

## Interview with Clyde Sukeforth

I'm 90 years old, it isn't too much more... I'm hopin' to do a little fishing, I have a little garden out here. I keep busy, but when you get to be 90 years old, it doesn't take much to keep you busy. Jean comes quite often in the fall, (we) go bird hunting. He hunts the whole state; he used to hunt a lot with George Butler, you know... and (he) was the fish and game commissioner. When George died, and that uh... a lot of judges just came to Maine. He likes to have somebody to go with him, I mean Jean's no kid himself. I guess he don't have to go hunting all by himself. He comes down quite frequently in the fall.

Just bought this lobster (boat)...we were keepin' out boat up here and Willie (Morin?), we used to go duck huntin' now before daylight, you know, to get your decoys out early, and we didn't get any complaints, but we figured that, you know, on a Saturday morning. We'd start an outboard motor right there, wasn't the proper thing to do, so I know these lobster (boats) for sale, so I bought one. I had to place a place to launch the boat and keep it here. And then the old buildings...they looked like the dickens if you don't keep them up, cost you money to tear em down, and we didn't need the bar or that other building, and I sold it to a fella who was a horse man. I mean, his whole family was very horse conscious, it was ideal for him.

(On baseball...)

I still have a game on TV, and I tune in and listen to the Red Sox some nights. I hear from a few of em'. The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dodgers, and I mean the National League and I saw (Pierre Romelli??) grow up around..He invited Gus and I out there, I mean, expenses paid. But she (wife/) wasn't keen on going, I wasn't either. Merillo's(sp.) gonna be out there the last of the month having his annual tryout, Bus and Buzzy Bowers scout for the Dodgers. Comes up here and goes huntin' and fishin' with me quite a lot/ We been friends for years, and then I'll get to see all of the scouts, I'll be at Merillo's tryout. It's open and it's supposed to be confined to certain ages, but anybody with any reasonable age is welcome. Merillo does a fine job with those kids, I mean he really does a good job. He's got a little age on him, but he can show a battin' practice better than any of the pitchers, he can ( ). You're having battin' practice with those pitchers, or course a lot of them think they're being tried out for a major league club, and I suppose that makes them a little wilder than normal. If it wasn't for Merillo, they wouldn't get much battin' practice. I mean he get in there and pitches. He has a good staff too, he has a fella Smith here in Maine that helps him, and they have it down to a science.

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Description: Clyde Sukeforth oral history, mostly concerned with baseball.

This boy Carleton (Willy, Willard?) down to Cherryfield, he dropped in on tryout camp, and got signed by the Braves, he had a lot of misfortune. He, last year he was in Wichita, he was considered by several scouts, he was the best pitcher in the minor leagues. Well, they were winnin' out there, and they were in a close race and they blamed Dick ( ) for overpitchin', but I wouldn't from this distance, and not knowing the details, I wouldn't criticize him. But anyway, he came up a little (?), and he overcame them. He never had that really good fastball like he was known to have, but he became a good solid major league pitcher. Then again after he got traded over to the Mets, he (was at) battin' practice and catches a line drive right in his mouth. It was kind of like bad battin' practice; its tough, but his ability isn't good. Course that just about fixed him. But he was a real top flight pitcher. Oh yes, I think he's a blueberry dealer, partner or manager of a blueberry operation up there (Cherryfield).

I was born in 1901, there's been a few changes. My sister was born the tenth of November in 1899, and they had to shovel to get the doctor through. Well, I was born two years later on the thirteen in the same thing. Of course, the roads weren't too good then, and like I said some old roads...no automobiles. Automobiles were just beginning to appear. The roads, they weren't any good for bicycle until maybe in mid summer, they'd smooth them down. They'd get smoothed down enough so you could get along a little better with a bicycle. Walked a half a mile to school, morning and night, and then after we'd get some of those grades. They had a one-room one teacher high school so called, and my sister and I walked three miles morning and night for that. And oh right after World War II, industry was real good and all the manufacturing plants sponsored baseball clubs. I played in Millinocket two years for Great Northern paper, and we used to play in Bangor, Brewer. Great Northern sponsored a club in Millinocket and another one in East Millinocket, and in Bangor, there were three: Penobscot Chemical Fiber and the Brewer Easter, and I forget what the other one was, and Bar Harbor sponsored a club. They recruited all better college players around, they paid us more than the good ball players were getting' in the minor leagues. They really put out. And then I went to Georgetown for a couple of years.

