with I hope to--both of you doing most of the talking.

t h e e n d

Wilmington Morning News, Feb. 6, 1974.

Zimmerman assails wrong critic



bill frank

It's a good thing for Sen. Jake Zimmerman of Dover that the code duello is forbidden in Delaware.

Otherwise I would have challenged him to meet me under the Dover Green elms at 40 paces with spitball weapons.

Egad, but there must be some sliver of gallantry left in this world. I resent his charge, published in Sunday's Delaware State News, that Elise du Pont had generated the accusations against Zimmerman in connection with alleged undue influence by him against migrant camp investigators.

Zimmerman says Elise du Pont is behind these charges because her husband, Pete du Pont, is planning to run for re-election to the U.S. House of Representatives and he (Zimmerman) just might oppose him.

Zimmerman's conclusion is that Mrs. du Pont had set out to discredit him.

This is utter nonsense on the part of Zimmerman. Why?

1. Zimmerman has ascribed stupidity to a very knowledgeable, and charming, lady and thus has maligned her ability to be the loyal, competent and accomplished wife of our U.S. representative.

2. Zimmerman has offended my zeal for the truth.

3. As a state senator Zimmerman has attempted to divert public attention from the real issue to a nonexistent situation.

Furthermore, Gary Hinds, an associate editor of the Delaware State News, failed in his story Sunday to make clear just why Elise du Pont might possibly be involved in this Zimmerman case. Mrs. du Pont is the very active and interested chairman of the State Advisory Council on Public Health and as such she is concerned with any and all problems of public health, regardless of her husband.

It seems that one day last November, Dr. Yvonne Russell, director of public health for Kent County, along with two sanitary engineers, inspected Zimmerman's labor camp near Dover.

As a result of that visit, Dr. Russell says, she came away with the distinct impression that Zimmerman had directly or indirectly threatened her job.

Dr. Russell was so upset that she made a report to her superior, Dr. Edward Gliwa, director of public health in Delaware.

The report was discussed at a meeting of the State Advisory Council on Public Health, with Mrs. du Pont presiding. No action was taken.

Eventually, Dr. Russell presented her charges to the office of the attorney general.

I can assure Zimmerman (although he won't believe it) that the report of all this leaked into the News-Journal papers from sources other than Mrs. du Pont.

And this, I think, ought to be known: Mrs. du Pont is extremely sensitive about the possibility of charges that she is using her office as a vehicle to discredit Zimmerman.

One day last fall I accompanied Mrs. du Pont, Dr. Gliwa and other officials of the Division of Public Health to a number of migrant labor camps in Kent County. I was permitted to go along on one major condition: I was not to identify any of the camps. Mrs. du Pont said it would be unfair to name the owners of these camps and also pointed out that she might be accused of engaging in politics.

Hence, I was not permitted to state that one of those camps was the Jake Zimmerman place. Nor was I permitted to report that the public officials were not impressed with the Jake Zimmerman camp as far as state migrant labor camp regulations were concerned.

In fairness to Zimmerman, it should be added that the camp was not in use at the time.

Now Jake Zimmerman is an intelligent man with some awareness of human behavior in politics. So I ask him: Why does he suppose that Elise du Pont — who is smarter than many men in politics — would ever think she could cook up an attack upon Zimmerman and get away with it?

She's not that naive. He has insulted her intelligence as a woman, as a wife of a very smart politician and as a devoted yeowoman in the service of public health.

If Zimmerman has any gripes he should direct them against Rep. Daniel E. Weiss of Brandywine Hundred and against Dr. Russell. Weiss has not only crusaded for improvement of living conditions in migrant labor camps but is also upset about rumors of political

interference with public health officers in their duties.

And, of course, if Zimmerman is not guilty of or even involved with threatening public health officers, what's he got to be worried about?

As of this date, the attorney general has not issued his report on the investigation. I suspect the report will not sustain the charges of Dr. Russell. At worst, the report may hint that perhaps Dr. Russell was personally convinced that she was exposed to threats.

But I believe Zimmerman was most ungallant in his accusation against Elise du Pont,



Sen. Jacob W. Zimmerman

who is extremely sensitive to political implications and cannot easily defend herself.

Afflicted, as I am on occasion, with the itch of knighthood, I decided someone should go to her rescue. Hence, I sought out Joe Smyth and Jim Miller Miller of Dover to be my seconds to represent me in my proposed spitball duel under the elms of the Dover Green.

Smyth and Miller have turned me down and you can't have a duel, illegal though it may be, without seconds.

Prevention beats abortion

letters

to the news

When reading Norm Lockman's Jan. 22

suade other weak-willed people to say, "I'm darned if I am going to be frugal with oil if some other people like the Schragers are behaving just as they did a year ago." This kind of encouraging everybody to get "his" is what makes for crises. There is and always has been enough toilet paper to take care of everyone

24 — State News &
Daily Eagle, Sunday,
July 21, 1974



JACOB W. ZIMMERMAN
Will run again

Zimmerman Announces Candidacy

DOVER — Sen. Jacob W. Zimmerman (D-Little Creek) yesterday announced he will seek another term in the 17th Senatorial District, which includes all of Dover and most of eastern Kent County.

Zimmerman, 44-year-old potato farmer, coupled his announcement with a plug for continued protection of the state's coastal zone, construction of a North-South toll road to ease congestion on US 13, and passage of a tougher campaign practices. enclosure and limitations

"PROTECTION OF our coastal zone is of particular importance in the 17th District. Hundreds of my friends and neighbors make their living from fishing, crabbing and other water-based commercial industries. My greatest service to their future will be to continue effective opposition to any weakening of our coastal zone act," Zimmerman said.

"But maintaining the coastal zone is only half the job. I have also sought financing to develop both the recreation opportunities and the ecologically sound water-based industries of my district. My actions resulted in Senate passage of a bond bill providing funds to develop Port Mahon as a recreation and fishing center for Kent County. Next year, I intend to pursue this matter.

"As chairman of the Senate Committee on Highways and Transportation, I sponsored the bill to create a North-South Toll Road, to be built at no cost to the taxpayer. The construction of this highway to the west of Dover would dramatically relieve the traffic burdens on US 13, especially during those months when traffic to our beaches makes it difficult for our own residents to use the highway.

"I AM CONVINCED we need the North-South Toll Road as a part of the overall road system of our state, just as we need the bicycle paths I co-sponsored and the mass transit money I supported.