

Jim Greengrass (JG)

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interviewer Thomas Liley

Why don't we start with the year 1944, when you got started in baseball?

JG- Alright, 1944 I sixteen years old going to Addison High School up in Addison, New York and a fellow by the name of Paul Wynn Wildrick was a young man in town, not so much a young man anymore, somewhere in his sixties at that time, he used to come down to the high school and hit pepper to a fellow named Frank Hardick and myself and we played and we played and I got to where I was pretty good at handling that glove and the ball. So he wrote a fellow that was the head of the Yankees scouting system at that time. His name was Paul Krichell. Paul Krichell made a trip to Addison in my junior year to see this young phenom I guess that Wynn Wildrick had been talking about. He came up there and he saw me play evidently in two or three games and in a state tournament so he approached me about wanting to play professional baseball. I said, "Boy, I'd love to." That was my whole dream since I was five years old is to play professional ball and to play in the big leagues. So, he approached my mother and of course my mother said, "No, there's no way he's going to do that. I want him to graduate from high school." "Well," I said, "Mom, you know I'll graduate from high school. I'll come back and graduate with my class." So, anyway, what happened was, he talked to the principal of the school, my teachers, the postmaster, and everybody. Addison is a town of seventeen hundred people at that time. It's now about twenty two hundred. It's in the dairy farming country, just southeast of Buffalo, about sixty miles. So anyway, they got the townspeople together and everybody was kind of excited about it and so I went back and approached my mom and I said, "Yes mom, I swear I will come back and graduate with my class in 1945." She said, "Well OK, but you know you won't stay because you'll get homesick just going across town to stay at your sister's house." I said, "No, I want to go. I want to play. I'll be alright." So anyway, it boiled down. She went ahead and let me sign. She signed, of course, with me, because I would be sixteen years old. And I went to Wellsville, which is right up the road about, I guess maybe, seventy miles, sixty miles, something like that, New York, and in the Old Pony League, which was the New York-Penn League at that time. I started my baseball career. It was exciting and that first year I went out and played and done very well. I hit .336, which is a matter of record and I came back after the season. Everything was fine. I went to school in the fall, worked with my class and took my final examination and everything in January. So I had enough credits. All I lacked, I think, was a half a credit from January until June for graduation to complete my graduation points that I needed. So, it was an easy breeze from then on getting my diploma. But I'd made the promise to my mother that I would stay and graduate with my class, so I did. Then it was about halfway through the season by the middle of June when we graduated so then I had to go to see Mr. Krichell again and he said, "Well, you've been promoted to Binghamton, which was in the Eastern League Class A ball. But, breaking into Class A in the middle of the season is pretty tough so you might be sitting on the bench a lot. We'd rather have you play because you're young and new and you need to be playing. You don't need to be sitting on the bench." So, he said, "Will you go back and play at Wellsville?" I said, "I don't care where I go, as long as I'm playing." Well, they paid me \$110 a month to play baseball, which was more money than I'd seen in my whole life up until that point in time. I'd never seen a hundred dollar bill until I was thirty years old, I guess, anyway. But, I went back to Wellsville that year, finished up, played pretty well, joined the ballclub and of course, they put me right in the lineup and we played in Hornell at that time. It was Hornell; Batavia; Rockport; Erie, Pennsylvania; Bradley, Pennsylvania; Olean; Wellsville. That was the league. So, I toured that league and I'd done very well and they were pleased so I came back before the next season

started, I went in the service. Well, I stayed in the service two years. I played ball while I was in the service, which was a blessing for me. That's one reason I joined the Army. I didn't join the Navy because there wasn't no place to play out there on that ocean. So, I joined the Army and got in there and played at Camp Lee, Virginia. We had a great team. In fact, we had a championship team. We won the section or the regionals up there and we went to Wichita, Kansas in the big semi-pro baseball tournament out there and finished fourth. General Graham was in charge of our group and he was a great baseball fan and friend and we just had a super out there and finished fourth and won the best sportsmanship award for the tournament. Which was very pleasing to the Army in those days. So, we came back from there.

Who were some of the players on that team?

JG- Well, we had some former major leaguers on there. Granny Hamner was there. He used to play shortstop for the Phillies, back when I was with the Phillies. We had a fellow by the name of Joe Nelson who went up with the Phillies for awhile, he was from Pennsylvania. We had Bob Chakales, who was a pitcher with the Cleveland Indians. Oh gosh, I'd have to really dig back in my memory to think that far back. You're asking me to remember something that happened in 1945-1946, a long time ago. But, there were some great players and we had a great ballteam and Artie Hoak, who was a shortstop for Wake Forest, in those days and later got a tryout I think, with Pittsburgh or somebody, and his son is a professional golfer right now on the PGA Tour, he was our shortstop. He'd beat Granny Hamner out for shortstop. Hamner had to play third and I played second because I was a third baseman at the time. So anyway, we had a great time there. I went through the service and got out of the service and reported to Binghamton in 1948. From Binghamton, I had a pretty decent year and they got into real bad shape and they wanted to send me up and so they sent me to Newark in the International League at the end of the year. I went down there and they wanted to keep from losing a hundred games. Well, we did. We lost ninety nine. So I don't know if I had anything to do with helping them not lose a hundred. I'm really not sure about that but anyway, in '49 I went back to spring training with Newark and it looked like I was going to be with them and right there on opening day they sent me back to Binghamton. So I was an unhappy camper then. I thought I had everything arranged there and I'd outplayed and they had some bonus ballplayers though and we had seven infielders on that Newark team, the Newark Bears at the time. Six of them bonus players, so guess who got sent out? So, my \$110 a month didn't amount to a whole lot. By then, I was all the way up to, I think, \$350. Anyway, from there I went out to Muskegon, Michigan and because I had such a good throwing arm, the Yankees thought they'd make a pitcher out of me. So I went ahead and gave that a whirl. I ended up with a five and five pitching record for the season but we were losing guys here and there and the Korean thing was just getting started and so we lost several of our young players and so I played short for awhile and then I went into the outfield and I really liked playing in the outfield, but I took my turn at pitching. Anyway, I started five ballgames and lost all five. So then they put me in relief and I won five. So I ended up with my pitching career in Muskegon, Michigan in 1950, 5-5, my pitching record. Well, that season ended I was really kind of disgruntled but they called me back there and they give me a raise in pay and I told them, "Well, I'm going to hang in there, but I'm not going to pitch. I refuse to pitch. It hurts my arm anyway." I didn't want to hurt my arm. I knew that arm was valuable to me as a player. So I went back and I played shortstop, third base, and the outfield, and I hit .379. Well, that opened up some eyes and so the next year, in '52, I went to Beaumont, Texas in the Texas League. That was Double A ball but I was still kind of discouraged. I was supposed to go to Kansas City, which at that time was a Yankee farm club, but something happened and there again, I think, the bonus players was part of it, but anyway I ended up going to Beaumont. And Harry Craft was the manager down there and I got down there and said, "I'm not playing every position on this ballclub. I want to be an outfielder. I feel god in the outfield." He said, "OK, you're going to be my left fielder and I'll work with you." And Harry

was a great center fielder for the Cincinnati Reds in his career. So he got me out there in that outfield and I played and he taught me and we worked every day and we fought the mosquitoes and everything else down there and as a result of that, incidentally, Whitey Herzog was our center fielder, who was a great manager with St. Louis. So anyway, I worked that and here comes Rogers Hornsby and Gabe Paul. The Yankees, I was still Yankee property at that time, and the Yankees were looking for a pitcher. Cincinnati had the pitcher they wanted, who was Ewell Blackwell. So, I wanted Ewell Blackwell to win me four ballgames at the end of the season. So, at the end of 1952 I was having a good year down there in Beaumont, doing real good. So, Gabe Paul and Rogers Hornsby came down there and Hornsby saw me play against their team which was Tulsa in the Texas League and he liked what he saw. I ran out a bunt, everybody hustled ala Pete Rose, in those days. If you didn't, you wouldn't have a job. Now, if they get them to run ninety feet, you're lucky. But anyway, he saw me play and I got a base on balls and run to first base and then I hit a home run over the fence and Rogers told Gabe Paul that's the guy I want in the trade. So the trade was made and they called me up so Harry called me up and said, "OK Jim, you've been traded to Cincinnati and as soon as you get that 100th RBI, you can go."

What was Hornsby's position with the Reds at that time?

JG- Hornsby was the manager. He'd just been signed on as the manager. I think Freddie Hutchings (Hutchinson?) was there, if I'm not mistaken before him, now I could be wrong on that.

The records I've got show Joe Sewell.

JG- It might have been, Joe Sewell. Joe Sewell, probably was, Joe Sewell. I don't recall because I really wasn't paying attention to them. I was just getting my stuff together. I wanted to get to the big leagues.

Your paths didn't cross.

JG- So anyway, Rogers says, "You're the guy." So I came up to bat, I forget the date, but anyway, it was latter part of 1952. I forget that date. But anyway, I come up and the bases were loaded. No, there was runners on first and second and I needed three RBIs to get my hundred. So I got up there and I got a good fastball up and I hit it out of the park. As I cleared the bases, I knew it was one hundredth RBI. I kept track of that. I come across the plate. Everybody, of course, greets me. I come in the dugout and Harry Craft said, "Jim, just keep right on going, head for Cincinnati, pal, you had a great season and good luck to you." I never actually stopped in the dugout, just right on through, shook everybody's hand and said goodbye, went into the clubhouse, got my shower, got my clothes changed, stepped out, and I had my clothes already packed in the car anyway. I come to the ballpark everyday packed. And, got in my little Studebaker Champion, which is what I owned at the time, and back to Atlanta I came. I got home, spent the night. They had tickets for me, airplane and flew into New York and met Gabe, signed a contract and went up to Boston, the last year the Boston Braves were in Boston. Joined the club up there and it was about the fifth inning of a two-night doubleheader. I got dressed and they had my uniform waiting for me, of course. I got in there and got dressed and Hornsby told me to come on down and sit down beside him. He asked, the first thing out of his mouth and I'll never forget this, I probably made the greatest statement I ever made. He says, "Are you ready to play, kid?" I said, "Hell yes, that's what I came here for." He said, "Good. Get a bat. You're going to pinch-hit in this game and you're going to start the next one." I grabbed that bat and I was ready to go. So, that's how I got started in the big leagues. I'd pinch-hit against Warren Spahn. Well, I'll tell you this little story about that first time in the big leagues for a rookie. I stepped up to that plate and there's

Warren Spahn pitching and Del Rice was the catcher. I got in there and I got ready to hit and my right leg just started going boom-boom-boom-boom-boom like Thumper the Rabbit. I backed out. Well this went on for three or four times, I stepped out, clean my bill, wiped my face, cleaned my cleats. Jocko Conlon was the umpire. Great umpire. Jocko Conlon come around Del Rice in front of the plate and took his brush out and was brushing it off and he looked up at me and he said, "Hell kid, let him throw the ball once or we'll be here all night." So I said, "OK." So Jocko went back around. He never tried to show me up or anything. He just kind of glanced up at me and said, "Hell kid, let him throw the ball once. Everything will be alright or we'll be here all night." OK, he got back around. I just grabbed the ground with my cleats and hung in there. I got that first pitch through me. When that ball went by me, that ended it. All my anxiety. All my nervousness. I felt I belonged there, at that moment. Why I have no idea but it did. It just went right out of my body and I was perfectly relaxed. I fouled about three pitches off and then Jocko made a bad call on an inside slider and I was called out on strikes. I say to this day it was bad call and Jocko said, "It was close enough. You should have hit it" and Rogers Hornsby said if the ball was close enough for him to call a strike you should have hit it and I said, "OK, I was wrong. I should have hit it."

I'd like to hear a lot more about that. You may not know but baseball historians have said that your first partial year in the big leagues, is one of the ten or eleven best debuts ever.

JG- Yeah, I guess it was.

You tore up the league and people are still talking about it.