(on sandlot baseball...)

There was no organization to it, we played seven days a week. We often times hardly ever got enough, two full months we'd be out there and play all day seven days a week. Basketball was nothing, football was nothing back in the early part of this century. And every kid had a ball and a glove and threw it seven days a week. And all you have to do is just go to the ball park now and see what difference it makes.

Somebody asked me quite recently how I happened to be a catcher, wasn't very big, but a small fell had a chance in those days. Well, I guess in the first place you're gonna have a game somebody's got to catch, and I did and nobody crowded me out. There used to be a lot of interest along here, they had the clubs in little towns along the coast here, there was quit a lot of interest in it. Oh, I don't know I guess so many other attractions...we didn't have radio until 1930, and no TV until the early 50's. The only way we got news up there was from the Boston Post, came by stage coach along about sunset everyday day. You have to get the Boston Post to find out what the Red Sox did yesterday. The Red Sox were featured in the paper, we got the old Boston Post, and you're more familiar with the players: Harry Hoper, Doug Lewis, Bill ( ) over in Lewiston was the manager for a while.

My Dad, he had a good reputation as a pitcher. He could throw harder than most country boys and he did a lot of pitchin'. Oh, growing up in that atmosphere...there was nothin' else to do. I mean, there were two things you could do, you could take your ball and glove and play pass with the neighbor's kids, or you could dig a can of worms and go fishin' on the trout brook, that was it! No radio, no TV, so as a consequence, we played and threw the ball seven days a week. Nowadays, I have a couple of nephews up here, I used to go and watch them play. They played Tuesday night, go home and get on the rug and watch TV, and then play again Friday night and in most cases wouldn't throw a ball in between.

Well, like I said even in 1943, Rickey got two crews together, we toured the country, he said this is going to be an expensive deal. If we lose the war, what difference does it make. So that's what made the ( ) tough, that problem was way ahead of everybody else. Oh, we picked up ball players. Some of the boys that we contacted and had a record of, you know, they showed enough that you'd think they'd have possibilities, young kids. Well, many of them went in the Army and when they came out, we were the only contact they'd have. 1946 tryout camp, spring training camp rather, in central Florida, there will never be as much talent in one spring training again. All of the boys were there, Robinson he was there until they run him out of there. And, we had the boys coming back from the service. So, along later on when the boys came back, along about '46 and '47, we had a problem. We had a lot of good boys and you could take forty and don't think we didn't get some action out there. We were scouting' day and night. I went to Billings, Montana, I think four years in a row, and every year I said if I ever get out there again, I want to get out to Little Big Horn. Well, I get to Billings, and see a game one night, and I'm figurin' on catchin' the bus and going to Little Big Horn the next morning because so and so's

gonna pitch tonight. Baseball didn't pay you much then, but it showed you a lot of real estate: Mexico, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic. I was down there and played for a while (Havana, Cuba). They took a couple of clubs down there, they would bill them as all stars, but they weren't legitimate all stars because I wouldn't have been there. But I did all the catchin' in our club and we had some big names. Mike Trainor, Glen Wright, Bill Terry, Carl Hubble, ( ). We had some drawing cards and those Cubans were crazy about baseball.

