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## **Iron Hill School Oral History Project**

### **Interview with Victor L. Doyle**

Date of Interview: November 7, 2003

Interviewer: Roberta Perkins

Transcriber: Marcia Adams

Also present: Laura Mackie Lee, Museum Director, Iron Hill Museum of Natural History

Roberta: This is Roberta Perkins. Today's date is Friday, November 7th, 2003 and I am here with Mr. Victor Doyle and we are at his home on Old Baltimore Pike in Newark, Delaware. I am interviewing Mr. Doyle as part of the Iron Hill Restoration Project. Also here is Laura Lee, Director of the Iron Hill Natural History Museum. At this point Mr. Doyle I want to thank you for taking time to talk with us and put everything down on tape. Mr. Doyle could you say to us again, where you were born, when you were born.

**Mr. Doyle:** I was born in Wilmington, Delaware, December 22, 1911.

Roberta: Can you give me the name of your parents?

**Mr. Doyle:** My father's name was George. They almost named me George the 3rd. My mother said, "No" so we were going to an Episcopal Church up on 18th Street and about 6 months before that Victor du Pont was christened in church and my mother had ??? named me Victor so I was named after Victor duPont but I never met him. That's how we got away from "Georges."

Roberta: Do you have a middle name?

**Mr. Doyle:** Lawrence. I don't know where that came from or what it means.

Roberta: What was your mother's name?

**Mr. Doyle:** Jenny Heatherton.

Roberta: H-e-a-t-h-e-r-t-o-n? Do you know where in England? Was she born in England or in this country?

**Mr. Doyle:** No. I don't know how they got to England. Her mother came from County to Roan, Ireland. That was her mother. Her great-grandmother. I don't know where they got to England or where they come from. A couple of her brothers came from England and came through Canada to the United States. I don't know much about the background or how they got there. My father's side – they were English and German. I guess it was an accident they got here. My great-grandmother, a little girl with her mother – my father was a doctor came over to the United States, I don't know whether it was a visit or what but anyhow I don't know how long they stayed but when they were ready to go back and the mother wouldn't get on the ship (she had a premonition that something was going to happen) so she kept my grandmother, the little girl, the ship left and never got back, the father died at sea. So the mother and daughter stayed here and they settled up in Pennsylvania where my grandfather's sister was a superintendent of school in Philadelphia for years. That's about all I know about the family background.

Roberta: How long did you live in Wilmington?

**Mr. Doyle:** All my life.

Roberta: So when did you move to Newark? How old were you, do you know?

**Mr. Doyle:** Its so many years ago. My father built this house in the 50's. The 40's and 50's. And when my mother passed away, he did retire here and later on he wanted me to come down here and he built the other house for my

sister and he wanted me to come down here and take over so we moved down here and he lived over there and my sister took care of him.

Laura Lee: Lived next door to you?

Roberta: What did your father do?

**Mr. Doyle:** He was a cabinet maker. His boss told my sister one time he was an artist with wood. He made that piece of furniture there.

Laura Lee: That's gorgeous.

**Mr. Doyle:** He made a lot of furniture. He was very handy with wood. People used to bring him antique furniture to fix up. There was an old rocking chair all in pieces. He looked at it and said, "that ain't worth fixin." So he didn't know who left it so there was a friend of his that left it so he fixed it. Ordinarily he wouldn't do it. I don't know whether it was the value of the chair or too much work or not but he would fix it up. It was done right. He used to always tell me "when you do anything, do it right the first time then you won't have to go back and do it over again."

Roberta: Would you tell me a little bit about growing up. What was it like for you growing up in Wilmington?

**Mr. Doyle:** Well we had 2 or 3 playmates. I had 1 nearby, we used to ride our bicycles everywhere and play Chaser on bicycles. We'd go down to the B & O Station and one of the men down there in the baggage room he would chase us away cause we was riding up and down the back hall. We used to ride through 10th Street Park, there was a path and we went to 28th. We would ride through the park from Delaware Avenue along the walk. There were 2 men who used to be caretakers of the park and they would be raking it up and I don't know what nationality they were, they were foreign born and my buddy had a habit of riding through the place on his bicycle and sneaking up in back of them and hollering "BOO!" Scaring

them. Well that man had a rake in his hand but he never caught him. We used to torment a lot of people. Not really hurtful, just teasing more than anything else. The same thing I did with the teachers in school. I used to torment them to death. Tease them.

Roberta: What were some of the things you did?