JG- Well I guess that's probably right although at the time I probably didn't think anything about it. But anyway, after striking out I came back to the bench and the guy says, "Don't feel bad kid. He's only struck out about two hundred and some this year." I said I'm ready to go this next ballgame. So Max Surkont, the big righthander, was pitching the next ballgame. So, I get in there. I'm playing left field. I'm not nervous. I'm out there playing and the first time up I hit a screaming line shot right up the middle, base hit. Drove in a run. Anyway, we ended up winning the ballgame, I think something 4-3 or 3-2 something like that. I drove in all the runs and got three for four. From that moment on, Hornsby, he'd just look at me, "I told you it was better. The lights are better. The field's better. The players are better. The pitchers have better control." He said, "Well hell, even the coffee tastes better here." I loved it, I loved it from that moment on. It was like I just come home or went to heaven or something. I was just delighted. Then I went on, we went from Boston, of course, that was the last game of our series with them, and we went to the Polo Grounds. We're out there before the Polo Grounds, that's the biggest ballpark I'd ever seen, they could put the whole town of Addison right there in that ballpark and still have plenty of room left over. I'd never seen such a place. So Rogers come to me and says, "Jim, you're the best outfielder I've got so you're going to play center field today." I said, "Center field! I just learned to play left field." He says, "No, you're going to play center. Get out there during batting practice and field some balls and get the feel of it." And I went out there and that center field was so large and the hitter looked like he was about three or four inches high. It was a huge place to me. I had never seen nothing like it. But I worked out there and I said, "Boy, I need help." So Cal Abrams was playing right field and Willard Marshall was in left field and I said, "You guys give me all the help you can." They said, "Yeah, we'll help you. Don't worry about it. We'll place you in the right stop." Anyway, we got through that ballgame pretty good and went on, we just played two games there. I think that series was cut short for some reason or another, we just played two games. Then we went over to Brooklyn, in Ebbets Field. Boy, I'll tell you, there's a park that I loved. I come up in maybe, I don't know, maybe the third or fourth inning, I forget now what it was, but I was hitting behind big Ted Kluszewski. We had Ted Kluszewski, Roy McMillan,

Johnny Temple played second. Two great double play combinations, should be in the Hall of Fame for what they could do out there on that bag. Bobby Adams played third. I was playing left field. They put me back in left. Gus Bell was playing center and Willard Marshall and Bob Borkowski switched off in right field at that time. So, about the third inning, we get runners on first and second and Klu comes up, so Charlie Dressen was the manager of the Dodgers. Charlie walks Klu to get to this rookie kid. So he calls on it, I didn't know about this, they told me afterward, Charlie got on the dugout telephone and calls long distance to Bobby Bragan down in Oklahoma, I forget what their farm team was down there now, whatever it was, Fort Worth was their farm club, and called Bragan and asked how to pitch to this kid Greengrass. So I don't know, he told him to keep the fastballs high and tight and the curveballs low and away probably. That's what they taught how to pitch everybody. So anyway, Johnny Rutherford was pitching and the second pitch he threw me, I hit in the upper deck for my first major league home run, which was a grand slam. Herman Wehmeier was our pitcher that day, Herman went on and shut them out and we beat them 4-0. I don't think I touched the ground the rest of the season. It was my first really big blow. I'd had hits before but when that ball went up in that upper deck off him, I just felt so good. The next day, Carl Erskine was pitching. Now there's another guy, a tremendous pitcher. Carl had probably the greatest changeup there ever was, what we call a real downer curveball. I mean he could throw good, and he threw hard. I came up with two men on against Carl and he threw his curveball and parked that in the same place in the upper deck. So I knew that before hitting off of a lesser known person like Johnny Rutherford, then hitting against one of the greats of that day, Carl Erskine, and getting a home run, that there ought to be something to this. Maybe I do belong here. Maybe this is where I...and I went on, and I think from there we went to Cincinnati; I never got to play in Crosley Field that year. Our season at Crosley Field was over but we did stop there on an off day going to St. Louis. I got to see Crosley Field. Of course, when you walk into Crosley Field you just fell in love with it. They've built a replica of it now in Blue Ash, up just north of Cincinnati, kind of a suburb of Cincinnati. Beautiful, the grounds, the terrace in left field that Hornsby ran me up and down later on a hundred times every day, the old scoreboard, everything is there and there's even five or six hundred of the original seats that were in the stands that were there. It's a public park and it's just beautiful. Anyway, when you walked into Crosley Field you had to love it because the surface was just garden trim, like Maddie Schwab who was the groundskeeper there had taken a comb and scissors and trimmed the grass and the baselines. It was just a gorgeous place to play. But anyway, I went on to St. Louis and in St. Louis I got lucky and Stu Miller was pitching. I don't know if you remember about Stu Miller, now a lot of people remember him as the kid who got blown off the mound with the Giants in the World Series.

He was a junkball pitcher also.

JG- Yeah. He threw me one of them ten count curveballs he threw so many times and I hit it off the scoreboard in leftfield out there. It was the first home run that had been hit off him all year. So that kind of opened up some eyes. They told me this at the time but it didn't mean to me anything to me anyway, but that was pretty good. Anyway, from St. Louis I don't remember. I think we ended up the season. But anyway, I played something like seventeen ballgames or whatever the records say, I'm not sure what it says...

It says eighteen, you're awful close.

JG- I knew it was something in there, but I can't remember all of that, but I had five home runs and twenty seven RBIs. As a matter of fact, I had more RBIs than some of the guys that had been on that club the whole year. I remember Hornsby making that statement in the clubhouse that kind of embarrassed me, you know, at the time.

So there was no question about you're being on the team the next year?

JG- No, I think I established myself as being ready to play. And of course, the next year I worked hard all winter and went through and went to spring training in July shape. You might say. I was ready to play the opening day of spring training. I worked hard all winter and run up and down banks at the Atlanta Reservoir, had kids throwing me batting practice and all kinds of stuff. I just worked all winter long.

Had your parents moved to Atlanta from Madison?

JG- My dad had passed away when I was two so he never got to see me play. My mother came the following year in 1953, my rookie year, she came to Pittsburgh twice, er three times, and each time she came to the ballpark in Pittsburgh, I hit a home run. I said, "I want to pay you to travel with me." Every time she attended a ballgame that I played in the big leagues, I hit a home run in that particular game which was no great thing but it was something to me and it meant a whole lot to her and that was really something and '53 was my rookie year and I had a very good rookie year, 27 home runs, 100 RBIs, and I don't know what else.

Well, a hundred and seventy three hits is pretty respectable, too. Eighty six runs.

JG- I thought I had enough and some of the guys on our ballclub thought I should have been Rookie of the Year that year. Junior Gilliam was voted Rookie of the Year and I don't know where I finished in the voting and I never bothered to look, I didn't get it. But the year for the eighteen games that I played at the end of '52 *The Sporting News* elected me to their all Rookie All Star team or whatever it was at that team and they had voted me on to that team as a result of those eighteen games. But the next year everybody on our club at Cincinnati thought that I had a real shot but they said you can forget about it because if you don't play with New York; the Yankees, the Dodgers, or the Giants, you can forget it because that was the center of the news media and those guys got all the publicity. Everybody in the country knew those guys because they were all over the radio and everything in places like Cincinnati and St. Louis and even Chicago at that time didn't have that national coverage so anyway I didn't get Rookie of the Year, but I would have loved to have it. It didn't matter to me because I was playing in the big leagues and that was my dream. So I fulfilled my boyhood dream of when I was about five years old, I wanted to play in the big leagues and I accomplished that and I am very proud of that fact. It was great and I got to play in two consecutive Hall of Fame games. One with Cincinnati in 1954 and then I was traded in the early part of '55 to the Phillies and the Phillies played a Hall of Fame game in Cooperstown and I got to play in that game. So, I got to go to Cooperstown twice and I played there and I can always say (to the question) "Did you make the Hall of Fame?" I can say, "Yeah, I made it two years in a row!"

Who did the Reds get for you from the Phillies?

JG- The Reds got, let's see, they traded me and the Yankees got Ewell Blackwell. They got a pitcher name of Ernie Nevel. They got an outfielder the name of Bob Marquis. Ernie Nevel, Bob Marquis, myself and probably some money for Blackie. I think that was the total deal. Don't hold me to that, because I may be wrong. I may have left somebody out but if I did I just plain don't recall but I know Ernie Nevel was a pitcher, a righthanded pitcher with us and Bob Marquis who was an outfielder, a fleet-footed centerfielder, oh, he could go! He was from North Carolina, boy he could fly. And myself. You got the rookie year over with.

Yeah.

JG- But I really had my confidence then after '53. I really did feel that I belonged and according to what everybody was telling me and Hornsby was very pleased and Gabe Paul was very pleased so I felt, you know, I've worked all my life up to this point and now I've finally made the big leagues and I'm just tickled to death to be here. It's a funny thing and I haven't mentioned it only one time and that's my starting salary of \$110 a month. I have that contract at home in a frame. But, money never became an object with me.

You must have been pretty fast. I see you had seven triples in 1953 and that's a lot of triples nowadays certainly.

JG- Well, I could move. I think I had a knack for running the bases. As I recall, I never failed to score from second base on a base hit. I was fast for a big guy. And Rogers Hornsby said I didn't look fast but I could cover a lot of ground and I think that's what Rogers Hornsby liked about the whole deal. I was a big guy and I had power. I had two things going for me. I had power, I was strong, I had a good arm and I had the guts of a burglar. Nothing frightened me. I wasn't afraid of anything. And that was a big plus for me at that time.

There were a lot of power hitters on the Cincinnati teams in those days.

JG- Oh, we had Kluszewski, of course, huge mountain of a man, a great power hitter. And Templeton and McMillan. I think we set the home run record or come close to it in 1953 and they each had ten or twelve home runs. Gus (Bell) had thirty some home runs. Klu was in the thirties. Andy Semenick was our catcher. He was in the twenties. Wally Post was a twenty and better home run hitter. Bobby Adams hit ten, fifteen home runs. So we had everybody in our lineup just about could hit the ball. Our problem wasn't getting runs. Our problem was holding the other team. We'd score eight and they'd score ten. That's how that worked. But we had a great team and I really enjoyed every minute of it. Like I say, I was tickled to death just to be in the big leagues.

Did Rogers Hornsby talk much about hitting? Of course, he was such a great hitter himself.

JG- Now Rogers Hornsby would sit up all night and talk baseball with you. All night long and into the next day if you want to. If you changed the subject to something else and he'd just get up and leave. He loved the game of baseball. He was at the ballpark every morning before ten o'clock in his uniform sitting in the dugout. He may have been the only one there, him and the birds and the bees. Can we cut this?

Rogers Hornsby and hitting is where we were.

JG- Oh, Rogers Hornsby was the greatest. In 1953, we're in spring training. Ted Kluszewski at that point in time had never hit more than twenty, twenty one home runs in his entire career. Rogers was watching Klu hit in spring training and he asked Klu one day, we're all sitting there and talking about hitting and everything and he said, "Klu, I want you to," in batting practice, "instead of swinging down at the ball, swing level. If you hit that ball on the upper side of that bat and it goes in the air, it's going to go forever. You've got such tremendous power." Because he hit some of the most vicious line drives you ever want to see. I couldn't imagine how hard he hit that ball. So, he got him to swing level. As a result of that, the first year in 1953 I think he hit well into the thirties. The following year he hit forty something and then he hit, Rogers left the ballclub, and I don't think Klu ever topped forty again and then of course, later on he was traded

to the White Sox and went on and got to play in a World Series and win a pennant. But Klu was a monstrous man and he had such great power. He could be completely fooled on a pitch and turned loose with the bat, just hit the ball with one hand and hit it out of the ballpark. Tremendous power, but Rogers Hornsby was the greatest righthand hitter to ever play the game, in my opinion. I think the greatest lefthand hitter that I ever knew, in my opinion, was Ted Williams. Those two guys, if there was a game in the balance or you needed somebody to put that bat on the ball, either one of those guys up to that plate would almost guarantee that they were going to hit that ball hard somewhere. And that's all Rogers ever said really about hitting was to hit the ball hard, keep your eye on the ball and try to hit it right back at the pitcher. Because, that's the biggest area of the field to get a base hit in. He's only sixty foot six inches away from you. Once it's past him, it's wide open spaces. But, of course, then they got to play in shifts and stuff like that, you know and changed that a good bit. But he said, "Just try to hit that ball, try and get a base hit every time you go to the bat. Every time you swing that bat, intend to hit that ball." He hated for a guy to take one of them weak, half-way swings. He said, "When you get here and you swing that bat, let it go. If you miss the ball, so you miss it. At least, if you swing and you got a good swing and you swing, you're going to hit it hard. If you hit it hard, it's got a chance of being a base hit. So don't ever give those little half-swings and all that. You make up your mind to swing and let 'er go." That's the way he taught hitting.

Could you describe the way you gripped the bat and your stance?

JG- Well, I was kind of an open, what they call an open stance. My legs, my feet were medium apart. I kept the bat straight up and down and back and my left shoulder down and my head turned fully around where I could see the pitcher with both eyes. You'll be amazed at the guys that don't hit well and wonder why because they're only looking at the ball with one eye until it gets about halfway there before the other eye actually picks the ball up. What we used to give ourselves a little test. In batting practice we'd get in there and get ready and let loose the bat and put your hand up over this eye. Nine times out of ten you wouldn't see the pitcher with your right eye. Being a righthand hitter so you'd get your head turned to where you could see the ball with both eyes. That was one thing that Rogers always said. "Look at the ball with both eyes and don't take your eyes off the ball." In fact, he like you to see the ball hit the bat. So many guys that have played for years say, "I never saw the ball hit the bat." Well, maybe not in their conscious mind but in their unconscious mind it was such a flicker, you know, so fast that you actually see it. If you really concentrated hard, you could see that ball hit that bat.

I think Ted Williams said he could see the ball hit the bat.

JG- Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Or, vice versa. The bat and the ball.

JG- And Williams, they had some great eye exercises at that time and guys just don't...they were professional guys and like I say, money never come into our thoughts when we were playing ball. Nobody ever discussed money. We knew if we played well and had a good year, we were going to get money and be fairly fair about it. Sometime it wasn't but it depends on the person. What satisfies one doesn't always satisfy another. But I never worried. I never argued about money or anything. I was thankful they sent me a contract to sign.

Was Bob Carpenter the owner of the Phillies when you were there?

JG- Yes, Mr. Carpenter was the owner of the Phillies when I was traded over to the Phillies.

And who owned the Reds? I don't know.