(on best pitcher)

hard to say, I'd say though without hesitation, for just one game you had to win, probably Carl Hubble. Oh, he was so dependable, he had that screwball that nobody else really duplicated. I don't know how, he had the ( ), I guess. We were scoutin', Rickey was scouting' at (the) Negro Nation[al] League. I'm workin' in the East, I'm stayin' at the New Yorker and in those days there would be a double header at Yankee Stadium every Sunday when the club's on the road. And then the next Sunday, there'd be one at the ( ) when they're on the road, and then there was some at the ( ) field, but most of my work was around the East. Mr. Rickey called me on Monday and he said, "I want you to go to Chicago and see a game Friday night, Kansas City Monarchs and the Lincoln Giants. Pay particular attention to a short-stop named Robinson, particularly his arm." "Now," he said, "tell him who sent you and what you want to know, what you want to see." Prior to that we had never identified ourselves anyplace, I mean, if you wanted to know something, if I wanted to know something; about a player, I called Oscar Charlestown, the old ball player. He was a bellhop, a bell captain in the Old North Philadelphia Station and Oscar would be going to the clubhouse, and get all the information you want. The boys' age, his habits, anything that you want. But he (Mr. Rickey) tells me to identify myself and tell him who sent you and what you want to see, and he said, "Now if you like his arm, bring him in if his schedule will permit. If not, make an appointment for me, and I'll come out there." So I said, ooo man, this is ( ). Well, I get to Chicago, and I can't locate the club. I wanted to see him before he went to the ballpark, but I had to go. I wanted for him to come in, and he came in on a bus. I don't know from where, but I couldn't locate him. Some guy gave me a lot of hotels that catered to all the big people, so I called three of 'em and they weren't registered anywhere. But anyway, I go down in the front row box there and I picked up a score card and the score card had Robinson as number eight. The score card happened to be right that late in the year, you know, you wouldn't depend too much on it. So I called him over while I was there, and I wanted to get a good look at his arm. I said, "Will you have the infield hitter hit the ball over in the hole. The arm, to Mr. Rickey, seemed to be important."

He can't understand why Rickey's interested in his arm naturally, and I mean he kept gigglin' at me and I said, "I'm sorry, I can't answer that. We have a colored club in Brooklyn, and we're allowed to think that we're scouting' for that club. But as far as I know that's it, but I don't believe it." So anyway, he said, "I'd be happy to show you my arm, but I fell on my shoulder night before last, and I'm not going to be available to play for several days. So I said, oh oh there's a break. I talked to him a long time. I said, "I probably won't stay 'till the game's over, so how about meetin' me down to the hotel...and maybe we can work out something, or since you're going to be out of the line up for a few days, nobody's gonna think anything of it that you're not playin'. Come into Brooklyn and Mr. Rickey can answer all the questions you've been asking me. So, he came down and the more you talked with the guy, the more you liked him. I mean, you could see determination written all over him and he's an intelligent fellow. He came down and stayed for a long time, and I got a train schedule out of Chicago to Toledo.

I had to see a double-header in Toledo on Sunday, part of that trip, so there was a train getting into Toledo in the middle of the afternoon on Sunday. And I tell him to meet me at the Toledo Ballpark, he said he would, he did. And I had reservations on the train to New York and got him in. We got in there real early, and had some time to kill, and I said, "You have any connections here in New York?" and he said, "Oh yeah." he did; that boy's got around.

Told him, "Meet me over to 215 Montague Street by 9:00", and he did and that's where the meetin' took place where Rickey really gave him the works. Rickey said "All my life I've been looking for a great colored ball player: and he said, "I have some reason to believe that you might be that man." Then he said, "What I need is more than a great ball player, I need a man that'll take insults, abuse; in other words, turn the other cheek." Then he said, "I don't know whether you can do that or not," and Robinson didn't answer it right quick, and that impressed Rickey. We were talkin' Montreal contract with him right then, wanted him to play a year in Montreal, and then on to Brooklyn. Robinson came to the club before he answered then he said, "Mr. Rickey, if you want to take this gamble, I promise you there won't be no incident." Rickey told him, he said, "If somebody slides into you, calls you a black so-and-so, you come up swinging, and you be justified." Then he said, "But you'd set the course back 20 years." And when he told him there'd be no incident, that was it. He called his secretary, "Bring me in a contract."