**Mr. Doyle:** Well we had a history teacher. The toughest teachers I had were the best ones. I look back on that and I wish I could apologize to 2 or 3 of them. I didn't do anything to hurt them personally but they were always trying to correct me for the things I was doing to torment them and this 1 teacher was a history teacher and she was good at it. She would write, she would write it up on the blackboard something Patrick Henry said or George Washington and she would go around the room to get a drink of water and I would look at it and get up there and rub a letter out and put another letter in there and she would come back in the room and I was the only one studying and everybody else was laughing. So one day she had rings and a wristwatch and bracelets and she would take them all off and lay them on her desk and down the aisle she was going to box your head. It didn't hurt but it did get your attention.

Laura Lee She would whack your ears?

**Mr. Doyle:** So she would come down the aisle. I would get up in the other aisle and she would say "sit down" and I said "no, I'll wait until you leave" and she said "what did you say?" and I wouldn't tell her and she would say some big word and I said "she must have swallowed a dictionary". She could see me talking but she couldn't make it out so she said to the guy in back of me "now you tell me what he said or I'm going to give you what I was going to do to him." So he told her "he said you swallowed a dictionary." She said that's easy to take care of "you see me after school." So after school she had a great big Webster Dictionary sitting on her desk and she said "carry it around the room." So I carried it around the room. She said

“is it heavy?” I said “no.” She said “well carry it around 10 more times and you will know what a dictionary is.” I laid it down on her desk and my buddy was down the hall waiting because we used to ride home together – he was waiting for me to get out so I said “Eddie bring me a sandwich and a blanket I’m going to stay all night.”

Roberta: How old were you Mr. Doyle?

**Mr. Doyle:** Oh I was maybe in my teens.

Roberta: Ok, a teenager.

**Mr. Doyle:** This was middle school. Maybe 14.

**Mr. Doyle:** So then she said “all right, you can go now.” You had to say “goodnight” to her. You couldn’t say so long or goodbye, you had to say “goodnight Miss Robinson.” That was her thing, very polite. I said “so long I’ll see you tomorrow.” So I went out the door and got in back of the door that was closed and I heard her get up and walk down the hallway to the office, the principal’s office, to see if I had come past there so as soon as she had turned that corner I come around behind the door and sit in a desk where I could see her coming back and I pretended I was asleep and she said “I told you that you could go.” I said “ok” and I got up and I said “see you tomorrow.” She said “no, you can’t go saying that.” You know what to say.” So I finally said “goodnight Miss Robinson.” That’s the kind of teasing that I did for those few years. I never got mad at any of the teachers. It was more of me tormenting them than anything else.

Roberta: They probably remembered you above all the other students.

**Mr. Doyle:** When I was going to high school we had a book called *Peck’s Bad Boy* by William Peck and William Peck wrote this about his nephew. There is a laugh on every page. So anyhow when I was going to high school and on the radio they announced that he had died so I go in to the library to get

the book because they told a couple of stories about him. I goes in to the library to get the book, didn't have it. Didn't even have it in reserve. So I go home and I can remember sitting at the supper table and we got to talking about Mr. Peck dying and I said I went to the library and I said they don't have that book *Peck's Bad Boy*. My father looked at my mother and they started laughing and they said we got that book upstairs hidden. We figured if you ever got it you would try all those things in there. He was something, he just looked for trouble. He played jokes on his family. One of them was he would write a letter to his father from the girl in the church choir, "meet me on the corner at 6 o'clock," and then he would write one from his father to that girl "meet me on the corner at 6 o'clock." He would go down there at 6 o'clock and see his father with a strange woman and say "Pop give me 50 cents or I am going to tell Mom." Fifty cents was a lot of money in those days. That's the kinds of things he did. He was just always looking for something he could stir up. I still have that book.

Roberta: *Peck's Bad Boy* ?

**Mr. Doyle:** It's a collector's item, Yes.

Roberta: I've heard the title.

**Mr. Doyle:** It's really something.

Roberta: Let me back up a little bit and ask you about what do you remember about going to school. You went to Pleasant Valley School?

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes.

Roberta: And how far is that from where you live now?

**Mr. Doyle:** About  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. From here down to the traffic light. Across the road was Charles Schwartz. Patterson and Schwartz had just died and we used to walk to school together. They came from all up Pleasant Valley Road.

And down the hill. There was some of them on Whitaker Road, over in that section. They all walked. The roads weren't paved and in the Spring of the year we'd walk down hill and there was a ditch between here and the school. We'd take our shoes and stockings off and put them in the ditch and see how far we'd get before the teacher would notice it and send us home to get shoes and stockings on. Then we would come up to the ditch, and put our shoes and stockings on and instead of going back to school we'd walk the ditch way down Pleasant Valley Road and then we would walk back to school again.