JG- Mr. Crosley from old Crosley Field. His family, he had passed away and his family were the owners there and then later on, I think, in the later fifties, that it went into a corporation or something and somebody got a syndicate up or however it was, and they bought it. But, it was owned by Crosley when I first joined them there. He started out in his business as a washing machine and mechanic in a little old hole in the wall store. That's where he got the appliance and then he built the appliance, of course, and went on to make money and then he bought the ballclub. A great owner. They weren't exactly spendthrifts. They didn't pay players a lot of money, but you had a wonderful place to play. Crosley Field; you couldn't ask for a better place to play baseball than Crosley Field.

A lot of the fields that you played on in the National League are no longer there.

JG- Oh yeah.

You said Crosley was your favorite field to play in.

JG- Oh, by far, by far.

Which did you like the least?

JG- The least? The Polo Grounds. It wasn't built for my favor because it was such a huge park but it was deep in right and left center field to center field, four hundred and ninety foot to center field. It come around. It was very short down the lines. It was only two fifty down the lines to the edge of the little overhang that they had there in the stands. But, if you weren't a dead pull hitter or hit the ball the opposite way down the lines, there was no chance. I mean, I hit a ball in the Polo Grounds one day and the clubhouses were in dead-center field and you had steps going up this way into the clubhouse. Well, there's a cutout there between the bleachers where you went in and it was pretty wide, I guess it was probably, I don't know, fifty, sixty foot wide, maybe longer, maybe bigger than that. But, it was a big opening there in dead center field and back inside of that before you went up to the steps to the clubhouses was a statue of Tug McGraw, er not Tug, but John McGraw. It was a beautiful bronze statue there, a monument honoring him. Well, I hit a ball one day in the air. Willie Mays is playing center field. And I got to second base and looked out there and he's standing out there by that statue and caught the ball. And I'm standing there on second base. I could not believe it. That was the hardest hit ball I ever hit, the longest probably I ever hit and he caught it. Had it been twenty feet this way or twenty feet the other way it would have been in the seats for a home run but it was in that opening, dead center field, back past where we go in and he went back in there and caught it. Willie Mays was a tremendous outfielder. Probably all-around ballplayer that I'd ever seen play, I mean, he could do everything. Willie could do absolutely everything. He could run, he could hit, he could throw, he could steal bases. He had great instincts and he could go get that ball in the outfield. And he could hit that ball. He was just a great all-around ballplayer.

You mentioned Ted Williams being the best left-handed hitter you had seen. Who were the best hitters in the National League?

JG- The best hitters in the National League? Well, number one was Stan Musial. Stanley was probably the greatest as far as the National League was concerned that I ever saw. There may have been others but as far as I'm concerned, the ones that I saw or know about. He just, Stan

Musial could just...he was unbelievable. Not a great big guy. He was about your size, about built like you. Not a muscular type of guy but looked like, you'd see him in his street clothes and he looked more like a businessman, you know, that you would see running, some executive in a business office. But boy he could hit that ball and he had that peek-a-boo stance, and who's to say? Probably the worst hitting instructor that could ever have possibly been. Yeah, this is the way you ought to hit son, duck behind your arm here! But he was such a great man and a great person. We had a favorite saying. We called him the Poor Polack because of course, Stanley was Polish, but he made more money than anybody because he should have, right so, but in those days, forty thousand was a top salary. And he and Williams were the guys that got that kind of money. And everybody else was in the teens, you know, from ten to twenty. But, oh boy, he was a great hitter. Whitey Lockman, I always thought he was a great hitter. He hit against us, well, all the Giants hit against us, but Whitey Lockman I always thought was a good hitter. Snider, Duke was good hitter. Carl Furillo, he played right field for the Dodgers, was a good right-handed hitter. Very good, in fact, he led the league one year, although I don't think he deserved it because he sat the last week out. But still, he was a good hitter. Oh gosh, ...

Would you agree that Furillo had the strongest arm of anybody in the league?

JG- No. No, and I'll tell you why. Ebbets Field, you had to be familiar with Ebbets Field. He got that reputation in Ebbets Field but Ebbets Field was a short field. High fence. Concrete at the bottom. And what Furillo would do, he played that fence and that wall like an expert, and he had a good arm. I'm not saying he didn't have a good arm, he had a major league arm but as far as a great arm, you're talking about guys that could throw that ball right throw the wall. But Furillo had a strong, accurate arm and he'd play that ball off that thing, whirl around, and of course, the distance wasn't that far, probably three twenty, three twenty five and bingo, into second base. He'd nail guys trying to make a double but he learned to play the wall. He was a great defensive outfielder off that wall, playing the wall. Which you don't see nowadays; they don't know how to play the wall and they don't practice it. But, he practiced it. I watched him and that's why. No, he didn't have the greatest arm. The greatest arm I ever saw on a guy was on Glen Gorbous, a Canadian, who just passed away this past year, as a matter of fact, a good friend of mine, who was traded from Cincinnati to the Phillies, when I went to the Phillies. Andy Seminick and I was traded. And Glen Gorbous was traded to the Phillies for Smokey Burgess, Steve Ridzik and another player and I don't recall the other player's name. But he could throw. He took a ball behind home plate in old Shibe Park in Philadelphia and threw it over the scoreboard in right-center field, out of the ballpark, which is some three hundred and forty feet to the base and that scoreboard went up probably forty feet in the air and he threw that sucker over the top of it from behind home plate. But, he could throw from the outfield. He threw live clotheslines from the outfield. He had a great arm. He was a Canadian boy and an ex-hockey player. He'd run like a duck. He'd run funny. Everybody made fun of him that way he run because of his skating I guess. His feet were out. He run like a webfoot, but he could run good. But he had such a tremendous arm. Rocky Colavito, Cleveland. Tremendous arm, whew! Al Kaline, Al Kaline with the Tigers had a great throwing arm. A strong throwing arm and I'd put Furillo in their class but maybe a step below, a notch below as far as power goes, as strength goes. As far as accuracy, Furillo was probably the most accurate in Ebbets Field that anybody that ever play in Ebbets Field that I ever saw play anyway because he was just absolutely unbelievable.

What about pitchers?

JG- I love to talk about baseball because I grew up in it. I love it. I love to play baseball.

The Cincinnati Reds had a farm team in the city where I grew up. The Topeka Reds.

JG- Oh, Topeka, Kansas.

Yeah, Johnny Vander Meer was the manager at that time and I remember going out to that old ramshackle ballpark many an evening.

JG- Johnny Vander Meer was at Tulsa when Gabe Paul and Rogers Hornsby came down there to scout me and he pitched one of those games in that series that they watched me play in. In fact, he hit me right in the seat of the pants. I hit a home run off him and he says, "I'll get you next time, kid," and I said, "Well, if you hit me right in the eye it won't even make it bloodshot, I ain't worried about you," and he threw at me four times with an old inside slider and he hit me in the seat of the britches with a spitball. It didn't hurt any because we had sliding pads on but he was a great, great man, a great guy.

Who were the toughest pitchers at that time, who gave you the most problems and who did you touch the most often?

JG- Oh, boy, I love to talk about this because, remember me telling you back early my first time at bat, I faced Warren Spahn and he struck me out on a called third strike that I thought was questionable but Jocko and Hornsby, I wasn't going to argue with those two men. But anyway, I hit Warren Spahn as good as I hit anybody. I ended up my career, off of him, I think, probably four hundred and something. And he never could fool me with a pitch. I guess I was so determined because he was the first one I faced and he was never going to get me out again. So, I hit Warren very good. I hit Robin Roberts very well. Most all of the really, the pitchers that had the publicity and won a lot of games, the good pitchers I hit very well. But there was a pitcher at St. Louis that I couldn't touch and he later went on from St. Louis to the White Sox and helped them win the World Series, or helped them win the pennant, was Jerry Staley. I could not get that bat on the ball off of Jerry Staley and I don't know why. Every time he went out there I was just a big out. If I got three foul balls off of him I think that was about as good as I did. If I got a base hit off him, I don't remember it. I should, because I remember most of them. I didn't have all that many. But, Jerry Staley was the toughest guy in the National League for me to hit. I didn't mind any of the rest of them. Vinegar Bend Mizell could throw the ball right through that wall. He didn't bother me. Pittsburgh had Bob Friend. The Phillies with Curt Roberts and Robin, er Curt Simmons and Robin Roberts and oh, that big, tall lanky guy, I can't remember his name. The Cubs had Bob Rush and guys like that and I never, . . . and Sad Sam Jones. Let me tell you a story about Sam Jones. I was traded from Cincy to the Phillies. I got injured in 1954, late in the season, that actually ultimately ended my major league career. And I still carry it with me today. I developed an injury sliding into second base and it broke down the main circulatory blood vessel in my leg and as a result I got blood clots and it turned into thrombo phlebitis and that was the beginning of the end for me, but I was traded to the Phillies in '55, early '55 and I told them I wasn't 100% and I wasn't. But evidently, Gabe Paul and Birdie Tebbetts who was the manager at Cincinnati at that time, I told them that I was, and I said "well, nobody asked me but if you asked me I would have told you that I'm not and I'm not." Anyway, Fred Haney was the general manager and Mr. Carpenter, of course, was the owner. So after they talked it they decided well, we're going to get you fixed and we want you. So they sent me to Johns Hopkins Hospital and we worked out and got all that taken care of and I didn't play much that year. They got my leg fixed and all my problems straightened out. Then the following year, we started out the season and my first time up as a Phillie, I hit a home run. Bad mistake to do in Philly. Philly fans are rabid fans and they see you do something good the first time they ever see you, they expect you to do that from now on. Of course, that isn't the case. But that was part of it and anyway, I got the leg fixed up and uh, let me catch this phone. . .

When you went over to the Phillies, you joined up with one player who went into the Hall of Fame, certainly, Robin Roberts.

JG- Oh yes, Robby was...

A wonderful pitcher.

JG- Great pitcher and a fine gentleman, a fine athlete and what we call a good guy. He wasn't ate up with himself. He didn't have the big ego and stuff like that. He was just a regular guy. Great fun to be around and worked hard at his craft. Threw every day and ran every day, and so did Curt Simmons. Just a great guy. There's no way they could keep Robin Roberts from being in the Hall of Fame. He was the greatest righthanded pitcher going in that day and time and he had the best control of everybody. That's why he was a pleasure to hit against because you knew he had such good control, he's going to throw the ball in the strike zone. Your problem was hitting it. When he got it in there. But, I was always in there good and I managed to him fairly well and beat him two or three games which he disliked for very much because pitchers remember those things, you know. He said, "How did you hit that ball, it was low and away?" And I said, "Well, you know, I saw my son yesterday and we were playing in the yard and I saw him swing the bat and I said boy, that's the way I need to hit." And he'd just get all upset. He'd say, "You lying so-and-so." But, he was just a great guy, a great guy to be around and a hard worker. Those fellows in those days, Williams, Musial, Robby, all of those guys didn't become great and get in the Hall of Fame by accident. The good Lord gave them the physical body but they had to develop that and through their integrity and their work and their stress and their sacrifice, and those ballplayers sacrificed a lot, including a lot at home with family to be away to play, and they practiced every day. There was never a day went by that we weren't doing something. If we didn't practice in the morning, we'd get out before the ballgame started and had our infield and very serious about this practice business. And hitting practice and infield practice and outfield taking balls in the outfield and I used to run guys out of the outfield, out of left field. I'd say, "Hey, left field belongs to me." I want to catch the ball off of everybody that's taking batting practice and that's how I learned to get a jump on the ball and got the baseball and made catches that other guys had trouble getting to if they got to them at all. But, you learned to get the jump. You learned, and you'd talk about the guys today and they don't know what you're talking about.

What was it like playing next to one of the greatest defensive centerfielders of all time?

JG- Richie Ashburn?

Right.

JG- It was a riot. I'll tell you why. Rich is a super guy and a great leadoff hitter. I don't know if there's a place in the Hall of Fame for leadoff hitters, he ought to be in there because he was have three steps to first base before the batter made contact with the ball. But Richie had a bad habit as an outfielder and everybody of course was aware of it. And you had to learn this and you had to really be on your toes because as soon as the ball was hit up in the air, Richie would holler, "I got it." It doesn't matter where in the ballpark it was at, he had it. And he was going, and I mean, he was going and he could get there.

He was fast, wasn't he?

JG- Oh yes, very fast, very fast. But thirty thousand, forty thousand people screaming in the stands, when that ball was hit there was a big scream and that's when Richie would holler, "I got it" and from then on he'd never say another word and he'd just go on after that ball. Well, if it happened to be over in your area and you're going like poor Del Ennis. They ran together, I don't know how many times! It's a wonder either one of them survived. But, Richie would never say another word. And Del was going over there, you know, it's an easy play, he's made about five steps over there, and here comes Richie. Zoom, like the Roadrunner and make the catch. And every once in a while they'd collide. So you had to be very careful playing next to Richie. He was a great outfielder. He could cover that ground. He'd cover Dixie like the dew, they would say but I'll tell you what. When the ball was hit and it started up and he'd say "I got it" and that's the last you'd hear of him, well, we were taught in Cincinnati by Tebbetts and Hornsby that when the ball goes out to the outfielder, you'd wait until the ball starts its downward flight, you'd see where it's going to be and then if you're there and you've got it, you've got a good bead on it, then you start hollering, "I got it, I got it" and let the other guy know. When only let the centerfielder do the calling. And we'd keep going as the left fielder or right fielder until we heard the centerfielder and if he says, "I got it" then you back off and let him have it. But if he didn't say anything, you kept going and make the catch. Well, with Richie hollering as soon as the ball went up, by the time you get to the ball, and you're listening and you don't hear him and you're reaching for the ball, and here comes, ZOOM! Here comes the Roadrunner! So, it was thrilling. It was thrilling to play the outfield. I didn't get to play that much because of the injury but it was thrilling to play next to Rich because he was so extremely fast and he was good. He was a good outfielder and a tough competitor, good ballplayer. He could run and he could hit, he could swing that bat and he could get. He'd hit a ball back to the pitcher and nearly beat it out to first base. In fact, if the pitcher happened to bobble the ball, he'd beat it.