You know the one thing Mr. Rickey underestimated was the racial ( ), and the ( ). We had Montreal and Nashua NH then, and there was one of the clubs in Illinois, I don't know if it was Peoria. They were going the colored players, and they at the last minute, they backed out. But we don't have much of a place for them.

. We had three AAA's – Montreal, St. Paul and Hollywood California. Three AAA Clubs. Give him a feeling' and you know see what the general reaction was. He told Rickey, he said, "I think I can play in Montreal, I think I can play in Brooklyn. But," he said, "I'll accept your judgment on that." Yeah, he did, he kept his word, we had no idea of the abuse the guy took. Ben Chapman and those fellas over there, oh they called him everything. "You cotton 'pickin' so-and-so," everything else, and you know the best part of this story is the Philadelphia press got on Ben and now he's kinda worried about his own job. He asked Robinson to come over and have his picture ten [taken] with him, and Robinson was big enough to go over and do it. That shut Ben up and it told the rest of 'em to lay off. The (Dodgers) signed a petition, they made a trip over to South America in Panama, and they, quite a few of 'em signed a petition against playin' with colored ball players.

Pee Wee's a Kentucky boy, you know, but he's a little smarter than the rest of 'em, and probably not quite as prejudiced, at least his prejudice didn't seem to run so deep. He merely made Robinson just by one incident. Robinson wasn't going at his best, and I don't know what the occasion was, but Pee Wee went over and put his arm around him and talked to him. That sold Brooklyn, of course the Brooklyn's were all for him anyway, they're rabid.

Stankey, you know, he was livin' in Mobile, he wasn't raised down there, but he'd been down there long enough livin' there, he married a Mobile girl. He wasn't enthused about it, but anybody can help you win; colored supercedes any other qualities. I mean baseball or any other field, I don't think there were too many boys who were (colored), Dixie Walker, ( ), signed the petition and Rickey like that. I mean, harboring that feeling, they came out and let him know how they felt about it. Well, you get rid of a major deal, which he wanted to do anyway, I mean he liked to get rid of those guys at the peak of their career and that gave him a perfect excuse to put Walker on the market. I know that.

(about Brad Shrickey?)...)

you must have read that story; he was coaching a college club. And he'd go to South Bend to play Notre Dame, and he has a catcher named Thomas, black boy, and a better ball player and the whole team won't take Robinson in. I mean won't give him a room, won't register him. So Rickey get hold of a bellhop and gets him to get a cot and brings a cot up in Rickey's room. And Thomas just sat there and he'd look at those black hands and say, "Oh, if they were only white." And he was telling Robinson the truth when he said he'd been looking for a great ball player. In the colored league they had some outstanding ball players, they had better ball players to this day, and Josh Gibson probably one of the greatest catchers that ever lived. I mean he could do everything and hit the ball out of the ballpark. I mean great.

Satchel (Page) well, this Rickey could realize the importance of this and he figured Robinson being a college boy he can realize he can do this job, I mean an average fella couldn't take that kind of pressure, it's a big job. It's too big for most of 'em. Now Josh Gibson, his habits weren't good for one thing. I mean he drank a little, and an awful lot of 'em drink, and the white boys do for that matter, but he had some age on him, and Satchel Page, of course, he had age on him. And then there were a lot of desirable boys. Larry Dilby, we wanted Larry Dilby, I mean I did anyway. Yeah, he sent me over to Little Rock to see the second baseman, that (Effie Mandler) colored woman owned and ran that club and don't think she didn't run it. Well, I got over there and I watched the infield fun and I watched the battin' practice. This fella, he was a find lookin' athlete, got a good stroke, highly desirable. When the game started, they trotted out, a big six foot inch negro, and over nineteen years old, and threw harder than anybody we'd ever had. So, when I saw Rickey the next day, he said, "Did you see that second baseman last night?" I said, "Yeah, bring it in." Well, he came in, and I brought him in the day that Rickey told me to bring him in and he came in with his wife, cutest little colored girl you ever saw. And I told him to be there at one o'clock. Well, we got there and of course, as usual the Brooklyn office is confused. They're having a directors meeting. So, they sit there for an hour or an hour and a half, and finally she said, "Well, we have to go." "Well," I said, "Wait a minute." I went in and pounded on the door and barged in and said, "Mr. Rickey, them boys have gotta go, so when should I tell him to come back?" "You sign him," said Rickey. I said, "What do I give him?" "Treat him like you would white boy," said Rickey. And so I signed him. Just gave him a hundred dollars bonus, and six hundred dollars on the Montreal contract.