Roberta: And so how old were you then?

**Mr. Doyle:** I was probably about 10 or 12 years old.

Roberta: So how many years did you go ...

**Mr. Doyle:** Just 2 years, then I went back to Wilmington.

Roberta: What grades were you in?

**Mr. Doyle:** From 1 to 8 I guess. You went from here to Newark High School. It had a good reputation then. Mr. Schwartz across the road was on the state school board. He knew what was going on. He said that was the reputation. This was a good school - a good foundation. Little things like that meant a lot. Just across the line there was a family named Coyle had over 3 boys and a girl. Now they lived in Maryland. In order for them to go to school they had to go down to Muddy Lane to way down to McDonald's, 4 or 5 miles. So Mr. Schwartz got permission for them to go to this school. They lived in Maryland but they went to Pleasant Valley.

Roberta: So from here how far is Maryland?

**Mr. Doyle:** ¼ of a mile. About a mile. They should have gone 4 or 5 miles but they only had to go a mile to this school.

Laura Lee: Now when you went to Pleasant Valley you didn't live in this house, right?

**Mr. Doyle:** No we lived down the other end.

Laura Lee: So you lived closer to Maryland. On the Maryland side of 1736 Old Baltimore Pike.

**Mr. Doyle:** It was right opposite Dixie Line Road – we could see down Dixie Line Road.

Laura Lee: Ok, I know where that is.

Roberta: So you lived in Maryland?

**Mr. Doyle:** No, we lived in Delaware.

Roberta: So you lived just this side of the line.

**Mr. Doyle:** I'll tell you another funny thing about this school.

Roberta: Go ahead.

**Mr. Doyle:** At dinner time we used to play Foxes and Hounds. We'd take turns. The boys would be the hounds and the girls would be the foxes. And after we ate our lunch we would run down where the driveway is there used to be an iron bridge there with wooden boards in it and they would go down in there and they would go either right or left. If the girls were out we would down the bridge and stand still and listen and you could hear them talking and we would know they were on the left or on the right. So the next day we would switch. It was just something to do for exercise. So one day we went down there in the wintertime and when the water would come under the bridge it would make a big circle and it was 3 or 4 feet down to the water below the ground. A fella went to school named Bill Thorpe and he had knee boots on, leather shoes which was unusual at that time and he

had them on and he spotted them. They were down almost on the ice but with their bodies laying on the bank thinking that we would go by and wouldn't see them. So this Bill Thorpe, he saw them and he backed up and he went "ssshhh" and he went and he jumped in the middle of the ice and all the girls slide down in the ice and got wet. So one girl said her father would kill her if she got home with wet clothes on so they came up to the school and told the teacher. The teacher said well you girls can't go home and you boys can't go home either. If they were brother and sister if the brother went home and the girl wasn't there, there would be trouble. So they closed the shutters and got the pot bellied stove hot. The girls dried their clothes off and the teacher would come out every once in a while to check up on us. See we had to be around the school where she could see us and I often wondered if some of those parents ever found out they fell in and got wet and had to dry their clothes.

Roberta: Nobody ever said anything to you?

**Mr. Doyle:** No, I never heard any more about it.

Roberta: What was the school day like there for you and who was the teacher again?

**Mr. Doyle:** Emily Carpenter was the first teacher. And the next year I went they had Ruth Stinebaker.

Laura Lee: She's in your picture right? Or she's listed there on your attendance?

**Mr. Doyle:** I think she lived in Newport.

Laura Lee: That's a long drive.

**Mr. Doyle:** Now Emily Carpenter lived with Waltons on the top of Otts Chapel Road right by that first hill.

Laura Lee: Waltons owned a store didn't they?

**Mr. Doyle:** There were 3 brothers. One of them owned a store, one of them on the hill here he was a tax collector and I think the one in the store was a preacher on Sunday and the one that lived between here and the railroad, he was a tax collector. The Walton family. Nice people.

Roberta: The name down there at the bottom says Mabel Stinebaker. And this is your attendance sheet?

Laura Lee: How did you end up with an attendance sheet?

**Mr. Doyle:** What is the date on there? I missed 3 days that year

Roberta: September 5th, 1922 and this is the period ending September 27th, 1922.

**Mr. Doyle:** That was the way they played at school those days. They didn't have all the games like they do today.

Laura Lee: Right. Kids found a way to entertain themselves. Now that was dated 1922 and the museum that I work in that used to be the black school was built in 1923. Do you remember them building that school?

**Mr. Doyle:** No I don't. We played with the Congo family. We played with all the black boys in our neighborhood but that school was after I had left here and I understand it was built by I think some of the duPont family. They went all over the state and built schools for the black children to give them a good opportunity.