Or, I suspect like a high bouncer that the pitcher fields.

JG- Oh yeah, he would hit one of those choppers into the hole, into third or short and they'd go over to field that ball and make a throw that normally they'd get somebody out. Richie was already walking back to the bag. He's already crossed first base. Tremendous.

Was the injury that you had, was that the reason that you played some third base again, when you were with the Phillies?

JG- No, the reason I played third base one time in Milwaukee against the Milwaukee Braves was that Willie Jones come down sick. Bobby Morgan was the other utility infielder and he was sick. So, they had nobody to play third base. So, having been a third baseman starting out in my career they decided to put me on third base. Well, Eddie Waitkus was the first baseman and he had come back and Eddie was playing first base. So, I said, sure, I've give it a whack. I hadn't been out in the infield in a long time, but, you know, I'll get in there. And, I could handle ground balls, no problem. I was good on ground balls. So I had two plays come up during that game that ended by third baseman as far as Mayo Smith who was our manager in Philly at that time was concerned. The first one was a slow hit ball between the mound and me, going toward shortstop. And I went over and I got the ball and I come up firing. Like I said before, I had a good arm. And, Waitkus was used to Willie Jones, who would always flip the ball to him. Well, I didn't flip. I got the ball and I was taught in the Yankee organization to get that ball, get around, take that step, and gun that guy, hit him in the chest with it. I turned that ball loose and Eddie reached out for that ball like this and it went ZOOM, right past his head! I went into shock. I couldn't believe it. He never saw it. He never saw the ball and I said, "My God." If that would have hit him, it would have killed him. He reached out to get the ball like this and it went right past him. Well, needless to say, that shook some people up. Then, there was a high foul ball hit up, one of those guys that

was up above the light towers, way up there. And, I'm over there at third and I'm trying to remember now, I know the ball has got that different spin when it's in here and it will go out this way and then, because of the spin, it reverses and it will come back toward you. So, I'm up there and I'm trying to remember that and I'm waiting and the ball is up there, it seems like forever, and I get well, it's right about here, and all of a sudden, it starts drifting, and then I start drifting with it, and the more it drifted, the more I drifted. Pretty soon, I'm on a dead run after it. And I had to dive and luckily I caught that ball. I was on the ground. The people were hysterical. It was unbelievable. But, anyway, I made that catch. When that game finally ended, I don't even remember the score now, I tried my best to forget about the whole thing. In fact, I would have forgot about it had you not brought it up. They never asked me to play third base again. But, I could field ground balls. I was a good fielder. I was a very good fielder, as a matter of fact, and I had a lot of comments of how I put my face down on the ball. I never looked this way and caught it over here. I never turned my head. I was always on to that ball and I could judge the ball pretty well as far as getting a good hop or a bounce, to field the ball and play, and not let the ball play me, be backing up. I always charged the ball. I had no problem with that but poor Eddie over there was used to Willie's throws and boy when I uncorked that I thought Oh my God!

He almost lost his head.

JG- Oh, you know, and he had just recovered from being shot, you know. He was shot by a crazy woman in Chicago. So I thought, oh my God, but anyway, I didn't have to play third any more after that. Mayo Smith sure of that. So, that ended that.

You mentioned Jocko Conlon earlier on. What about other business you had with umpires. Did you ever have any run-ins with them?

JG- Nossir. I never had any trouble with umpires and I'll tell you why. One of the reasons. Of course, when I was in the minor leagues coming up I never gave the umpire a bad time. Never did. Never did in high school. But, the reason I never did in the big leagues and the reason I think it finally come to light to me why and I was already doing it, I didn't have to be told, but still, was that Rogers Hornsby made a statement to me one day. He said, "Jim, don't ever turn around and show an umpire up. If an umpire calls a third strike on you," and this happened right after my first at bat in the big leagues, "if it's close enough for him to call a strike, it's close enough that you should have been swinging at the ball. So, don't blame him for you being out. You're up there with a bat to do one thing. Hit the ball. Go up there swinging. Don't take a third strike. If that ball's close enough to hit, let that bat go. You'll get as many hits off bad pitches as you will good pitches and if they're an inch or two off the plate, what difference does it make? If you can hit it, hit it, that's what you're up there for." I never forgot that and I'll tell you what. I didn't take very few third strikes after that. But, I was going to tell you a story about Sam Jones, the toothpick guy. We was in Chicago, I was with the Phillies, and I pinch-hit against left-hander because my leg was bad and so the only time I'd be in the game was when a lefthander was pitching. Well this day, Jones was pitching. Pitching a tight ballgame. We had a tight ballgame, 2-1, something like that. Curt Simmons was pitching for us. It was about the seventh inning and we get two men on and Curt's due to hit. Curt wasn't a great hitter. So, Mayo Smith's looking down the bench for someone to pinch-hit against Jones and of course, everybody is hiding because Jones had that very wicked curveball, that side-armed curveball and a tremendous fastball. He could throw hard. So everybody's kind of shimmying and hiding so I'm on the end of the bench so I just stepped off the bench and stood down in, kind of like the runway. And Mayo leaned down, he looked down that bench and the only one he saw down there and he said, "Greengrass, get a bat." And Robin Roberts and all the guys on the bench started snickering and said, "Hey Jim, you're going to get to see a right hander today, aren't you?" Boy, why me. Why is he picking me to hit. I haven't hit

against a right hander in two months. This guy, of all people. So I go up there and Clyde McCullough was the catcher, little Clyde, just a wonderful man, a great man, I love him, was their catcher. So I get up to the plate and I'm thinking of all the things that Tibbetts taught me about psychology, OK, tell him how hot it is, of course, you always played in the afternoon in Chicago. I said, "Boy, it's hot out here and I haven't seen a right hander. I don't know why he's got me up here. I don't know why he'd want me to hit against this guy." And I tried my best to break Clyde's concentration so he will call for a fastball. Because, Jones' curveball was a wicked curveball and you'll see why in a minute. So I'm talking to him with all this psychology and I said "Boy, whew, I'll be glad when this sucker's over. I don't even know why I'm up here. I'm so tired and beat up. I was out all night and man I don't need to be up here. Let's get this over with in a hurry." And I'm just waiting, just waiting, fastball. Well, the first pitch he threw was right back here behind me, coming at me like this and I said, "Oh, no" and I dropped down on the ground and hit the dirt. That ball goes SHOOM. "Strike one!" That wicked curveball. He threw it behind you and it's hard to hang in there because he threw it so hard. So I get up off the ground and the whole place is just roaring and our guys in the dugout are just laughing their tails off and so I dusted off and I get up and said I'm still going to work my psychology. So I said, "Damn, that's no way to treat a guy that hasn't seen a right hander in three months and here he's throwing my that wicked curveball. Come on, Clyde. What kind of sport is that anyway? You ought to take it easy on a guy. Geez. Can't run, can't do nothing and I'm up here. All I want to do is survive, you know." He was just kind of grinning and I'm ready to hit that fastball. SHHOE, here it come again. I dive and hit that ground in a cloud of dust. "Strike two." Boy, by then the whole place was just in an uproar. Everybody and even Sam had a grin on his face. They were just laughing and I'd Clyde says, and I think the umpire, I want to say Dusty Borgess, I don't know if it was Dusty or not. He usually was in Chicago when we were there. I think it was Dusty, but anyway, they were all having a ball with me then. Oh man, I looked funny ducking out of the way of that curveball and it came over right, strike, right in the middle of the plate. So, I get up and I didn't say another word. I just got up and I gritted my teeth and said to myself, no matter what, I am going to hang in there this time and if I can reach that ball, I am going to whack it. So I got in there and of course, in those days, it was always kind of a status quo for a pitcher, you get two strikes on a hitter and then you waste one, up high or somewhere out of the strike zone, then you come back with the same pitch, you get him out on. Usually, that worked. So I'm just gritting my teeth and saying I'm not moving and if that ball's where I can reach it, I'm going to hit it. Well, he tried to waste a fastball right about eye-high and I tomohawked that sucker into the dead center field seats. Well, our dugout just went bananas. Old Clyde, behind the plate, he was furious and Jones was looking at that ball and he was cussing me all the way around the bases, "You, son of a...that was a waste pitch, why'd you hit that ball?" He's just raising Cain with me and I come across the plate and Clyde was standing and I said, "How do you like that, you little so-and-so?" and he followed me all the way to the dugout and he said, right back, "You'll never get another fastball as long as you live, Greengrass, you hear me? Never will you get another fastball as long as I'm catching." Oh, he was mad and so I got my little moment in the sun for revenge on them for knocking me down twice with strikes.

I think you won the battle.

JG- But, I'll never forget that if I live to be a thousand. That was a great afternoon for me and I had to laugh at Mayo because Mayo was laughing and he said, "What can I say, Jim, I saw you and I didn't want to use my left-handed pinch-hitter right now because it was too early in the game." Anyway, that home run got us out in front and we ended up beating them. But Lord! They had us beat and Sam Jones and Clyde McCullough didn't speak to me again the rest of the year. Of course, this was into the late July or August, somewhere in there. But, that was a great experience against Sam and he was a great pitcher. Oh, he was tough, a tough, tough pitcher. That

hard fast curveball he had and then his fastball was hard and it was always moving and he didn't have great control. That's how we'd stay close to him. You'd just go up there and take two strikes and make him throw you strikes and that's how we got into him. But he was a tough pitcher. Oh yeah, man, he was tough. Let me see, who else? Oh, Lew Burdette. He was another one, herky-jerky squirming guys, wanted to make you think he was throwing you a spitter all the time. I don't know if I'd light him up or not. But, he'd get that thought in your mind and then if you fouled one off or got hit on the hand or didn't get a base hit, "Oh no, he threw me that spitter." You'd blame that pitcher for that, you know. Well, Rogers Hornsby would say, "It doesn't make any difference Jim which hand they throw with, right or left, if you're a big leaguer, they gotta throw that ball in the strike zone. If it's in the strike zone, you ought to hit it." So, this platooning, Rogers Hornsby didn't like it. He didn't believe in it. "If you're a big leaguer, if the ball's in the strike zone, you ought to be able to hit it." He'd tell me, "I don't care if he throws it with his foot. What difference does it make? It's got to come here, in this strike zone. If the ball comes in that strike zone, then you've got to hit the ball. And if you can't do that, you don't belong in the big leagues." And that's just the way he taught. And a lot of people didn't like that but that was the fact. But platooning helped a manager get the second guessers from the stands, the news media, the owners whoever, off his back because he'd say, "Well, he got a good right hand hitter and there's a left hand pitcher and supposedly, which is not always the case is true that a right hander hits a left hander better than he does a right and vice versa." But, it didn't make any difference to me which hand he threw at because Rogers Hornsby taught me and instilled that in my brain that it doesn't make any difference. And I hit as good if not better off right handers than I did off left handers. In fact, the Braves' Rookie of the Year, Dave Justice, hit .3 something off left handers and only .280, I saw only because he had a good year, off right handers so he proved that lefthanders, it doesn't make really that much difference if you get up there and swing that bat, that's the main thing. A lot of guys have fear in their eyes and that's what hurts.

Do you get to many games during the season?