After, he got it made. He had a peculiar temper about things; he was always needlin' me. He was always sayin', "You behave yourself. ( )" And I take he was jokin' in a way, and I take it all summer long. And late in the year we were havin' a little difficulty, I mean things going bad, I'm trying to miss a strike. Somebody threw the ball, right on me in ( ), and it was a long time, we lost the game, and the previous game he'd been in. I thought he let up a little bit when things weren't going right. So I said, "Listen bub, there's been times when I thought I gave you too much." "What do you mean?" he said. "Well," I said, "IF you don't quit spittin' to that bit when something goes wrong, I know damn well I gave you too much." He never mentioned it afterwards. He was on a good will tour for church, and he was appearing in a church in Bath, Maine. So, it was well advertised. I went out to see him, and he appeared glad to see me and so I started kiddin' with him. I said, "I made some reference to that big contracts I signed you to, ignore it, didn't hear it. Change the subject right now."

(about Doug Nukum...)

He (Rickey) calls me Monday and said, "Get down to Richmond, the Montreal Club is comin' in for five days and stay until you see Joe Black pitch. Maybe there's a possibility we can make a deal with him." I get down there, and I just get there just before the Montreal club. He's takin' their infield practice and he's a baby-faced Negro out in right field just as fine an arm as you'd ever looked at in your life? Boy, opened up your eyes! Well, he's not playin', couldn't bunt, said Max, the manager of the club, and Max played for me in Montreal two years, so I know Max real well. So he goes in to pinch hit, they're behind a run, and left hand pitcher, and they sent him in to pinch it the sixth or seventh inning. He hits the routine ground balls to the short stop and bang, like that at first base. I said there's two things, and I'm out here every night and I'm watchin' him in battin' practice, and his arm is a little unorthodox, but it gives a good power stroke there. If he didn't hit that way, his own natural way, like I say it's a little unorthodox, but it's a good strong power stroke and we didn't have to tamper with it. So I stay there and through the whole five days and he didn't pitch. Max, he's workin' him out all the time. I mean, he's workin' out. And throwin' a little bit, but I was askin' Max, "When you gonna pitch him?" He said, "I haven't seen Joe Black pitch, and he's not gonna pitch in the immediate future. Then I have our draft choice. We're finishin' last, no doubt about that. We're way down and the National League has the first draft." I said, "He isn't gonna pitch, but we have your draft choice – tell him. I'll never see a time when you can draft this kind of talent again for \$4000 even." I mean, oh that time they had a rule; if you exceeded \$10,000 limit, they had a bonus limit at \$4,000, and it developed they'd have given him \$10,000. So, he's gotta go through the draft. Comes a time we're having our draft meetin', we had it out to Mr. Rickey's place out in Fox ( ), it's a suburb of Pittsburgh, and we started. Who we gonna draft? One guy had a pitcher, Southern League, somebody else had an infielder. Finally, he said "Clyde, do you have a candidate?: I said, "Yes sir, Clemente, Montreal." "Any of you fellas seen Clemente?" One guy said, "I saw him, I didn't like him." "What didn't you like about him?" "Well, I didn't like his arm or his attitude." Said to me, "You saw his arm." I said, "I sure did, some question in my mind whether its better than Furillo's but I'll guarantee you its as good." And Furillo had the best arm in the league, and its so important that number one draft. I don't know whether he thought I had been drinkin' or the other fella, then of course we drafted him. And I found out afterwards about ten clubs just waiting'. But the poor fella, I didn't want to...I told the guy, I said, "I don't think you saw it, I know you didn't see it at its best, but I think he's got a great arm." But of course, he didn't like his attitude either so...