Laura Lee: Now there was an old school there before the new one. Do you remember a black school down there?

**Mr. Doyle:** No I really don't.

Laura Lee: You didn't really go down that far?

**Mr. Doyle:** No. No I don't remember that. That was after, this school was built after I went to Wilmington. After we would come back from Mr. Schwartz' we

would see the school there but I didn't know anybody there outside of the Congo family. Mr. Congo and my father used to change - my father would sharpen his saws and axes and he would plow the ground up for my father for a garden – just help one another out. Good neighbors.

Laura Lee: Do you remember the names of any of the Congo children that you played with?

**Mr. Doyle:** No. I remember there was 2 or 3 boys. I think the daughter still lives down here on the left, one of them. One boy in Wilmington, one of the Congo boys, he was always in trouble with the law. They used to call him the black sheep of the family. I don't know if there was 1 or 2 girls but they used to do a lot of domestic work for people. I think they were married – or that age any way.

Laura Lee: Do you remember a Martha Congo or a Sammy Congo?

**Mr. Doyle:** Noah Congo was the father and I think Mattie was the mother. Mattie Congo. I remember one time when telephones were rare the Schwartz's had one and the Congo's had one and there was a family on the corner, McCormick. They had one. Mrs. Congo's house was on fire and these two neighbors were talking and she said, "I'll have to call the fire department, hang up." And of course when they knew who it was they went down to see if they could help and it was a frame house and they couldn't save it. I don't know what happened after that, where they went or what happened.

Laura Lee: So the Congo's had a phone back then.

Roberta: So that was 1923? 1924? 1925?

**Mr. Doyle:** They've been there a long while. I don't know which one was a funeral director.

Laura Lee: I think Sammy Congo was a funeral director. I'm not sure.

**Mr. Doyle:** I don't remember any of their first names. But Schwartz lived there longer than I did. He knew them before I did. When we played together after I left and went back to Wilmington they would still play together. I just knew them as we played the couple of years that I was here. We never had any trouble. We never had any fights over anything. We would argue like.

Roberta: I guess your whole family moved back to Wilmington?

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes.

Roberta: Why did you move back to Wilmington?

**Mr. Doyle:** Well my mother was a city girl. She couldn't stand living her alone with no electricity and no radio, no car or anything. You had to walk every place. Mrs. Schwartz across the road, that was the nearest neighbor. They were good friends. Good neighbors. They would do anything for you. But my mother being alone all day, my father worked in Wilmington and my sister went to Newark High by train and we would walk from here up to the railroad station about a mile and a half or a mile and three quarters. It didn't matter what the weather was, we'd walk. No busses along here.

Roberta: I guess that was pretty lonely for her.

**Mr. Doyle:** I don't think they even have busses when they had the road paved. I don't remember a bus running through here. Route 40 was always busy.

Roberta: Even then, huh?

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes. My father never owned a car. He worked on automobiles in Wilmington but he never owned one. Never wanted one. When we would go to Wilmington and we would come home on the train Mr. Schwartz would remind us to get off at Newark and we'll take you home so if we got off here they would have the wagon to meet us. Mr. Schwartz and

another man were co-owners of a big leather factory right next to where the Pennsylvania Railroad Station is.

Roberta: In Wilmington?

**Mr. Doyle:** In Wilmington. I guess it would be on Front Street down past the station.

Roberta: I remember a leather factory in Wilmington but not there.

**Mr. Doyle:** I worked at one and my wife worked at the other one, Allied Kid that's where my wife worked and I worked for Amalgomated Leather, about 3 or 4 blocks apart. They were in competition. The one that I worked for they were noted for the whitest leathers in the world and the other one was noted for more patent leather, specialized. I have a piece of leather upstairs, I have 2 pieces. A piece of suede that is a whole goat skin. You can crumble it up and squeeze it, lay it out on the table and there's no wrinkles in it. It's leather – no wrinkles in it. Then I've got another piece that came out during the war – 14 karat gold leather. They would tan the hide, put it on a board and it was a neutral color and they had a 6 inch square screen covered with nylon and the girls would rub it in their hair to magnetize it and gold leaf was kind of in a book with sheets about 4 inches square and they would rub this and the gold leaf would come up on that nylon and hold the nylon down on the leather and blow on it and it would stay on the leather and they had a glaze on the leather and they would take the leather and they would plate it, put it on a flat steel bed and then it would come down under pressure and push that gold leaf. It still is as bright and shiny today a gold leaf as it was the day it was made. During the war most of that was made in Germany. The plant that I worked in they worked 24 hours a day making gold leaf and when it came time for the Spring style show they flooded the market with it. Handbags, shoes, all things made out of gold leather.