JG- No, in fact I get to just about zero any more. First of all, I don't like to get into that traffic going to Atlanta. I've been out here for thirty years now and it was country when I moved out here and now it's heavy suburban. But, just don't like to fight the traffic. Then, the stadium is not located in an ideal place as far as I'm concerned so I don't go to many games. If I'm invited to an Old-Timers Game, I go but then we'll just go my wife Katherine and I. We'll go to the hotel when we're staying and from there we'll get on the team bus and we'll go to the ballpark and then we'll come back to the hotel and get in our car and come home. But, I don't stay down in Atlanta much. But, when we first met, back in 1947, I was stationed down at Fort McPherson down on Lee Street and I used to ride the trolley downtown to change and go out on Marietta Street where she lived, pick her up, and we'd ride the trolley back down in Atlanta and walk all over Atlanta and go to the show, and get a hot dog and window shop, to eleven, twelve o'clock at night and never think any more about it. But now, you can't go twenty feet down there if you don't get run over by somebody or somebody's robbing you or mugging you or something. So I just don't go anymore. We stay out here in the country, or in suburbia as it is now. When we go somewhere it's usually north or around Atlanta and down to Florida somewhere. But we very seldom go to the Stadium. There too, there are so many games on TV now, we get cable, and I like to watch the Cubs because they're playing at old Wrigley Field. Beautiful ballpark, my second, no, my third best park. The park I love the best and miss the most, of course, is Crosley Field. Then, Ebbets Field for two reasons. One, it's a great hitters ballpark and two is where I had my first major league home run. Great memories at Ebbets Field and the fans, the old Brooklyn Dodger fans were so great and if you something good and on that field as a player, whether you be a Dodger or a visiting club, they were up and would give you a standing ovation and great going. They were just great fans and great people and I loved to go there. That was a great place to go. It was

like going to the circus. Just a great place. The fans were sometimes more interesting than the game going on in the field. They were just great. I loved that. That was my second park I loved the best. Then, Wrigley Field was my third. I love Wrigley Field for two reasons. One, the beautiful ivy, it was a great ballpark and you played in the daytime all the time. And baseball was invented by old Abner Doubleday I think, or whoever, they say Doubleday and then you hear the story and somebody else is talking about it, but whoever thought it up, it was made to be played in the daytime and it's a daytime sport and of course, it won't be in the next ten, twenty years, it will all be indoors. So they won't lose any gates with a rainout! It's my guess. I don't know. It's gotten to be so much money, I'll tell you. It's amazing. I don't begrudge the players for getting money. I think that's a wonderful thing. Life is so short as a professional athlete that you need to make whatever it is you can. If you can demand those figures and get them. I'm amazed that a guy that can hit .220 and drive in 16 runs and not even come close to winning the fielding average or Golden Glove or anything can demand a million dollars a year and get it. I mean, that's amazing to me. But there's a lot more teams, of course. In those days there was only eight teams in each league, sixteen teams and jobs were scarce and if you got out of that lineup for any length of time, you might not get back in it. That's proven in a lot of cases in the Yankee organization, especially. Because they had like, and the Dodgers, both of those organizations and the Red Sox had players, they had four or five thousand ballplayers under contract all the time. I think when they broke the reserve clause, Major League Baseball's reserve clause went out and now the players can arbitrate, they can do this and that and the other. They got lawyers and attorneys and all this people talking for them. They don't really have to think about whatever they do. All they have to do is think about playing baseball and half of them don't even want to do that, it seems like, by the way they play it shows that they don't practice because they don't play and the caliber of the game at the major league level has really sunk down, with the exception for two or three teams. Now the Dodgers always play good fundamental baseball. You watch the Dodgers and that's because of Vero Beach. That's like a baseball factory down there and it's a wonderful thing to see that and go down there and see and they got a great guy, Mr. Baseball, Tommy Lasorda, great, great guy. And great for baseball. I think the world of Tommy Lasorda. But there's so many of the players that they're building up as superstars that couldn't play, well, they'd be hard pressed to make what we called the extra man on the ballclub, our utility players back in the forties and fifties. And I'm not saying that because I played there and at that time but from what I see and from what I know what it takes to play in the big leagues at that time and what they're doing today, my gosh, it's a cakewalk. I wish I could play today. I had a lifetime batting average of .280, right in there somewhere. I'd be a millionaire. And, you know, I wouldn't have to be fooled, chasing all the wars down and everything.

Well, sort of between you and me, you may have not noticed this but at that card show, I was must more interested in speaking with you and Mr. Nixon than I was with Dave Justice. All respect to Dave Justice, but he hasn't proven himself yet.

JG- No, he's just getting started. But, you know David has got a wonderful attitude and I hope he keeps it. He has got a great attitude and he's got a super swing at that ball and it's as close to Ted Williams as I've ever see and Willard and I agree on that. Willard used to dress right next to Ted when Willard was with the Red Sox. If he doesn't get, like so many of them do, and that's that ego trip, and say, hey, I'm going to do one thing. I'm going to be the very best baseball player I can possibly be and work at it. Then, he's going to be a superstar.

Who are the ballplayers today that you think would have been successful in any era?

JG- Well, you know it boils down to really, very few. I think the kid that's playing second base for Chicago would have had a chance.

Sandberg, you mean?

JG- Sandberg is a tough competitor out there and he's always working on the game. He has his bad days but so does everybody but it seems like he concentrates on the game. I don't know the names of a lot of the guys that I've watched play because I'm not following it really that close because the other thing's overshadow. I can tell you some bad plays that guys wouldn't have been there long. They'd had a bus ticket in their locker. Jose Canseco was one of them. He's a great guy, big guy with a lot of power but he can be pitched to as the Dodgers showed in the World Series and as the kids last year, Cincinnati showed in their World Series against him and he's a terrible outfielder. He almost got hit in the head with a ball. That he should have caught, it almost hits him in the head, and then he don't know what to do with it after he gets it. He's got a good, strong arm, physically, and that's the thing that amazes me, too. When we're talking about that. These guys today are such physical specimens. They've got all the Nautilus equipment and they've got tremendous athletic bodies. But, they don't know what to do with it. That's the problem. They go in there and work out on the machine, I guess because you can sit down and do this stuff, and ride a bike or whatever, but they're great physical specimens. They're in great shape but they don't practice playing baseball. It's like a mechanic going out and looking at a car and saying, "Oh I can fix that" and don't know what tool to use. They just don't know what to do with the great ability that they have and the great physical strength. They can make anything. First of all, there's no such thing as a natural anything. There's not anything that's a natural hitter, a natural fielder, or a natural pitcher, or a natural thrower, whatever. You have the God-given talents. You have the physical ability. What you do to cultivate that and make yourself the ultimate ballplayer, in this case a baseball player, you have to do through your mind and your determination and your heart. You've got to have the heart to go out there and face the rejection of making mistakes and the rejection of sometimes forty thousand people on your back, but you keep driving to become the very best you can possibly be. And these guys don't do that. You don't see them practice. I was down in an Old-Timers game at the Braves Stadium and we're in the dressing room and Pee Wee Reese is in there, sitting there together. There's another great ballplayer, Pee Wee Reese. Boy, he was steady. If there was ever a steady Eddie, that was him. He was always there, with that bat, or with that glove, in the field. He didn't make sensational plays. He made the everyday play that you have to make to win ballgames. The sensational, this jumping up in the air and lollypop a throw, that's a bunch of baloney. Everybody trying now, it seems like, to make a play in the outfield or in the infield to get on play of the week award, whatever the hell that thing is, you know you see them do all kinds of crazy things and they play terrible about that. Pee Wee was just out there, the ball's hit to him, he goes over, he gets it, and he throws the guy out, and go to the next guy. And that's the way those guys played in those days and then they would make sensational plays. They literally go in the hole in back of third base and stretch out along that ground and backhand that ball, come up, and plant that foot, and fire a rocket to first base. The guy's out. These guys today, they go over there, they backhand the ball, they jump up in the air like they're flying or doing the ballerina or something and they flip the ball and there's no way in the world they're going to throw it now with that kind of a thing and they say, "Oh, what a great play he made!" Well, he didn't make a great play. He made, in my opinion, he made a complete fool of himself, if he's a major leaguer, he should have been over and grabbing that ball, and coming up and firing that thing, and getting that guy out because you gotta get them out. Anyway, that's the way we lived and this is the way these guys live today and sometimes you wonder.

If you were an owner and all of the managers you played for and against, who would you hire?

JG- Of all that I played for and against, who would I hire? Boy! Now, there's so many, each one of them had their own special quality, the way I look at things. Now, I don't look at things like everybody, of course. But, if I, gosh, that's hard question because like Rogers Hornsby was my favorite man. Two reasons. One, he was good to me. He showed me respect as a kid and he liked my attitude and my going for the game. I always thought he was great and there was guys on the ballclub that hated him. But, baseball, just as pure baseball manager's thinking, I guess, oh, gosh, Bill Rigney was right in there. Birdie Tibbetts was right in there, a great psychological guy, great thinker, thinking two or three innings ahead. Stanky, Eddie Stanky was a great ballplayer and a good manager, and wanted fire in there and always thinking of a way to beat you. Oh, just so many guys with different styles. Gosh.

That's a tough question.

JG- I think probably the most, and Casey Stengel, oh, I loved Casey Stengel. Casey Stengel told me in 1977, we were in Cincinnati at an Old-Timer's game and I came into this clubhouse and here's Casey sitting down over here and he looked up and he saw me and I hadn't see Casey to speak to for twenty-five years, 1952.

And you were in the Yankee organization?

JG- Yeah, and I walked through that clubhouse door and he looked up. He was putting his uniform on, getting ready. He was our manager for the Old-Timers game. And he looked up and he said, "Jim, come here a minute and sit down," and he patted the stool next to him and said "I want to tell you something." Well, my mouth dropped open. I was flabbergasted and that he even knew who I was to start with. He said, "Son, I want to tell you why I made that trade." I said "Yessir." He said, "Your power was straightaway and I needed a guy to win me four ballgames, at the end of 1952. Blackwell was the guy. Cincinnati wanted you. I didn't want to get rid of you. We were going to bring up the next year. We were going to bring you up in '53. But, when we got to thinking about it, Yankee Stadium wasn't built for a hitter like you because your power is straightaway and that's the big part of the field out there. The balls that you hit out in other parks would be caught out there in right center and left center, centerfield. If you had been a pull hitter, more of a pull hitter, then you'd have been OK, but pull hitters were the only ones that ever really survived in Yankee Stadium. The guys that hit straightaway didn't hit many home runs and didn't last long. So, we had to take that into account and that's the reason that we finally OK'd that trade and Rogers Hornsby himself insisted that you were his guy. They wanted you bad. And, that's why I made the trade and I've been wanting to tell you that and this was the first time I saw you and I just wanted to tell you. I hope there's no hard feelings about that." I said, "Mr. Stengel, there certainly isn't." But then we got to talking and he told me and he said, "You know, managing the Yankees," in his own way, his own Stengelese talking, such a man, he'd say, "You know, I could manage the Yankees from a hotel room. All I have to do with my ballclub is go out there and pick out eight guys to play their positions and a pitcher. Give the umpire the scorecard and tell the guy's who's going, and then get back out of the way and let them play" because all the Yankees through their D ball all the way to the big leagues know how to play the game. You're taught that from the very first day you become a Yankee, all the way though, in those days, not so today, but in those days, and the system is always the same so when you got to the big club, you didn't have to be shown or taught and they didn't have school or class in spring training in the big leagues. You were ready to play the game and now it was a question, can you play it. Are you good enough defensively? Do you have a strong enough arm? Can you hit well enough and so on and that's what they looked for in spring training. It wasn't going to school and teaching you this and that and the other, because you already knew that coming through their minor league system. So, he says all I have to do, I don't even have to show up at the ballpark if I

don't want to, but I show up so I can talk to reporters. I have fun talking to them. And that's what he told me and I could not believe that man. He was such a great man and he was no dummy because you don't become president of two banks and be a dummy. He had some kind of smart but he was so, and he didn't miss anything. People say, oh, you know, he'd go to sleep on the bench, he didn't go to sleep. He never missed anything but he could look back and tell you, just like me walking in that clubhouse, he maybe saw me, that I know of, three times in his entire life, and all of it was in spring training and I don't know if he ever saw me any other time of not. If he did, I wasn't aware of it but after twenty-some years, here's a guy he traded, but that was him. Chicago used to give him a bad time when I'd go to Chicago. The White Sox announcers would always get me on the radio show. I was always good for fifty bucks or for a radio or a watch or something and when we went to Cincinnati or Chicago because, they always would want to talk about Stengel. They'd always try to rap Stengel and the Yankees and they'd use me because he traded me away and they'd say I wonder about how Casey feels about trading Jim Greengrass today? You know, how he hit two home runs or something? Especially, if they happened to be in a little slump and the White Sox were doing good or they were doing good against them, they'd always bring that up in Chicago.

Well, I get the feeling that Casey Stengel might be the person that you would have hired.