(about the strike zone...)

But that's good at that age. You take Yogi Berra, I mean he's up there to hit. Chuck Klein, oh I remember Chuck Klein. They used to strike him out up here. He was up there to hit. Dukie Snyder, he was, he never did no strike zone. I mean until he just learned it by experience.



(Mr. Rickey's move from Brooklyn to Pittsburgh...)

I went the next year after. He went over in '51, I went over in '52. Everyday I was in the bullpen, and that's my claim to fame. I sent in the wrong pitcher, but we had, incidentally, that's the only one I picked all year. ( ) sent two guys to the bullpen, usually ( ) up to the fifth inning, and Casey or whoever it was, maybe it want him, but so-and-so up to the fifth inning, through the fifth inning, and then Casey for the rest of the game. Well, Casey wasn't there and we have Branko and Erskine. No other instructions. I mean I assume cause he didn't say, so-and-so after the fifth innin'. We're throwing down there and I'm next to the wall where the telephone is, I'm catchin' Branko. And I forget who was catchin' Erskine, and Erskine he didn't go in until '48, and he joined us with a little arm trouble, and it was more or less chronic through his career. Otherwise, he'd of won twenty every year. He had that real good curve ball, and his fast ball was adequate. Well, we're synchronizes; I catch, practice, pitch. We've been throwin' since the seventh innin', I mean either one of them was about as ready as they were ever gonna be. But we keep throwin' and I'm catch, practice, pitch, and so its Erskine. And knowin' Carl the great competitor that he was, and I thought he felt up to it, he'd have shown me one of those. I mean, he didn't show me his normal fast ball and his curve, that good curve. Oh, I don't think there was any better in the league. And Branko, he was doin' good, and had an underestimated fast ball and if you ever followed it. Either side, right field or left field is only 250-260 feet, Branko is better equipped for that ball park for one thing. So he said, "Who's ready?" I said "Branko's doin' well." Brings in Branko. Well, somebody misquoted me, they may have overheard me say I didn't see Erskine's pitch, and knowin' his history with his arm trouble. I had reason to think he wasn't sharp. Two pitches later, we're on our way to the clubhouse.

Montreal club, they got me some bad press, you know a lot of people writin' in sayin' Branko lost our other playoff game in '46, and why should I send him in there. And I'm takin' a lot of flack apparently. And now I'm told I'm not interest in managin'. I wouldn't have quit the Brooklyn job, I would've stayed until I got fired if I wanted to manage. I didn't mind managin' in the minor leagues even though I don't think I'm cut out for that sort of thing. But, veteran ball players, too much time on their hands, they can always find somethin' to gripe about. And I had the whole bunch of, all the worst men in baseball in Montreal. McPhail was runnin' the show. We had (Parfenberger) we had Ratzinoff. Signed in the barroom. Jake Powell who later shot himself in jail. I don't know how he got the pistol in the jail, oh we had em' all. Rory Hughes, hard drinkin' individual, oh what's his name, writes a syndicated column; he's a baseball fan...(Judge Will?). He had a note in his program one time that I called a meeting and asked for nine sober ball players to play this game. And that's an exaggeration, of course, but it could have happened. We had that kind of clout.

(on his personal life....)

For the last of it yes, no I didn't get married until...second time, my first wife died. Second time I got married in '51. Like I say, they didn't pay you much money, but they showed you a lot of real estate. And I was single, I enjoyed it. (children) One girl, my wife died 15 days after she was born; four grandchildren and five great grandchildren now.