Roberta: Other than the piece that you have do you have a piece of clothing or a shoe that was made with that leather?

**Mr. Doyle:** No.

Roberta: I've never heard of that.

**Mr. Doyle:** My wife used to get the shoes the salesman brought in my wife wore a 5 or a 5 ½ and very few ran in 6 and up and she used to either buy them, I don't remember him giving her any, he might, I don't know. Another place Bronstein's Store in Wilmington. They had shoes in the store. My wife had a deal with the shoe salesman and she would see a shoe in the store and she'd look around and see if it was her size and she would go in and talk to the man and he would say it is but we want to leave it in there on display you can have it two weeks later we'll take it out and you can come and get it.

Roberta: Mr. Doyle what did you do when you worked at the leather factory?

**Mr. Doyle:** I was a sorter for light leather.

Roberta: Ok.

**Mr. Doyle:** The leather was run through the factory they would buff the flesh side of the leather and I would sort it for clean nap and I had 10 people working under me.

Roberta: How long were you there?

**Mr. Doyle:** Most of them were pros a couple of them were

Roberta: How long did you do that?

**Mr. Doyle:** Let's see. I guess I must have been there 5 or 6 years. I remember the day I got married. I told them I was going to get married. I worked till noon

time, had to go to Baltimore to get married. They wouldn't believe I was going to get married.

**End of Tape 1, Side 1.**

**Begin Tape 1, Side 2.**

Roberta: Mr. Doyle, if you could talk to me at this point about some of the people and some of your memories that you can remember about going to Pleasant Valley School. Now you went to Pleasant Valley School for just 2 years. What were the grades?

**Mr. Doyle:** I'd say maybe some where 3 to 5. 3 to 4 or 4 to 5.

Roberta: Ok, that's fine. You have a picture with a lot of the students on it.

**Mr. Doyle:** One of the students is named Clarence Buckworth and he lived over on Whitaker Road. There was a big funeral here in Elkton a couple of weeks ago named Buckworth, he was a veteran. I wondered if he was the same man. I don't know.

Roberta: Do you remember what his first name was?

**Mr. Doyle:** No, I saw it in the paper but I know it wasn't Clarence because he was well known as a veteran. He did a lot of good work in the community. He lived over on Whitaker Road.

Roberta: Now in this picture, people are different grades?

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes, that was the teacher there.

Roberta: What was her name?

**Mr. Doyle:** Mrs. Stienbaker.

Roberta: S-t-e-i-n-b-a-k-e-r?

**Mr. Doyle:** I think that's right.

Roberta: Let's see if you have it on the attendance sheet. Yes. It looks like S-t-i-e-n.

**Mr. Doyle:** She was a very strict teacher. She was a good teacher but she was very strict. The oldest boy, Pat Coyle, I don't see him in here. His brother, Francis, he had a barber shop in Elkton after he graduated from school. The oldest boy, Pat, used to get up and walk up to the teacher's desk and ask her for something. He would have a crayon in his hand and he would touch the pot bellied stove and of course it would smell up the whole room and he would go back and sit down and it didn't take her long – who went past that stove you know. For punishment they used to take your hand and hit it with a ruler, take a ruler and hit the palm of your hand with a ruler. It hurt. She would hold you hands real tight and hit the palm of your hand with a ruler.

Roberta: I bet that stung.

**Mr. Doyle:** That was your punishment. That was Herbert Wood right in the middle there. He lived on Otts Chapel Road. Like I said he was one of the older ones. This was the Bill Thorpe that I was talking about that jumped in the water and the girls got wet.

Roberta: Ok.

**Mr. Doyle:** I wrote on the back of them because I wanted to remember the names but some of the girls

Roberta: Which one is you? This one is you?

**Mr. Doyle:** Right in the middle there, yes. There is a Schwartz on the end here.

Roberta: Who is this one? He looks like he sticking his tongue out.

**Mr. Doyle:** That's John Coyle. There were 3 boys, his brothers Francis and John and I don't see his sister in here. She could be one of these girls but I am not sure. I know this girl here was a Mexican. She lived north of Whitman. You go down Pleasant Valley Road she lives right across (Route) 40. Right opposite Pleasant Valley Road. She married a preacher and they lived in North East but I don't know their married name. Martha Whitman

Roberta: Ok. how did she get along with the – you said she was Mexican

**Mr. Doyle:** Oh fine, I'd say she was normal. We never thought of her as Mexican it was just we remembered her nationality more than anything else. This little girl here was Alice McCormick and one time she was Charles' girlfriend. She married a fella when I was working for duPonts. He came up to me one day and he said "Mr. Doyle you went to school with my wife." I looked at him and I said, "who?" He started naming her and I said "no" so he finally named his wife and I said "oh yes" so Alice McCormick married him I don't know who she had married.