JG- If I was an owner and have my choice all the back through the years of the guys I knew, probably Stengel and I'll tell you who the coaches would be. I wouldn't have Rogers Hornsby on third base. He got me in trouble on third base. I'd have Rogers as my hitting coach. I'd have Stan Musial at third base coaching. I'd have Birdie Tebbetts would be there on the coaching staff to handle the psychological things on the ballclub and the clubhouse problems and those kind of things and I guess, Freddy Hutchison. I'd have old Freddy there to put some fire into the pitching staff. Boy! He was tough. He'd fine pitchers. He didn't knock you down. He'd fine 'em. In fact, it got so bad, we were playing St. Louis and he was the manager of St. Louis and Harvey Haddix was pitching, Klu was hitting, and Gus or somebody hit a home run in front of him. And Hutch says, "Damn," and Harvey's out there, you know, little old Harvey is throwing that ball and Harvey throws one in close. "That will be a hundred and fifty dollars!" Klu is standing up there and so Harv hit him with a fastball, right there. Klu never moved. Boom. The ball hit him and bounced back to him. Klu just, you'd never see Klu mad. Gentle Giant. He'd just come around like this and he had a fence post for a bat and he just got up and he took that bat and slammed it against the ground and it just shattered. This fence post shattered. And Haddix took off for left field. He thought he was coming out of there after him! But, that was the kind of fiery guy that Hutchison was. When Stanky was managing, I come into home plate and knocked their catcher and scored the winning run, but he was blocking the plate, and I come in and he was getting the ball and the ball and me and everything got there at the same time and I hit him pretty good and flipped him all over and just bashed in his chest protector and shin guards went everywhere and I was bruised up pretty good as well. But he dropped the ball and I scored the winning run. And the Cardinal guys really got on my case about dirty playing and you didn't have to do that and all that and boy, you could hear Eddie in the clubhouse, through the walls to our clubhouse saying, "You bunch of so-and-sos, don't jump on that kid for knocking him down. That's the way you ought to be playing the damn game. He's just doing his job, which is something you guys ain't doing." And boy, he was red and he backed me up on that and he said, "No, you done the right thing. That's the way you ought to play the game and that's the way these crybabies ought to be playing themselves or they wouldn't be crybabies." That made me feel pretty good. I didn't mean to hit the guy or hurt him. It knocked him unconscious for a short spell. But still, I knew that my job was to get into that base and he had me blocked. I had to go through him. Or stop, and they'd tag me out. I was the winning run. I wasn't fixing to stop and so guys like that, fiery guys, ready to play and get out there, what they called it in those days, I thought I heard it, oh, Dizzy Dean and

Mel Allen, they'd be talking, and they'd say, "Hell for leather, that's the way the Gashouse Gang played and we'd just get out there and played like hell, boys! That's how we played this game." And that's the way it ought to be played. You play to win and when it's over with you all get together and go have a beer or a soda pop and sit down and have lunch and tell stories and have a good time but when that game started those guys in the gray were your enemy. And, if you were in the white, if you were the home team and always dressed in home white, and the road teams were always in gray. If you're the home team, them guys were your enemies. They might be your best friends off that field. But you were doing anything you could to beat that rascal during that ballgame. That's the way they played and that's the way they lived and they never worried about money. Today, guys are all worried about money, stocks and bonds and whatever. How many endorsements can I get? Just thinking about how to play the game, how to win.

You mentioned managers as coaches, but you had some fiery people who were coaches for you. Dick Bartell was one of your coaches and I don't know how you get much more fiery than that. I believe Whit Wyatt...

JG- Well, Whitlow was a great pitching coach and would have been a great major league manager but he didn't want to manage in the big leagues. He managed here, you know, for the Crackers. Won a championship and a Little World Series.

Local, isn't he?

JG- Yes, he's from Buchanan right up here. Whitlow was just a great man and a great gentleman, just a great guy but a tough competitor. There again, one of them gentle giants. Boy, just as nice as he could be off the field but you put that glove and that ball in his hand, put him out on that mound and he would knock you down and if you got up complaining, he'd knock you down again.

Joe DiMaggio said he was the meanest pitcher he ever faced.

JG- Yes. He was a guy that would give the shirt off his back, but a tough competitor. And those guys, that's the way they played in those days. That's the way you were brought up to play. You played the game for all it was worth, as hard as you could play and when it was over, you could look in the mirror and say, "I'd done the very best I could do and I got beat, so be it. I'm going out there again tomorrow and do the same thing." I'm sure that guys have a tough time when they look in the mirror, other than their hair, to say, their conscious or their ego gets in the way. I don't know.

There was some fancy coaches. Jimmy Dykes was one of your coaches. And Wally Moses.

JG- Jimmy Dykes. Wally was OK, but not a great baseball mind, by any means, but he was a nice guy, a nice guy to have around.

Good hitter.

JG- Yes, very good hitter. For his type of hitting. He was a spray hitter, what we called a punch and judy. He didn't hit many home runs but he was one of them guys that could hit that ball and hit a line drive somewhere and he was a good runner. Oh, he could fly, and even in his fifties and sixties, he could still outrun a lot of the players that were playing at that time in their prime. He was a good athlete. Super. Not a great big guy but a good athlete and a nice man. He was a nice man.

Jimmy Dykes had quite a baseball mind.

JG- Dykes was great. Now I never got to know Dykes all that well. But, he was a good man and oh, there's so many and like I say, you could take any one of them and not have a loser in the bunch because they were all good men, good baseball men Well, if there weren't, they wouldn't have got the job, number one. In those days it wasn't the buddy-buddy system. It was, can you do it or can't you do it? And some of the great ones that found out, like Casey, as great a manager as there was when he went to the Mets. He was the first one to tell you. If you ain't got the horses, you can't pull the wagon. And he didn't have the horses with the Mets and of course, they were losers. So, does that make him a bad manager? No. That makes it that he had bad ballplayers. You can't run, hit, and throw for them. They've got to do that theirself. But the leader is the guy that can get them all together and gel and get everybody moving in the same direction and do all those things and work at it and take pride in what they're doing and not have outside interests and concentrating on that game on that field. Those are great leaders and Stengel, of course, he had great players, like I said. He could have managed the Yankees. Like I said, anybody could have managed the Yankees. You and I could have managed the Yankees and become famous for World Series wins and that because those guys could play. I mean you got DiMaggio and the Woodlings and the Bauers and, what was that first basemen's name? I never could think of it.

Skowron?

JG- Skowron, Moose. The Moose. All those guys. I played in the minor leagues with and against these guys and they were all great. They were great ballplayers. They were hard working guys and they got out there and they worked at their job. They'd go out and party sometime and play hard, on and off the field but they were always 100% and give 100% on that field every day that they walked out there. And that makes the difference in the caliber of baseball you saw then and the caliber of baseball you see today. You see less and less of the great ballplayer, the great play. Once in a while you'll see a great play and a lot of times you see a lucky play. But, back then it was an everyday thing. You'd never see DiMaggio diving for a ball and giving that flip and all of that. He was always standing there waiting for the ball. They'd say, Geez, what an easy play. Well, when it started out, it wasn't that easy but he learned. He got the jump on the ball. He got himself over there and he got the ball and he fired it back in there and that's was the difference. Now, they try and make everything a sensational catch and try, like I say, try and make the play of the week and get on, I don't know what they get for that. It's something, I guess.

What was the best play you ever saw? The best, probably defensive play.

JG- The best defensive play I ever seen. I think the best defensive play, just sensational and I wasn't playing in the game and I didn't do it, was Granny Hamner. We had the bases loaded and I believe it was against the Pirates in old Shibe Park. It was a wet, rainy, nasty night. Oh boy, it was a miserable night to play but we were out there playing and the bases are loaded and the guy hits a line drive back and I don't know the pitcher. I can't get that focus in my mind exactly who the pitcher was but I can see it right now. Granny is charging towards second and dives and catches that ball, slides across second base, comes up on his knees, and throws to first and makes a triple play. That to me, was the greatest play I ever seen. And I said, I'll betcha a dollar to a donut that he could do that again and again and again should that situation and that play arise because he was, that was the kind of ballplayer he was and he had a tremendous arm anyway. But he dove, caught that ball and slid across that bag at second, I can see that play, and was up on them knees, and fired that ball to first base and of course, the guy on first, he's just standing there and it was so wet he couldn't have got back anyway, but he was just, how did he do that. It

looked like a base hit. That was probably one of the greatest and one of the easiest that I made for an out was when Mays caught the best shot I ever hit out there by McGraw's statue.

Was that the oddest play you've ever seen?

JG- That was the worst play for me that ever happened to me. I was counting that home run already. In fact, I'd figured on an inside-the-park home run because I was standing on second base when he caught the ball. There's no way he's going to get me from second to home from out there because that's about a ten-dollar ride in a cab across that place. Oh, I made a couple of, oh, I'll tell you about it. I did make a good play. I did make a good play once. Rogers Hornsby, every day at Cincinnati, he'd run me up and down that terrace in left field, because in Crosley Field, it was a very tough position to play and you had to practice and you'd get yourself killed. So, every day at ten o'clock or out there, Rocky Bridges and I would walk from downtown Cincinnati out to the ballpark, get there about ten, get our shorts on, grab a bucket of balls and our bats and here's Rogers, sitting in the dugout. He'd be sitting there and you'd kind of look up and laugh and say, "Hey guys, late this morning, ain't cha?" And we'd go out there and we'd throw at each other and throw a little curves and that and we'd take batting practice to each other and he said, "OK, Jim, come on." He'd have that fungo and that bucket of balls and Rock would stand on second base and I'd get out there at the foot of the terrace and Rogers would get behind shortstop and he'd hit line drives off that wall and I'd take them over my head and play the carom and fire to second base. Well, to show you how that paid off, the Chicago Cubs had a leftfielder the name of Hank Sauer. Remember Hank? We called him Abe Lincoln because he was tall and raw-boned. Nice man. He had three ton of chewing tobacco every season that the fans threw to him. But Hank was a good hitter. He was a good hitter and he hit a lot of home runs but he hit a ball off of left center field out there in old Crosley Field and I went down that terrace. I played that carom and took that ball and I fired to second base. I didn't even have to look at second base. I could have hit second base blindfolded. I'd done it so many times. I'd gun that ball in and Temple caught the ball and here comes Hank, rounding, kind of jogging in, a stand-up double for sure. He looks up and here's John and John says, "Hey Hank, look what I got, and showed him the ball." He took his hat and threw it down and kicked the dirt and said, "How the hell did you get that ball?" And he questioned the ump and said, "He had that ball in his pocket." I learned to play that carom that well and that particular day and he hit that ball and I made that play and that was as good a play as I ever made. It tickled me to death. It was such a sensational play and would be a routine play really but to see Hank's face and him coming jogging into second base and I could still see him, old raw-boned guy coming in there. He knew he had that stand-up double and John said, "Look what I got, Hank" and he just went crazy.

Well, you said you continued playing ball until what, 1963?

JG- '63, yeah. After my legs started giving me just bunches of trouble, they sent to Miami, the Phillies did, to run in the surf and I worked out with that team all spring and when the Phillies left spring training camp, I stayed down there with the Miami ballclub and then it got to be where I was in pretty good shape and I said I believe I can play some more. "We want you to play, but we don't want you to hurt it. We want you to play." So they sent me to Sacramento, California in the Coast League and I went out there in this good, warm weather, no rain, it never rained in the summertime out there at all. It rains all winter, no rain in the summer. I went out there and had a good season. I forget what the record was. They're in the book. I had 27 home runs, whatever. I had like 15 or 17 assists from the outfield and stole, I don't know, eight or ten bases. My leg was felling good but I wasn't tired. It was the greatest schedule that ever was in baseball and would love to see it happen again. You go, in the coast league in them days, you'd go to a town and say, were at Sacramento so we'd go down and play San Diego. We'd go down there and we'd spend a

week there. We'd arrive on Monday. Mondays were always off days. You'd play Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night, Friday night, Saturday afternoon, and a doubleheader on Sunday. After the doubleheader on Sunday, you'd get in a plane to go to the next town or back home or whatever the case might be. You didn't play again until Tuesday night. That schedule'd run like that all year and it was just so great. You'd get to a town and you'd could take your stuff out of a suitcase and hang it up, send out to the laundry or dry cleaner or whatever and relax and you're there for a week. It was just like being on a vacation to play ball. Then, every Monday being off. You'd get back home and it was great on Sunday afternoon at home if you had a two-week homestand or a three-week homestand, the Sunday afternoon doubleheader is over. You'd go home and you'd cook out and you'd have a nice time and you'd know you haven't got a thing to worry about now until Tuesday night. So, you're with your family. You have the kids and it was just super. The greatest scheduling that ever was. In fact, there was so many guys that played in the coast league in those days that refused to go to the big leagues. The minimum salary in the big leagues then was five thousand dollars. And when you're in your first year in the big leagues, that's all you got. You had to prove that you could play, that you belonged there before that you could ever get off that five thousand mark. I don't know if that was true 100 per cent, probably not, but that was the circumstances and those guys in the coast league, those guys out there were making more money than guys making in the big leagues. There was guys in the big leagues making ten, twelve thousand dollars and they were in the big leagues and these guys in the coast league were making fifteen and twenty! But, it was great playing conditions. If you couldn't play in the coast league in them days, you couldn't play anywhere.

Who were some of the people in the coast league with you?

JG- I was afraid you were going to ask me that. There were just so many. Just so many guys and I am very bad at names.

Who was your manager then at Sacramento?

JG- The manager at Sacramento was a big, rotund fellow the name of Tommy Heath. Tommy was just a great guy to play for and we had some good ballplayers. We had a shortstop the name of Righetti, Leo Righetti, whose son pitched for the Yankees, a lefthander. Dave, that's his son. We had the Westlake boys, Jimmy Westlake and his brother played there and oh gosh, when I try to think of somebody's name... Al Heist was our centerfielder, who later went to Houston when that opened up. He was a good outfielder. Great arm, he had a little trouble with the curveball, hitting, but other than that he was a good ballplayer. He played centerfield for us and we had Nippy Jones, he played first base, remember Nippy, he's in the Hall of Fame with the famous shoe-polish ball in the World Series. Oh, there's just so many guys and the guy that ended up managing the Orioles for so long was a pitcher, was the manager of Vancouver. There's two up there. Charlie Metro was one. He was up there and then this guy was a pitcher for Charlie in those days, and then later on he became the manager of the Orioles for such a long time. Oh my my, I can't think of his name. That's awful. Now, when you leave here, I'll remember it.

Now, on my sheet, let's take a look.

JG- But, anyway there were so many great guys. Ralph Kiner was down at San Diego. He was a manager, a general manager and also started his broadcasting career there. When I played down there and I was later traded to Portland, played up there and then I went to San Diego and finished up my regular playing days there.