It's changed so much, I mean – where to begin with – everything about baseball's better now except the arms, and then because the kids don't throw that ball like they used to in their growing years. But you can go to a game now, a high school game, and in all probability you'd see a boy slidin' into a base, he can slide properly. Well, I never did learn to slide properly, nobody ever showed me anything at all, then I go to the Cincinnati club, that may have been the worst of the clubs, I mean it wasn't one of the better developing clubs, that's for sure. And in all cultures usually drinkin' buddies of the manager, it's a ( ) thing, and its ever so much better now.

Well, as Yogi Berra express it, "It ain't over until its over." We had a game in Cincinnati one day, Adolph Lukey, eight runs to the good; Adolph Lukey was an outstanding pitcher and we would up losing the game in the ninth innin'. It's like Yogi says, it ain't over until its over. You take a baseball club or a football club; if one team gets way out in front, why it's pretty much over. Oh, it's a different... 'course a quarterback is tremendously important, more important than the pitcher for that matter. They can't .. you can't blow a big lead in one of those games and just one little error can make the difference. Like one pitch, instead of us going to the Yankee Stadium the next year, we were goin' home. So many things can happen. And people get interested in it, and they get ideas and you don't have to play this game to know something about it. You take one of Rickey's ... big reason that Rickey's a success. He'd take the men he put into baseball in the minor leagues, his coaches, usually high school coaches and teachers, and they weren't there because they were old drinkin' buddies of the manager. And he added a lot to it in that respect. It took a lot of business away from the bars.

(Prohibition...)

Oh, I guess they had speakeasys, that gets back to that. The players have too much time on their hands, you have to do somethin'. In those days, you used to play games under two hours. You had more time on your hands. But after TV, you know, you slow it up.

(Travel)

No air conditionin'... you get one of those hot pullman's in July and August, and go into St. Louis, you get to the Chase Hotel, its hotter in there at midnight than it is at noon. A lot of the guys, I remember Sam ( ), and Sam he used to take a shower and get in bed; hour or so he'd get up and wet his sheets, get back into bed. He couldn't take the heat as well as I could.

We were both coachin' for Pittsburgh, we didn't have air conditionin' in the early 50's. Well, it wouldn't have been so bad if you could, you know, go to an air conditioned hotel. You could stand the heat at night, but now you're jumpin' from the frying pan into the fire. And these boys complain nowadays, it's rough these long trips. Of course the trips are longer, but you get to your hotel, and you get into an air conditioned room. I don't think travelin' is quite as tough as it was in the old days.

(on career)

We, it's the only thing I ever wanted to do. I appreciated it, like I say, I was fortunate I got in on the pension. Nobody thought it was ever going to amount to much, but it developed into a pretty good thing once you qualified for the pension. It turned out that I never made any money... & \$15,000 is the most I ever made salary in one year. So the pension came along and helped out, and you take \$10,000 back in Depression days, early '30's. I mean you could buy a little insurance with that. I was a little bit fortunate in that respect, although I'm far from being wealthy. I had eight and a half years as a player, and I guess ten as a coach.

(happiest memory...)

I don't know, when you're a kid, I mean, things impress you more. Opening day in Cincinnati in 1926, I suppose. I'm walkin' out of a big league ballpark with a big league uniform, I mean it was the biggest thrill, I can't imagine a thrill any bigger. 'Cause I was raised up her in the bush, I never, I only seen a couple of big league ball games. In 1918 my uncle took me to Boston to see the Cubs and the Rex Sox in the World Series; the only two professional games I ever saw. So naturally, I don't think ... there's a lot of satisfaction in winnin'.

(greatest accomplishment..)