Roberta: I've heard that name McCormick before

**Mr. Doyle:** There used to be a McCormick lived around here. There were 3 boys and a mother and father.

Roberta: Did they have a farm?

**Mr. Doyle:** I don't know.

Roberta: Ok.

**Mr. Doyle:** They must have had but when I knew them they were all past school age. They were a nice family.

Roberta: Who else do you have in that?

**Mr. Doyle:** This is Rambo. His sister was named Kate. I can't remember her first name.

Roberta: You had Alice back there.

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes, Alice Rambo, that's right. She was tall and skinny. We had a Halloween Party. We used to have a Parent Teachers Meeting once a month and of course they would celebrate holidays. They'd come dressed up and there was a bunch of boys standing on the steps and when you'd come down this road they knew who you were so Charles Schwartz and I went across the field and come down the other road. I had my sister's clothes on and Alice Rambo had I guess it was her brother's clothes on, tall and thin, and you had to walk around the stove 3 times and guess who and the one who stayed up the longest won the prize. They never did guess her. I went around once and I went to sit down and I sat next to Schwartz and another guy ??? lived down the road, he pulled my false face off and so he passed the word on. Second time I got up they caught me.

Roberta: Let me ask you a question. Generally it sounds like students had a good time. They liked playing a lot of jokes and it was a friendly teasing back and forth so you weren't the only one that was a jokester.

**Mr. Doyle:** No.

Roberta: Tell me some stories if you remember some things that ...

**Mr. Doyle:** I remember I don't know how often they had, if it was once a week or once a month or not but they had the girls cook a hot lunch. I don't know if they made soup or what they made, I can't recall that, but I remember we had to pay 10 cents for whatever the dish was to go with our lunch. One story I'll show you how the oldest boy, Pat Coyle, packed his brother's lunch now and then. So one day he put salt and pepper between the bread of course when lunch time came he got the sandwiches out and his brother bit into it "Pat, what did you do to me!" He started chasing

him around the room and he said “well pack your own lunch then.” That boy with the tongue sticking out, that was the youngest Coyle boy. They had a health nurse that would come down and check our health you know, check our blood pressure and listen to our heart and check our teeth and they would ask you if you brushed your teeth every day and Francis said “yeah” he brushed his teeth every day and the older brother heard him say it and he said “you don’t even own a toothbrush” and he said “oh, I use my brother’s.”

Roberta: Now you have the name here of one young fella – Jiggles?

**Mr. Doyle:** Oh yes.

Roberta: Is that his real name?

**Mr. Doyle:** He lived down the road here almost to Muddy Lane on the right. I don’t know whether it was St. Vidas Dance or not, but when he would laugh he would just shake all over and that’s how he got the name Jiggles. We would tell him stuff just to get him laughing and we used to call him Jiggles. I don’t know remember if it was a nervous condition or what. I don’t remember. But he was a happy go lucky fella. He was foreign born but everybody liked him in school. We used to call him Jiggles the way he used to laugh and shake.

Roberta: Do you remember what his name was?

**Mr. Doyle:** I don’t remember the family name at all. No.

Roberta: Now in this photograph, this is really interesting, it looks like a field, as you were facing the photograph where was the school? Because you have the students and the teacher is on the right.

**Mr. Doyle:** I think the school is right here.

Roberta: Ok, now in this photograph is the school to your right?

**Mr. Doyle:** It would be on the left. There was a field along side the school.

Roberta: Do you think the Museum could have a copy of this made for their record? Laura might want to make it. This is really very interesting and a valuable piece of information.

**Mr. Doyle:** Do they have a copier up there?

Roberta: I think so.

**Mr. Doyle:** I can get a copy made from it.

Roberta: Talk to Laura about it.

**Mr. Doyle:** I don't know if they want to photograph this or if they want just a print from a copy machine. I don't know. Over where there is a field now there are trees now and there is houses on Pleasant Valley Road and this would be Old Baltimore Pike and there are houses clear up to the black church there.

Roberta: In the school, what were some of the games and activities that you did?

**Mr. Doyle:** Well we played, I think that was Farmer in the Dell, I'm not sure but it was something of that type and then we would play Foxes and Hounds at dinnertime and we played Hide and Seek. I think they had a little baseball, batting the ball around. I don't think basketball was that popular when we were young.

Roberta: Was it more baseball?