Well, not Paul Richards?

JG- No, no, after him.

Well, after him Hitchcock.

JG- Billy Hitchcock.

And Hank Bauer was there for several years and then Earl Weaver took over.

JG- No, maybe it was the pitching coach.

You got me. So, did you stay...?

JG- No, or maybe it was Milwaukee. Gosh, it's hard for me to remember now.

Yeah, there's a lot of names and a lot of years.

JG- But anyway, he was great guy. He'd wet 'em up. He was a cheater but he was a good guy and like I said. I didn't care what they threw. Like Hornsby said, "You had to throw it in the strike zone and if you couldn't hit the ball in the strike zone, you didn't belong in the big leagues." That's...

Did you stay in the coast league through '63?

JG- I stayed in Sacramento for two years and then went to Portland. I was up there one year and then I went to San Diego and that was my last year of regular playing. It was at San Diego. Well, actually, I didn't play regular at San Diego. San Diego, we had a great bunch. We had Suitcase Simpson, remember the big tall..., and we had a guy that later went on to the White Sox that was a pitcher and I think now he's a general manager with somebody and he was a great athlete, a left handed pitcher. There again, it's one of those names that just goes.

Well, what did you do then after 1963? Did you move back to Atlanta?

JG- Yeah, I came back to Atlanta. I hooked up and scouted for the Houston Colt .45s when they first were getting started. Gabe Paul was down there and he called and gave me a job but I didn't like scouting and living out of the trunk of a suitcase, you know, the trunk of your car, and I was away from the family too much and I said, nah, I'm going to come back home. So, I come back home and piddled around and then went to work for Lockheed, a Georgia company over here in Marietta, building airplanes. I went into the employment office to get a job and they said "Well, what do you know about airplanes, Jim?" "Well, I said, "I know how to buy a ticket and I know how to fasten a seatbelt and that's about it." And they said, "Great! You're trainable. We can train you and you'll be a good worker for us." And they hired me. They did. They said, "You don't have any of these built-in problems that so many mechanics have of doing it one way and in the aircraft you have to do it precise and tolerances and all that kind of stuff." So, I was in there for less than a year and got into management. I became a supervisor and I went on a C-130, then from there when they first started building the C-140, the C-141, I took a supervisor job and I run that and then when the C-5 came in, I stayed on that for awhile and then I went to the training department and I trained guys. I loved to do that because I'm a people person. I love to be around people and do things. That was great. I loved it. Then, of course, that began to fade away. It was coming to an end. I went back up on the line and I spent ten years over there. Then, after that I was just kinda sitting around one day and my neighbor said "Let's go up and see Kermit Sanders,

who was then the Sherriff of Cobb County, said, "I got to go and have some business with him. Do you want to go along?" I said, "Yeah." I had met Kermit during his campaigning and all. So, we come up, right down the hall here and we sat in his office and Kermit asked, he said, "Well, what are you doing now Jim?" And I said, "Well, I'm not really doing anything. I got laid off at Lockheed and I'm just kinda looking around." "Well, how would you like to come work for me?" And boy, that lit up a ball and I said, "Well, I guess if you can stand it, I can." And he said, "Well, what do you think about law enforcement?" I said, "Well, I obey the law and I've always admired police officers and I know they've got a tough job, it's like being an umpire, but, that sounds like a pretty good idea." So he called Personnel, which was on the next floor above us and got Whit Carson. Whit Carson was the personnel director for the county at that time, 1973. He says, "Give him the Civil Service Exam." So, they brought me back here. They locked me in a room and give me six pictures to look at. It was a list of these guys. They were all criminals, their names and height and weight and birthdates and social security numbers and so on and what they were charged with and everything. I studied them for twenty minutes. So, pretty soon, here comes a lady, she come back in and she had a Coca-Cola and said, "Now, the first twenty questions on this test are going to be about those pictures you were just looking at." The rest of the questions, the other 80, (there was 100 questions), were kind of general questions. But the first twenty will be pertaining to those pictures you've been studying. I said, "OK." She left me the Coke and left and I started doing those and I had heard about the Civil Service Exams that if you don't know a question, or if you're not sure about it, don't guess, leave it blank. Because, you're not scored on the ones that were blank. Only the ones that you answer and miss and hit, or give the right answer to, so anyway, I completed all the questions and I'm sitting there wondering well, this gals forgot about me. So I study some of the other questions that I'd left out, well I don't know and I'm not writing something in there that I'm not sure about. So, anyway, she finally comes back and takes the exam and I come back down in the office and Mr. Dobbins, who brought me up there, he was sitting there with us, and we were talking there and shooting baseball. Pretty soon the phone rings. He picks it up and said, "Well, how'd he do?" He was kind of smiling and he looked at me. He hung the phone up. He looked at me. He had to know. Kermit was kind of like Hornsby. He'd never give you a direct praise about anything but he'd tell you that's the way I'd like to see you do things. So he tells me, he says, "Well, you're no damn Einstein but you passed. When do you want to start?" So, that's how my law enforcement career started. So, I said, "Well, I'm not doing anything, so I can get started." About that time Jim Lynch, who was the head jailer at that time, come by the door and said, "Hey Jim," and I'd known him from serving on grand juries. He said, "You coming to work for us?" I said, "Well, if Mr. Sanders here says so, I guess I will." And he said, "Boy, I need him up in the jail right now. So Kermit said, "We'll, when can you start?" "I can't start tomorrow as far as that goes. I'm not doing anything." So, he said, "Boy, that's great! Be here at eight o'clock in the morning." And back in those days nobody had uniforms or anything like that and the guys that served warrants and civil papers always wore a tie and a jacket and most of them wore hats because those days, the old days style was to always have a hat. And, of course, it's modernized now where nobody wears a hat, but they used to in those days. That's how you told the difference between the guys who were on the road and the guys who worked the jail was the guys in the road were suited up with ties and hat and the guys in the jail wore blue jeans and shirts, you know, and sweaters and things like that. When you got on the fourth floor with the prisoners, you couldn't tell the prisoners from the guards because everybody was dressed about alike. They didn't have like they do now with the uniforms, the coveralls and the white, blue-striped pants. They didn't have any of that. It was interesting and I said, "Well, I'll start when you want me to learn to do this business." From that I went a year in the jail and then come out on the road and served warrants for Kermit and then, of course, he retired after twenty years of being sheriff here and Bill Hudson took over and Bill started organizing and I stayed on the road and then I went to pre-trial court services and I worked over there with Helen Sholes for twenty years and I was the apprehension officer for that particular unit and then when

that folded down Bill brought me back here and I've been working in criminal investigation ever since. And, I'm backup for Neil Warren, who is a Colonel, the head investigator for our county. I love it. This kind of work, and people look at me kind of strange when I say that, but this kind of work is a real challenge because it's something different every day, different people, all these people on these warrants are different individuals, different characters, different problems. Not all of them are Public Enemy Number One by any stretch of the imagination, but they're people with people problems. And you get an opportunity to help them in some cases, guide them, and say, "You know, let's get this thing now and get it taken care of and then go on about your life. This isn't the way to live to have people out hunting you and want to throw you in jail. You know, take care of your business and do whatever you need to do and get straight with the world and go on about you business. Life's too short to be sad, and unhappy." So, it's a great challenge and it's kind of like baseball. You think you know it all. Forget it. You could live to be two million years old and you never know it all. You'll see something different every day if you're in there looking to learn. That's one thing that my granddad Greengrass told me. He said, "Son, keep your eyes and your ears open and your mouth shut and that's how you learn. Nobody ever learned anything while they were talking." And when you stop to think about that, that's true because if you're talking you're not listening and if you're not listening, you're not learning.

Well, I think I've got two more questions.

JG- Fire away.

What have me missed? That's one question.

JG- I don't know.

We've covered a lot of years and a lot of ground and I've enjoyed every second of it.

JG- I'm 63 and that's 63's worth a Greengrass you've been listening to.

And the second question I guess is, you know what's going on in the area and who is here. Who else should I be seeking out that could possibly be almost as good an interview as you are?

JG- Oh, I'm sure there are guys that would be much, much better.

I've got to admit. This is the first time I've done this and it's a little like a first date. You never know.

JG- Well, I'm glad you started with me.

I hope, and I am, too. I hope they all go this well. I've got about five or six people I'm planning on speaking with in the next month or so.

JG- Great.

Including two elderly gentlemen. They were both born in 1898.

JG- Oh boy.

One of them pitched for the '22 Senators.

JG- Who is that?

He lives in Homer. Do you know where Homer is?

JG- Yeah, I know where Homer, Georgia is.

Mr. Lucas Turk.

JG- Luke Turk, no see, that name, I knew Turk but obviously not, It might be a descendant of his. I played against Turk and he was a pitcher.

Oh yeah?

JG- Oh yeah, it was back in one of the minor leagues or he might have been in the big leagues. I don't remember exactly where but I know that name.

Well, this gentlemen pitched for the Washington Senators in 1922, five games.

JG- My oh my oh my.

The Society for American Baseball Research has decided that people ninety years or older, we really ought to be zeroing in on.

JG- Because they're not going to be around much longer. If you're going to talk to them, you better get at it.

There are two of them in this area, one in Home as I said and the other is a gentleman who lives in Newberry, South Carolina. Henry Levi Johnny, he was known as Johnny Wertz. [Actually, Werts.]

JG- That name I don't know.

He pitched for four years for the Boston Braves, back in the twenties.

JG- Boy oh boy. There will be interesting guys to talk to, I'll guarantee you.

Mr. Nixon is ...

JG- And you can take your time about the guy in the Carolinas, because those people there live forever anyway.

Do they?

JG- Oh yeah, if you come from Carolina, you just keep right on going. You don't ever die over there.

And there's a gentleman who lives in Riverdale that people, most everybody I've talked to didn't know he was still alive. He was the All Star shortstop in the American League in 1941. You know, the year that Williams hit .406, this is the guy that came in second.

JG- Wow! Who is that?

Cecil Travis.

JG- I know Cecil Travis well. Yessir. I hadn't even thought about him, but I see those guys once a year about and that's at an old-timer's picnic that we have at the old steel plant, down there in Atlanta.

How could an outsider wrangle an invitation? If you bring potato salad or something?

JG- That's nothing. You don't bring anything. I think that the barbeque ticket costs you three bucks and that's all.

Oh, I've love that.

JG- They gather every year and it's usually somewhere around the first of June. You keep in touch with me and let me know.

I will.

JG- Now, Cecil has been coming. Now, I don't know. There are so many amateur ballplayers and a lot of guys that played major league ball. Osborne is down there. Bo Osborne, who played first base for Detroit. We got right here in Marietta you got Nick Esasky, who was with the Braves, who hopefully will be an active player next year but then nobody knows. I'll tell you a great interview for you. It'd be Willard Nixon. Super guy and he's got some great stuff and great Ted Williams stories.

Oh?

JG- Oh, just super and he and I of course, we're pals with Ted Williams. We love him. He's a great guy. He's good. Williams got a bad rap but aside from that, the guy will give you the shirt right off his back. He's that kind of a person. And Willard is great. That's an old country boy, redneck, boy, he used to be hot, get mad, boy! He led the league in broken light bulbs in the stadium. You'd take him out of a game and he'd bust every light bulb in the runway, all the way to the dugout. One time he took his uniform off, they took him out of a ballgame. He was mad. He took his uniform off and tore it in little pieces, piled it in the middle of the clubhouse floor, and set it on fire. Tough competitor. But, see, when the game was over and he got through with all that, a country gentleman now. He'd look back at that and say, "Geez, how silly we were." Well, I led the league when I was at Cincinnati. I'd hit a line drive and somebody'd catch it. I led the league in kicked water buckets. God, I used to get that. And everybody would clear out of the dugout when I'd come in it because I'd be so raging mad, but you had to let that frustration out. And, once you let it out, it was OK, and you'd play that much harder the next time. But, that's the way we played. You know. But, Willard would be very interesting and he'd give you a different angle because pitchers live in a world all their own.

He was a pitcher.

JG- Those cats, they're like space cadets, what we'd call today. They're way up here somewhere. They look at it altogether different than you do as an everyday, regular player. For good reason, because they depend, every four days, to go out there, and that's where they make their money and they don't get another crack at it for four more days. So, that's gets kind of nerve wracking, I would imagine.

You don't do well in an outing and you can't do anything about it, for several days.

JG- Then, if you get two or three bad ones, you know, you may not be there any longer and that's all the crack you get, whereas as a regular, he gets at least a couple of weeks. If he gets a base hit along in there and makes a couple of plays, he can get on the go and he pays attention to business. They look at it altogether different, you know. Especially if somebody makes an error, you know, and the game is in the balance and they miss a double play or a base hit gets in there that they feel should have been caught, and sometimes like that, and rightly so...

What pitcher that you with or that you saw let that sort thing bother them the most? In other words, a fumble in the field would just...and sometimes a pitcher could recover from that and sometimes they couldn't?