I don't know, like I was tellin' ya...being in the right place at the right time. I get credit for Nukum, for Clemente. You don't have to...ninety percent of the people in the stands could make these decisions. You know, scoutin's overrated. You should be a psychiatrist...anybody can recognize a physical talent, I mean you can tell whether a boy can run or throw, and if he has a little problem with the bat. Everybody knows that, and you can pick out most that are outstandin' in those things. But there have been ever so many outstandin' ball players, and I'll give you a few examples that didn't have that great a talent... now Paul Richards is a good friend of mine, he was general manager of Baltimore, and he had a friend named Lindsey ( ) that was livin' up in Arkansas, and he wrote to Paul, and he said "There's a boy up here you ought to sign." So Paul sent up a scout, came back, "No way," he said, "the boy is very ordinary in every respect, He doesn't have a great arm, he's not any better than an average runner, and he has no power. Forget him." Sent up another scout, report is very much the same. So he sends up number three, who happens to an older fella named Dietrich. Dietrich said, "Yeah, sign that boy." The player happened to be in the Hall of Fame now, Brooks Robinson. And I said to Paul "Was Dietrich that much better?" "Oh, no" he said "he like everybody, that's why I sent him. I wanted to sign him because he's sent me some pretty good ball players, I mean they all had pretty fair ability." And he said, "I had to have one good report to sign hi." The guy, he just developed what talent he had every day, and he...you couldn't hit a ball past him. And even though he wasn't a great runner, there's a difference in quickness and runnin'. I mean, his lateral movements were outstandin'. And that ball would no more hit his glove before it was on its way to first base, and then as he grew older he developed power. He'd hit some home runs. One thing impressed me, this boy Scott, a second baseman at the university of Maine, signed a contract with Houston a day or two ago with a big bonus of \$1,000.00, and \$850.00 on a minor league contract for the remainder of this year. Now that's news, they usually start talkin' half a million. The boys wants to play, that's for sure. Like Morty, he's a Maine boy, he's a marvelous fielder and so much desire. He wasn't hittin', he didn't hit as much, but whenever they sent him back, he stayed with 'em. And he's changed his stance a little bit, I saw him on TV; it's opened up. He's got pretty much of an open stance now, and he's really hittin'. 'Course, its not gonna last, I don't think he's gonna lead the league, but he's been right along now for months.

(feel about self now...)

Oh, I'm gonna second guess myself too much cause a lot of things I should have done, I know. I don't have too many regrets. I don't have any regrets as far as pursuing the profession. I wouldn't have been happy doin' anything else. I like it that much. You don't worry about the future too much after you get to be 90. My grandfather lived to be 90, and when he was 90 years old, he'd tell that same old story about this house burnin', which his mother was... he was four years old and his younger brother was two years old, and they lived in a little house up on Washington, and it caught fire. And his mother was rushin' to the well for a couple of buckets, bringin' water from the well, tryin' to put out the fires. She eventually lost the battle, the fire got away from her. And he can describe every detail of that when he was four years old, and he had that kind of memory. And most people do, you don't forget things. When you get old, you forget things that happened last week. But those other things are stamped indelibly in your mind. I mean as long as you live you retain that.

(Pat Wilson story...)

That's a true story. Short right field fences, tin fence I would say, some kind of metal, but it sounded like tin, the balls used to bounce off there. You could hear 'em a long way. Well those Phillies had a good hittin' ball club and we got Boom Book Beck pitchin', and he was purchased by one of the owners of the club. He was a salesman, and he was on the road and he got a sales pitch about Beck. So on the strength of that, the club buys him. Well, he just didn't have it. I mean, he was a little short, but he got a couple extra chances because of the nature of his purchase. Well, this game in Baker's Bowl, they're tattooing that right field fence. He's runnin' down one and he grabs it and fires it, and he don't any more than get back before bang! Another one. They ran him around for a pretty good spell out there. So finally, (Casey was the manager), he goes out there to take Beck out. 'Course Beck said, "This is the last straw." He takes that ball and fires it against that right field fence, and Hackey's over there leaning over tryin' to get his breath and he runs and gets it.

(to be remembered....)

I never gave that a thought... only to respect everybody and treated them civilly and I don't intend to make any enemies, and I haven't intentionally. But in other words, my conscience is not gonna bother me regardless of what they think. I mean, I've done the best I could, and I respect that.