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes. I don't recall any of the other games. I went back there to visit one time after I went back to Wilmington. I went to school with Charles Schwartz and I was sitting all the way back on the left hand side, the last seat. I was sitting on the side of the window and it had a string on the curtain. I went like this and the whole string started going and the teacher

up front caught it. She said, “Victor if that string bothers you we can either move the curtain or move you.” She caught it. She was teaching somebody up front. She caught that string back there. I was only a visitor but it distracted other students I guess.

Roberta: You came back to visit after you had moved into Wilmington?

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes.

Roberta: Was that difficult for you? To have to leave this school?

**Mr. Doyle:** No.

Roberta: And the other children?

**Mr. Doyle:** Schwartz used to come up to see me and stay overnight. His father would take him home, he worked in Wilmington. Or I would come down here and the next day he would take me back. He had a sister, Helen Schwartz, she used to drive the car and the boys didn’t drive it. She made a remark one time that they would get her up out of the casket to drive the car. Charles was the youngest one of the family. He had a brother in between him and his sister. His sister and him both had pneumonia and they went to Memorial Hospital in Wilmington and Charles couldn’t understand why his sister didn’t come to see him when he was in the hospital. She died of pneumonia.

Roberta: While he was in the hospital?

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes, and they didn’t tell him until he was ready to go home. They was a close family. She was buried from here. They took a picture of her in the casket over here and showed it to him. It was a big shock to him and he just couldn’t believe his sister was gone. But they said that one drop of her pus from pneumonia was stronger than a pint of his. In other words she really had a bad case of pneumonia. She died.

Roberta: That's too bad.

**Mr. Doyle:** Yes.

Roberta: How old was she?

**Mr. Doyle:** I don't remember how old she was. Another sister had epileptic fits. Of course they were older than us, we didn't go to school with them but we knew the family and visited back and forth. My mother would visit them and I would always go with her and they were a nice family. They had a hired hand come with them and take care of the stock. They got him at a home for children, I guess, and Jim must have been, oh maybe 18 or 19 and he was a good worker, happy go lucky and afraid of nothing and they'd treat him as one of the family, slept in the house with them. He'd go to the station and meet the train with the horse and wagon or do anything they wanted and after they sold all their stock, Jim stayed with them and before that he had pneumonia in their house and he was delirious and they thought he was going to die so they went back to the home where he had come from and they found out he had a brother. He didn't know he had any family so they got a hold of the brother in New York and he came down and stayed with him until he passed the crisis and when he got better he went to live with his brother in New York. Well Jim, he wasn't wild, he was just outspoken and if he said something would shame you, so what? That was his way of life. He didn't get along with his brother's wife so he left and joined the Marines and go around the world. He would always send something to Mrs. Schwartz. I remember one time he sent her a pillow. "Mom." That was his mother cause she raised him you know. He ended up when they paved the road, we placed all the fences along the road and Jim was just out of the service and he got the job of putting in the posts. Well that started him in business. He put 2 or 3 freight car loads of posts around Hoopes Reservoir and Charles and I were working for him and he ended up he had an office in downtown

Wilmington and he had another office in Newport and he must have had 2 dozen men working for him. He had big jobs all over the State. A lot of school fences he would put up and it all started up from just a little experience out here, keep going and keep going. Never had much schooling but he was a good business man.

Roberta: What was the name of his company, do you remember?

**Mr. Doyle:** Newport Fencing Company.

Roberta: What was his last name?

**Mr. Doyle:** Weeden, Leslie Weeden.

Roberta: Weeden?

**Mr. Doyle:** W-e-e-d-e-n. When you go through Newport if you were coming out of Wilmington, the 2 streets that come together, I think he lived right in that house on the corner there.

Roberta: What holiday celebrations did you have in the school?

**Mr. Doyle:** I don't remember much about Christmas whether we exchanged gifts. Halloween we had a party and of course all the holidays they would celebrate. Patriotically with Presidents, Fourth of July. I don't remember too much about it. It was pretty good community living. Even though Jiggles was foreign born. You never realize it when you were coming up they were just part of the school people. Celebrations were all celebrated together. Halloween they would play a little ? with corn fodder and different things like that. I know there was a lot of things that went on. I can remember some of those things. I can remember things about my life and my sister don't remember any of it, she is just blank and we were raised together. But she's got a sharp mind now. She remembers a lot of things but she is stone deaf, she can't hear a thing.

Roberta: Do you remember if I was to ask you to describe when you walked into the school, Pleasant Valley School, do you remember what it looked like? If you are standing in the doorway and you're looking at the school ...