JG- Not too many, but I think the guy that it probably bothered the most that I was aware of, was probably Bud Podbeilan, who was a pitcher with us in '53 and '54. Gosh, I don't know. Guys were such competitors in those days. There's a lot of difference between being mad at yourself that you might think they were mad at somebody else but they're really... because a lot of those guys would show frustration but it wasn't toward the guy that made the error or didn't quite get the fly ball or a base hit fell in, it was because they as a pitcher had let this guy hit the ball to start with. So, it was hard to draw. Guys would blow up. It might have been some younger guys but for the most part, the guys that I really knew...

If they didn't learn to control it, they didn't stay around, I'll bet you.

JG- They didn't blame somebody else for their own problems because if a guy hit the ball, then it was their problem right off the bat. No matter what happened to it in the field, whether it was caught, or, because a lot of balls were caught that shouldn't have been caught. You know, lucky bounces. Whatever.

What was the best pitched game you ever saw?

JG- Well, I never really like good-pitched games because that meant you're usually going oh-for-four.

Well, it could be somebody on your team, I suppose.

JG- Well, the games I enjoyed, I really remember and was fired up about was when I was with the Phillies and Robin Roberts was facing Don Newcombe. Boy! Two tough battlers out there and boy, that was great just to be in the ballpark when them two guys, and those two teams. The reason I remember and I think so much about it because I drove in the winning run for Robbie in one of the opening day games he beat Newk in Philadelphia. But, boy, they were tough guys to hit against and it was always, it's going to be 2-1, 1-0, one of them squeakers and you had to really be on your toes and get that ball and make those plays because you'd know that the game was going to be in the balance if you didn't do it and you let them get a run, it's going to be hard to get that run back. And, it was usually the guy that got, if you got two to three runs, in one of those guys and either one of those guys got that much of a lead, got a two- or three-run lead on you, forget it. Because they would be tough to beat, but that is not to say that they didn't get beat in those games because they did but for the most part, boy, you had to really be on your toes and those two great competitors. When guys like that went at one another, it was like Willard Nixon was great against the Yankees. Geez, he could put them Yankees, he'd go against Ford and the

guys of that time and boy they were exciting games, because there wasn't many runs scored. But, you saw the fielding plays. These guys, Rizzuto and those guys made fielding plays, it was none of this lolly-pop throwing and all that crap, this was good, hard baseball and they went over and got that ball and they fired that sucker and they run them bases for all it was worth and if a guy was a second base, they'd break up them double plays. A guy had to get out of the way. If he didn't, boy, he's history. They'd knock him downtown, but that's just the way, it was part of the game. They were great competitive games. Oh geez, there was so many guys. Then we had a guy at Philly, I always felt sorry for him. His name was Jack Meyer. Jack had a heart attack and died in his thirties. Young, good-looking guy. Boy, he could throw that ball. And another good pitcher we had that pitched hard and didn't have any luck and he got frustrated with the manager more than anything, was Jim Owens. Big right hander. Boy, he had the best stuff. In fact, Robbie got him off of alcohol and he was rooming with Robbie all during spring training one year and Mayo told him, "You get him straightened out and he'll pitch the third game in opening the season. We'll give him a chance." And he did and that Jim Owens, he got off that booze and he worked hard and he was ready and Mayo never give him that chance. Robbie never liked Mayo from that day forward. He went in there and told him. "You lied to him. You lied to me and you lied to that boy and he's waiting every day to get that ball and you haven't given it to him. Two weeks go by and you finally give him the ball and he's coming to the ballpark every day expecting to pitch." Robbie never got over it. Robbie didn't like him at all for that. But Mayo was, that was Mayo. He didn't like Jim for whatever reason, I don't know. But, he was a hell raiser one time and he settled down and Robbie took him under his wing and everybody on that ballclub was looking for him to do great and he went out and when he finally did get the ball, he wasn't really ready to pitch because he'd been waiting and saving himself for that and it never came. And pitching is as much an attitude as it is having good stuff, good control and that. So, that was tough on big Jim, but he was a good guy. Good ballplayer. Oh, gee, there's just so many. So many guys. I have my mind churning. I've got to get back into this anyway because I'm going down the last of February to St. Pete. They are having the second annual alumni, Major League Baseball Alumni meeting down there and everybody is going to be down there. If you want some interviews, boy, you ought to go down there for that weekend. It's February the 28th, 27th and 28th and March 1st, 2nd, and 3rd.

I'm going to mark it down there. I'm sure I've got to work.

JG- But, all a fellow would have to do is sit down in the lobby and see these guys go by and say, "Mr. Killebrew, could I have a minute of your time?" Whoever would go by. There's just so many. Kaline, all those guys are there and so many guys, of less, not the big marquee players today, you know, the Hall of Famers, but guys like myself that played and were proud of the fact that we played and we had a decent career. There's so many of them. Monte Irvin and all those guys are there and boy, you'd have a field day as far as getting information from major leaguers and the place is full up. I mean, there's two or three hundred.

What I'll probably do is I'll probably mention it to the chairman of this Oral History Committee.

JG- Oh, that'd be the place to go.

The last weekend in February and the first weekend in March?

JG- Well, it's the last of February and the first of March, whatever those days turn out to be, yeah. And, it's coming up next month and I'm going down there and I was there last year for the first one and it was just so great. I'd seen guys I hadn't seen in forty years. We had the best reunion, the best time you ever and more bullshit went on. I'm mean talking about old stories and remembering and that when, when you get guys that can feed back to ya, remember when you

were here, remember when you were over here, and we did this, and this and that and the other, and all of a sudden it lights up. See, all that stuff is in your mind but it's hard and it gets harder as you get older. It's hard to bring it back out. Oh, it was so great. It was four days. Katherine and I went together. She can't go this year. She's got to look after her mother but I had the best time sitting there and talking to those guys and remembering those things and it was just a ton of stories, just a ton of them. Some great, some great things for what you're doing, oh, you would get so many things. And old-timers are there. Old-timers are there as well as the newer guys and the Hall of Fame guys are there and it's super. Then, they have an Old-Timers Game. You know, they have the Hall of Famers playing. Oh yeah, they have two sides, American and National League and all the big marquee. All of them are there. Stan's there. Whole bunch.

Well, I will check my calendar, but I'll be awfully surprised if I could get down there but I'll make sure that somebody knows about it.

JG- It would be well worth a fellow going down there with a tape recorder and just sitting and taking fifteen, twenty minutes of a guy's time and say, "Hey!" It's a funny thing about ballplayers, as you probably know this tonight, once they get to talking, they don't know enough to shut up, right? But, it's so great for me because I don't think about those things. See, I've got a job to do and I'm thinking about what I'm doing and I haven't thought back into those days and kind of and try to dissect them and remember those things and it's been a great experience for me just setting here and talking about it and remembering because you forgot about a lot of things. God, I forgot about so many things and they're still tons that I can't get going but if we had the time and I had some pictures. If I was sitting down in my baseball room...

I'm sure you've got memorabilia and photographs?

JG- Oh yeah, well, I've got the pictures of the guys that I knew and I can tell you about those guys and of course, you know the names. So many great guys. Mel Parnell is another great Boston pitcher and a great guy. In fact, he was supposed to be at the card show but he was sick.

I'm sorry he wasn't there.

JG- He was sick, he had the flu bug and he didn't dare to travel. Oh, just so many guys, Matt Bass come up last year. And we have a nice thing up in Ringo in the first week in May. It's a Old-Timers Game and about fifty guys from all over the southeast go there. Bob Montag, the great crackerball player will be out there. Bob will be out there. He and I are good friends. We play golf. We try to play about once per week when the weather permits and just a great bunch of guys up there and it's three days. We have a golf tournament on Thursday. We have Special Olympics for the kids on Friday with a parade and everything and then Saturday we play an Old-Timers game.

In Ringo?

JG- In Ringo, Georgia. And Jack Maddox is the head guy. He's the head of the Katusa County Athletic Association, or athletic department, I guess it's department. He's a county man, and everybody up there knows Jack and he's a super guy and you'll get some great stories. Boy, you know who comes up there? A guy you'd want to talk to, you need to talk to for this. Jim Turner. Remember him? Gentleman Jim Turner, a pitcher with the Yankees and a great pitching coach and he sit there and he will talk to you forever and love every minute of it. You'll just have the greatest kick out of him. He's such a nice man. He's there every year and hopefully he'll still be with us and be there this year. If he's breathing, he'll be there. And there's a lot of guys come up

there. Norm Zauchin, who used to be with the Red Sox when Willard played. Of course, Willard is up there. And, oh gosh, so many, many guys. Don Buddin, who's the great announcer who used to be with the Red Sox? Every time a ball was hit to Buddin, he'd go, "There's another base hit to Buddin," because he was a terrible fielder. Yeah, we kid him about that all the time. The guy lives in Wyoming with a cowboy hat on. He used to do all the broadcasting.

I can't come up with a name.

JG- But...Curt Gowdy. Curt Gowdy was the announcer and he would say, "Yeah, there's another base hit to Don Buddin."

Well, I will put that on my calendar.

JG- Oh, you'll have a great time and it's just a short drive up there and the people are so great and the guys come up there. You won't have any trouble getting interviews. Bring a lot of tape and you'll set in a room and I'll see that you set in there with Hurricane Bob Hazle. Bob Hazle had one of the greatest seasons and trivia question, The last major leaguer, he didn't get credit for it because he didn't have enough times at bat, the last major leaguer to hit over .400. Fifty seven Braves, or sixty seven, Fifty seven Braves. He had the greatest season of anybody that ever...every time he swung that bat, it was a base hit and he was just, that's where he got his name, Hurricane Bob Hazle. Him and you will hear the stories and laugh 'til you can't walk. And we just sit in a room and have a bottle of beer and they'll fix a drink or whatever, drink orange juice, and we just sit around there and talk baseball. And the things that come up and the remembrances and the stories, I'll tell you. I wish the last three years, and I've always thought about it and every time I get up there to get ready and go, I never take it, is a tape recorder. I wish I had a tape recorder that would play long enough. Because we're talking about hours, see, we're not talking about a few minutes. And it goes on and on, day, morning, noon, and night, and then individually. Those guys would be more than happy to talk with you about their career. Hazle, a very terrific and interesting career and likes to talk. Well, I love to talk to reporters and guys because, hell, at home, I don't get a chance to talk. My wife does all the talking. Which isn't true, of course. But I use that as an excuse.

Well, somebody I know once said that enthusiasm is the most beautiful thing in the world. And that's certainly what I've observed tonight.

JG- Well, I'm happy with it. I loved it.

Oh, you did what many people dreamed of doing.

JG- Well, that was my dream, you know. That was my dream. When I was five years old. I don't think I ever thought, as far as I know, if I can remember back, I never thought of anything else. I always wanted to play ball and I was always playing ball. Even in the wintertime when snow was four-foot deep. I was making snowballs and firing them at the trees and making like I was fielding ground balls and throwing them at the lamp post and whatever. And, uh, that was just the way I come up as a kid. We didn't have television and we had one radio, you know. I was a great Joe Louis fan. I listened to every fight of Joe Louis that he ever did but I never had any desire to be a fighter. But there was something about Joe Louis, I liked about that man, and I listened to every fight he had.

Did you follow the Yankees when you were growing up?

JG- No, I didn't even know they existed. No. They were close and that was the team. You knew New York Yankees and Brooklyn Dodgers, because they were always playing in the World Series. And sometimes, the Red Sox. And then Cleveland would sneak in every once in a while. And those were the only things you got on the radio but you can go down the main street of Addison, when I was a kid, at World Series time, and all the store owners, in the little street, which is maybe two hundred yards long, if it was that far, all the shop owners would have a little stool, and they'd put a radio out on a little stool and they'd all be tuned into the World Series. So, you could walk down main street in Addison, New York, during the World Series and hear the ballgame, wherever you went. And they were all talking about it and the guys would gather around and listen, you know and they would have their opinion about, "Well, this guy can't do that" and there would be arguments about who was the best and the big Yankee fans and the Dodger fans, but most everybody was a Yankee fan in those days because that's all you ever heard about, was the Yankees. I mean that's what the news media and the papers and everybody, they always, of course, they were winners. There was the New York Yankees and then there was the also-rans down here. But, I always liked the National League and I never really followed the American League very closely because I liked the National League. And I guess that comes from always pulling for the underdog. And I was just happy to be there and I got my chance in 1952 and I'd done the very best I could do and go home and I think sometime the good Lord looks out for us, too. He probably saw that here's a kid that's got the desire and he's got some tools and I'm going to give him a taste of what he wants to do, but personality-wise, maybe, and I feel this way sometimes, maybe the good Lord said, "No, Jim can't handle big stardom." And who knows, if I would have went on to, and I could have played, ten, fifteen years. I was a physical specimen. There was nothing wrong with me except my leg. And, of course, that ended it. But, I might have turned into an alcoholic, they didn't have dope in those days, I didn't know what dope was, but there could have been all sorts of disasters in my life that I couldn't handle that kind of publicity and that kind of prestige and everything that went with that. I wasn't capable. I didn't have enough knowledge or whatever. The good Lord guides us, I feel, anyway, and he might have saw that in me and said, "Hey, this guy's good and I've given him a taste now and he can make it and he knows he can make it," and I know I can make it. I'm not bragging. That's just a fact. I believe that and so, he said, "No, we're not going to let you do that. We're going to cut it short."

(interview ends)

-Transcribed by J. Thomas Hetrick, August-December, 2007.