**Mr. Doyle:** Well if I were standing in the center of the room there were desks on the left and the right and the teacher's desk was in the middle of the room on the far end. There was a window in the back of the teacher's desk. There were windows on the side and they all had shutters on them. I don't know whether they closed them during a storm or not. I don't recall that. The one time they had the girls get wet they did that but. She had a blackboard and in the back of the room on the right they had an oil stove where they could heat things up to heat water or to cook or something. It wasn't used everyday as I recall they were teaching the girls maybe how to cook and they would practice it. Charles Schwartz used to kid them they would try to poison them.

Roberta: Was the water pumped in or did it have to be carried in? Do you remember?

**Mr. Doyle:** I think it was carried in. I think they had a little water cooler in the back of the room. I don't recall a pump at the school but right across the road on this side of the road there was a house very close to the road. He took care of the heat. He had it warm when we came to school and I think he supplied the water for that cooler. I don't recall a pump. I know they had 2 outhouses in the back of the school. I don't recall a water pump. It was something we would have played with if they had one I guess.

Roberta: Was there any special way that the students went into school? Like when they came to the school, did the teacher ring the bell and then the students went in or you just went in as you came to school?

**Mr. Doyle:** You just went in as you come. They had a bell but I don't recall. The only time I know it would be recess and the end of lunch hour she would

ring it to get us all inside. I don't think she rang it to start school, even to finish school, it was just time to go home and that was it.

**Roberta:** In the community Mr. Doyle was there like a community center or did the school serve as a gathering place for meetings?

**Mr. Doyle:** The school, yes. That was the only thing around. I don't recall any of the meetings they had but they must have had some. Mr. Schwartz was on the school board. I don't know where they met. Whether it was local or down state somewhere. I don't know. It was good old days. I mean we went to school, we learned things, we had a lot of fun. As I say we, I don't recall any fights, we had arguments but it was like arguments in a family, it didn't last very long.

**Roberta:** Now I know we are going to run out of time for this session before I ask you a couple of these questions but you came back to Newark to Old Baltimore Pike, how old were you and what brought you back here?

**Mr. Doyle:** Just visiting the Schwartz's as our friends. I went to school with him one day, I don't recall why I wasn't in school. I could go to school with him down here. Whether it was my mother brought me down or some special occasion I don't remember. It was just a days visit. As a matter of fact I think that was the only time I was ever in this school after I left.

**Roberta:** So what made you decide to come back here and live.

**Mr. Doyle:** Well my father bought this place in I guess in 1920.

**Roberta:** And then you moved in town.

**Mr. Doyle:** No, we lived in Wilmington, had a house down here and we moved down here.

**Roberta:** Right.

**Mr. Doyle:** My mother couldn't take it so we moved back to Wilmington.

Roberta: Right.

**Mr. Doyle:** Then he built this house and the house down there was frame and Schwartz' looked out their window one day and seen smoke coming out of the window and they went down and my father didn't know it but they had rented it to people who were living there and they had a still in the kitchen, burnt the house clear to the ground. It was a frame house. They lost more than we did. They lost all of their possessions. My father lost the house so instead of building a house way down there we decided to move up here to be nearer the Schwartz' so that's why he built up here. My father build the house all by himself.

Roberta: Incredible. So you built the house and you moved back here by that time were there more things that your mother had that she was comfortable with?

**Mr. Doyle:** My mother died in Wilmington before we moved back. She had a broken disc in her back. She had gone to church with her 2 brothers and had to pass the choir and she leaned over the side and fell. They picked her up for dead and took her over and had a pump and revived her and took her home but she went around with a bad back all her life. My sister graduated as a nurse at Memorial Hospital. In those days if you went to a hospital it was a last resort. In other words you were seriously ill and ready to die that's why you went to the hospital which is why my mother never went to the hospital. They didn't think of taking her. You saw a doctor and he gave you some medicine for pain. I don't recall if there was any bandage for support put on or not. I guess you had to live without it.

Roberta: That's too bad, I am sorry to hear that.

**Mr. Doyle:** Well the doctors didn't have the instruments they have today. They didn't have the know-how. I remember one of my sister's friends was a doctor

and he said when he got through medical school he should go back and take another course in medicine because in 4 years time it had all changed. What they were taught in 4 years time there was something newer came along.

Roberta: Well Mr. Doyle I think we will stop now and come back and finish this up at another time. Thank you so very much.

**Mr. Doyle:** There isn't much more that I can tell you but if you think of something I can tell you what I found.

Roberta: Ok we will certainly do that. I will get together with Laura and we will see. This ends the interview with Mr. Victor Doyle. This is tape 1 side 2.